OT-OIA-2026-0264

11 September 2026

s9(2)(a) [redacted]

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Thank you for your email, received on 23 August 2026, to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting information on Oranga Tamariki policy and practice concerning removal of older unharmed children if a baby or toddler is suspected of having a non-accidental injury. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA).

You have requested:

> *Can you please advise what is OT's policy and practice concerning the uplift of older unharmed children if a baby/toddler is suspected of having a non-accidental injury?*

To clarify, Oranga Tamariki does not use the term "uplift" to refer to tamariki and rangatahi who come into the care of the Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki, particularly when urgent or emergency entries to care occur.

There is no specific policy concerning the removal of older, unharmed siblings if a baby or toddler is suspected of having a non-accidental injury (NAI). Rather, each child's safety is individually assessed, and decisions are made according to the level of risk identified. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by Oranga Tamariki, and we have no reason to believe that the information is held by another department.

While we have refused your request, you may be interested in the processes that are followed in these instances. It is expected that any decision to seek the care or custody of tamariki is made in collaboration with their whānau or family, who should be given extensive opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. Emergency entries into care would only occur without family input where tamariki may suffer serious injury, undue hardship, or risk to personal safety.

Section 78 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (the Act) allows for the Court to place tamariki in the interim care of Oranga Tamariki when there are immediate concerns for their safety and wellbeing. Section 48 of the Act provides Police with the authority to take urgent action to ensure the safety of tamariki and rangatahi. Further information regarding use of section 78 of the Act to take urgent action to ensure the safety of

tamariki and rangatahi can be found on the Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre website (the Practice Centre) here.

Urgent or emergency action is only used to secure the safety and wellbeing of tamariki when all other intervention options have been considered. Decisions to carry out emergency actions are made through robust practice consultation with a social work Supervisor and Practice Leader, using the child and family consult. Actions under section 78 of the Act must be approved by a judge. This is not a decision that is made solely by Oranga Tamariki. Legislative and practice requirements require us to ensure that alternatives to prevent entry to care are explored fully and all possible means of supporting the child to live safely with their parents or wider (extended) whānau or family are considered.

If a baby or toddler is suspected of having suffered a non-accidental injury, Oranga Tamariki practice is to assess the safety of all children in the household. We consider whether the circumstances that placed the injured child at risk also places the siblings at risk of harm. We work with whānau, health services, Police, and other professionals to develop a safety plan. More information on how a safety plan is developed can be found on the Practice Centre here and here. We decide individually for each child whether they can remain safely at home, require alternative care arrangements, or need urgent protective action.

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter available to the public by publishing this on our website with your personal details removed.

I trust you find this information useful. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise them with Oranga Tamariki. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

Ashley Seaford
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Office of the Deputy Chief Executive
Chief Social Worker and the Professional Practice