

Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust



Police Vetting Policy
March 2012

Background

The Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) was incorporated as a charitable trust in 2002. The Northland-based trust was established as a charitable umbrella and support organisation for the Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) marine education and Whitebait Connection (WBC) freshwater education programmes. These are leading models in education for sustainability in New Zealand and now available nationally. The trust sees education as a vital part of society and central to all environmental restoration. Its work involves providing dynamic experiential education programmes that engage schools and communities in conservation and the pursuit of sustainability. Our programmes usually engage schools during school hours, under the supervision of teachers, however there are odd occasions where by a MTSCT coordinator may take a school group to a special event or lead an activity whereby the teachers may not be present, such as a community event. Our coordinators may also be in a situation whereby direct physical contact is made with students, such as helping them don or doff wetsuits, helping them in the water, assisting them to use equipment.

Purpose

To contribute to our consultants and endorsed/approved regional coordinators, trustees and volunteers having the highest possible professional standards

To contribute to ensuring a safe and healthy experiential environment for programme participants.

Guidelines

- When appointing a new consultant, coordinator or regional coordinator or long term volunteers, a satisfactory police vet will need to be obtained before they become approved and endorsed by the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust
- All existing consultant, coordinator or regional coordinators should be vetted, unless they are a registered teachers or actively teaching in a school whereby they would have already been vetted by the school (or similar environment)
- Strict procedures to be in place to protect the privacy of those being vetted to avoid inappropriate information being released; vetting results (not the person in question) will be discussed at MTSCT meetings.
 - Which offences are relevant?
 - Violent or sexual offences are not acceptable
 - In terms of other offences, the factors to be considered are:

- When the offence occurred, age of offending, severity, pattern of offending.
- rights of the applicant

Procedure

- We only require regional coordinators, consultants and regional coordinators in the role of delivering our programmes to schools and communities to be vetted. Only volunteers working with us on a long term basis and **not** under direct supervision of an existing approved co-ordinator will be vetted.
- The programme director will undertake the vetting via the police website (we are an approved agency with the NZ Police).
- If a vet receives a police stamp indicating that adverse information is held about that person, then the trust must not act until the person has had an opportunity to validate the information.
- All information shall be confidential.
- Vetting is compulsory, but consent forms need to be signed.
- A record of the vet having taken place must be kept.
- If the vet does not reveal any criminal offence or concerns by the police, the vet should be destroyed and a record of its destruction kept by the trust.
- If the vet reveals offences or concerns by the police then consideration needs to be given as to whether the information should affect the position using the considerations established by the Trustees.
- Unsatisfactory police vets (with regard to existing coordinators) will result in removal of Trust endorsement and the person in question may be removed from the approved coordinator list.
- The MTSCT school agreement *“guarantees that the instructors/coordinators it provides for the programme will not have criminal records for violent or sexual offences.* Disclosure of any information will not be made without permission from the person in question.

Date 11 March 2012



Signed

**Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust
Chairperson**