Providing a Child Safe Environment

POLICY STATEMENT:

Lake Mac Newy OOSH provides an environment that promotes the safety, health and well-being of children at all times. The safety, rights, well-being, and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in all decisions, actions and daily practices, including supervision, staffing, risk management, digital technology, incidents, complaints and child protection. These considerations will take precedence over operational convenience, staffing arrangements, financial considerations or service routines.

Educators and management will maintain the premises and equipment, follow safe work practices, and operate in accordance with child protection obligations and the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations. They recognise their legal responsibilities as Mandatory Reporters to take action where a child is suspected to be at risk of significant harm. Children will be adequately supervised at all times, and every reasonable precaution will be taken to protect them from hazards and harm likely to cause injury or trauma.

Educators, staff, students and volunteers will complete and maintain child protection and child safety training appropriate to their role, including training required under section 162A of the Education and Care Services National Law, as well as first aid, CPR, and asthma and anaphylaxis training as required by legislation.

PROCEDURES:

<u>Managing the Facility</u>

- **SECURITY:**
    - Only approved educators and management members will be given a key to access the building and equipment areas.
    - A key register will be maintained that indicates the person's receipt of the key, date received, and date returned on completion of employment or completion of term as a member of Management. If the service is situated on a school site, it will adhere to the school's key registry requirements.
    - Extra keys will only be cut after agreement by the management and a record made of where they are.
    - All monies and important documents will be kept in a lockable place, and access will only be permitted by approved staff and management members.
    - Educators will ensure that the building is left in a secure manner before leaving and all windows, cupboards, safe, and other relevant areas are locked. All heating and lighting is off, and all doors are properly secured, including deadlocks.
    - Educators will inform the police and Management as soon as possible if there has been a break into the service of any kind.
    - Educators will remain at the service until the police arrive or inform them of what to do.

- **BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:**
    - Equipment will be chosen to meet the children's developmental needs and interests. There will be sufficient access to furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care of each child.
    - Service premises and all equipment and furniture will be maintained in a safe, clean condition and in good repair at all times.

- Children will be provided with adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities. These will enable safe use and convenient access by children.
- There must be no damaged plugs, sockets, power cords or extension cords
- All plug sockets shall be maintained as child safe and power point covers used and checked as a part of the daily WH&S Checklist.
- Electrical appliances shall be in good working order.
- Electrical circuit breakers will be installed and maintained.
- Provision will be made in the budget for regular maintenance and repair work and for deferred costs of major capital repairs.
- Management will contact the Primary School to inform of any safety problems to arrange fully licensed and insured trades persons.
- All contractors should have their own public liability insurance.
- The service and equipment will be regularly checked to ensure that they are in a good and safe condition, comply with relevant Australian Standards and have appropriate soft-fall surfacing maintained.
- Equipment will be regularly washed and cleaned.
- Recycled craft materials should be checked for potential hazards, including food allergies.
- Educators should ensure safe handling of all tools if used as part of any activity. (Please see Risk Assessment Policy)
- Families will be encouraged to notify educators of any safety issues they observe.
- Anything that requires maintenance is to be reported to the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible & documented on the daily WH&S checklist
- Faulty equipment should be removed, or protective barriers should be placed around any dangerous materials, equipment or building sites.
- A maintenance book/computer register will be kept that records any maintenance that needs to be addressed in a timely manner.

- A maintenance registrar document will be provided on the computer or a book to allow staff and volunteers to identify maintenance issues. Staff and volunteers will be encouraged to identify:
    - The type of problem
    - Date that it was observed
    - Who notified the Nominated Supervisor and when?
    - What was done to rectify the problem?
    - Date repaired
    - Tradesperson employed to repair the problem
- For urgent repairs, the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person will contact the Approved Provider to organise a contractor to attend to the problem.
- Non-urgent repairs will be recorded in the maintenance book. The Nominated Supervisor will note this in their report and bring it to the attention of management at the next meeting. Management and the Nominated Supervisor will organise to rectify the problem.

- For major repairs, a minimum of three quotes will be sought and reviewed by management, who will make a decision on a further course of action. The Nominated Supervisor or someone with management control may obtain the quotes.
- Maintenance matters should be regularly reported to the persons with management or control of the Service and maintenance reviews should be discussed with the Approved Provider.
- It is the responsibility of management, once a problem has been raised, to ensure that it is rectified in the most efficient manner and that the service is safe for educators and clientele.
- Should the Service be considered unsafe or as being a health risk, then the Service will be closed, until the problem has been rectified. Notice will be given to all relevant parties.
- The service will have an appropriate number of first aid kits that are suitable to the ages and needs of the children attending. The first aid kit will be well stocked and be easily recognised and accessible at all times.

- **STORAGE:**

  - A storage system should be devised that ensures easy access and uncluttered storage of all equipment.
  - Storage areas will be cleaned and tidied at least twice a year or when seen as necessary.
  - Play equipment and toys should be easily accessible to all children during the operating hours of the service.
  - Children will show respect for the equipment and be encouraged to pack equipment away that they have used to avoid trip hazards.
  - All equipment is to be neatly packed away at the end of each session.
  - Craft equipment will be stored in a separate area. Children should ask permission before removing any craft equipment, such as paints, glues, etc., which has not been set up by the staff.
  - All craft equipment is to be properly washed and cleaned before storage.
  - Where available, a separate storage shed is available for sporting and large outdoor equipment to prevent clutter. Children must always be supervised in the shed, and it must be locked when not in use.
  - All items such as cleaning materials, disinfectants, flammable, poisonous and other dangerous substances, tools, toiletries, first aid equipment, and medications should be stored in the designated secured area which is inaccessible to the children. Educators are responsible for ensuring that these areas remain secure and that they do not inadvertently provide access to these items.
  - Kitchen and other refuse areas will be provided with lidded facilities that are cleaned and emptied daily.
  - Educators and management will ensure that all family records are kept in a nominated secure place, ensuring that records are kept confidential and not left accessible to others during the course of the daily operations.

- **ENVIRONMENT AND ONLINE SAFETY:**
    - The promotion of a culture of child safety and wellbeing within the service
    - Our OOSH Service is committed to creating and maintaining a safe online environment with support and collaboration from children, educators, staff, families, and the community. Management ensures that anti-virus and internet security systems are installed to block access to unsuitable websites, newsgroups, and chat rooms.
    - Ensures backups of important and confidential data are made regularly and stored securely offline, or online. Software and devices are updated regularly to avoid any breach of confidential information.
    - Authorisation is requested as part of the enrolment process for children to use computers/tablets; have their photo taken and published as part of promotional marketing or on the app program used by the Service. The identity of a child is not published on any platform.
    - Personal mobile phones, smart watches, tablets, cameras, USBs or any other personal device capable of taking, storing or transmitting images or videos must not be used while educators are working directly with children, unless specifically authorised in line with law, regulation and service procedure. Only service-issued or approved devices are to be used for service purposes, and children must be actively supervised when using digital technology.
    - Only educational software programs and apps that have appropriate content and have been examined prior to allowing their use are used in the Service. Educators will actively supervise children when using digital technology and ensure that online environments, apps, games, websites, and communication platforms are age-appropriate, safe, and used in line with the service's Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy.

- **VENTILATION, TEMPERATURE AND NATURAL LIGHT:**
    - All heating and cooling systems will be of good quality and checked regularly to ensure safety and reliability.
    - All heating and cooling systems and power cords will be kept in a safe area and away from children.
    - Educators will take individual needs and specific activities into account when ensuring that heating, ventilation levels are comfortable.
    - Should educators, children or families complain about the temperature in the service not being at a comfortable level, this matter will be drawn to the attention of management and steps will be made to address the problem.
    - Adequate ventilation will be provided at all times. Windows will be properly maintained to ensure easy opening and protection from bugs and insects.
    - Where activities involve toxic materials such as paints and glues, staff are to ensure there is adequate ventilation before undertaking the activity.

- Windows are to be opened during operation of the service unless closed to protect from extreme weather conditions.
- Natural light is considered to be most desirable. Provision of natural light areas will be enhanced as much as possible.
- In areas made available for children's homework or other fine detail, natural light will be made available where possible and good overhead lighting provided.
- Adequate light will be maintained both indoors and outdoors. A security light will be placed at the entrance to the service that clearly provides unobstructed view of the door and surrounding areas.
- Outdoor lighting will be suitable so that families, staff and children can enter and exit the building without any unsafe dark areas.

- **PEST CONTROL:**
  - Equipment and especially food items will be properly stored so as not to attract pests and vermin.
  - Garbage/compost bins and disposal areas will be emptied and cleaned daily.
  - Kitchen, food preparation areas and storage will be cleaned and maintained daily.
  - All areas will be checked daily for any signs of pests or vermin.
  - Should any pests or vermin be identified then action should be taken to rid the service of the problem by:
    - Initially using non-chemical methods such as physical removal, maintaining a clean environment, and use of any non-chemical products.
    - Low irritant, environmentally friendly sprays to be used minimally and only with adequate ventilation and preferably not in the presence of the children.
    - Other methods, such as the employment of a pest control company, may be used if deemed necessary by management, where the above methods have failed.
  - If urgent, Management may obtain a contractor to address the problem.
  - If non-urgent, the Nominated Supervisor will bring the problem to the attention of management in their report and management will decide on the appropriate course of action.
  - All families will be notified of any use of substances that may pose a risk to children.
  - Any use of chemical products should only be conducted outside the hours of the children's and educators' presence in the building.
  - All action will be taken to remove the children, educators, families and visitors from the environment for as long as is safe and viable.

Managing the Indoor and Outdoor Environment:

- **INDOOR ENVIRONMENT:**
  - The indoor environment will be smoke and vape-free in line with the following schools' rules relating to no smoking or vaping within school grounds. No smoking/vaping notices will be prominently displayed.
  - The Nominated Supervisor will only enrol the number of children in the service, which can comfortably fit into the building space and in accordance with the National Regulations.
  - A Risk Assessment on the indoor environment will be developed to identify any potential risks to children's health and safety.
  - Where children are indoors for long periods due to weather conditions, special activities will be planned, and other areas sought to disperse the group such as school COLA and verandas.
  - Separate areas in the indoor environment will be provided for:
    - Signing children in/out of the service.
    - Collection of fees, answering phones, and maintaining daily records.
    - Educators and families to talk in confidence.
    - Children to store their bags and belongings.
    - Storage of equipment, food, dangerous materials, and family records.
    - Preparation of food and drinks.
    - Kitchen and other refuse.
    - Cleaning of equipment.
    - Male and female toilet, hand basins and hand drying facilities.
    - Creative and other activities.
    - Large and small group activities.
    - Display of children's activities and work.
    - Quiet space for children to retreat to or do homework or lie down if unwell.
  - The indoor area is to be set up to allow children to participate in a variety of experiences with easy access to equipment. Drawing paper and other materials will be made available to the children at all times.
  - Easy access to areas should be maintained by making clear easily definable passageways and walkways through the building.
  - Staff will ensure that children properly store their bags and that bags and other items are not thrown into walkways or play areas.
  - All items obstructing areas are to be removed and placed in the correct storage areas.
  - Areas must be set up to ensure that proper supervision can be maintained at all times.
  - Access to the outdoor environment should be clear and easily accessible by the children and staff.

- **OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT:**
  - The outdoor environment provides each child with at least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space in compliance with National Regulation 108.
  - The outdoor environment will be smoke and vape free in line with following schools' rules relating to no smoking or vaping within school grounds. No smoking/vaping notices will be prominently displayed.
  - A Risk Assessment on the outdoor environment will be developed to identify any potential risks to children's health and safety.
  - The outdoor space will be inspected daily for any obstacles or dangerous items and the hazard check will be recorded.
  - Any hazardous items will be disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area.
  - The outdoor space will be set up in a variety of ways to encourage participation.
  - Areas will be made available where children can play in large or small groups or by themselves.
  - Active Supervision should be properly maintained. Children are only to play in areas that are clearly visible to educators, and where child/educator ratios are maintained.
  - Clear boundaries shall be set and enforced.
  - When it is necessary to go outside the boundaries or line of supervision, an educator must accompany children.
  - Adequate shade via trees and coverings will be maintained.
  - As far as possible, activities will be set up in shaded areas.
  - Use of other outdoor venues will be considered where access to the area is safe, adequate supervision can be maintained, the area is considered of value to the children's physical development and personal comfort, and where adequate staff/educator ratios can be maintained.

- **Prohibited Use of Tobacco, Vaping Devices, Illicit Drugs and Alcohol**

Our service is strictly tobacco, vape, illicit drug and alcohol free.

To support the safety, health and well-being of children, educators, families, visitors and volunteers, the following applies:

1. The use, possession or consumption of tobacco products, vaping devices, vaping substances, illicit drugs or alcohol is prohibited in all areas of the service, including:

a) Inside the school hall
b) Outdoor play areas and playgrounds
c) School car parks and surrounding school grounds
d) Any building or area being used as part of the service operation

2. Smoking, vaping, the consumption of alcohol, or the use of illicit substances is prohibited:

a) During excursions and incursions
b) While transporting or supervising children
c) During educator meetings, training or professional discussions conducted as part of the service
d) During family or parent meetings conducted as part of the service

3. Under no circumstances is any person permitted to attend the service or participate in service operations while affected by alcohol, illicit drugs or medication that may impair their capacity to safely supervise, educate, care for or interact with children.
4. Educators and staff must immediately report concerns regarding impairment, substance use or unsafe behaviour to the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person.

CHILD PROTECTIVE PRACTICES:

- **Supervision, Child Safety, Children's Voice and Staff Accountability**
  - Educators will provide active and effective supervision at all times, including maintaining awareness of children's location, activities, interactions, individual needs, group dynamics, risks in the environment and any child safety concerns.
  - Child safety is everyone's responsibility. Educators are expected to be professionally accountable to each other and must respectfully speak up or intervene if they observe unsafe supervision practices, inadequate supervision, inappropriate interactions, misuse of digital technology, or any concern that may place a child at risk.
  - Any educator who identifies a supervision or child safety concern must take immediate action to protect children and report the concern to the Responsible Person or Nominated Supervisor.
  - Following any supervision-related incident, including a missing or unaccounted-for child, inadequate supervision concern, unsafe practice, misuse of digital technology, or child safety concern, the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person will review supervision arrangements and identify any changes required to reduce future risk.
  - Concerns relating to child protection, reportable conduct, mandatory reporting obligations or serious incidents must be managed in accordance with the service's Child Protection, Child Safe Environment, Supervision, Code of Conduct and Incident Management policies.
  - Children will be supported and encouraged to speak up if they feel unsafe, worried, uncomfortable, excluded, or concerned about the behaviour of another child, educator, visitor or adult.
  - Educators will listen to children respectfully, take concerns seriously and respond promptly in line with the child's age, development, communication needs and best interests.
  - Children will be provided with opportunities to contribute to decisions affecting their safety, well-being, and participation within the service.
  - Educators will support children to develop confidence, agency and understanding of their rights in a safe and developmentally appropriate manner.

- **MANDATORY REPORTING:**
  - Mandatory reporters are persons who deliver education, care, welfare, health or other services to children as part of their professional work and who are required under legislation to report concerns relating to children at risk of significant harm.
  - In OOSH services, mandatory reporting obligations apply to relevant educators, staff, management and other persons as required under legislation.
  - Educators, staff and relevant personnel must report concerns relating to the safety, welfare or well-being of a child where they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child may be at risk of significant

harm, in accordance with the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and service procedures.

- Concerns relating to child abuse, neglect, reportable conduct, inappropriate conduct or child safety risks must be responded to and escalated in accordance with service policies, legislative requirements and reporting obligations.
- Educators, staff, students and volunteers will participate in child protection and child safety training appropriate to their role, including mandatory reporting requirements, reportable conduct obligations and child safe practices in line with current legislation and regulatory requirements. Where required, the service will support personnel to complete training within an appropriate timeframe.
- Refer to the Child Protection Policy for further information.

CHILD SAFE SYSTEMS

Promotion of a Child Safe Culture

o Lake Mac Newy OOSH is committed to maintaining a culture where the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is the paramount consideration in all actions and decisions affecting children.

o Child safety is embedded into everyday practice through effective leadership, ongoing supervision, open communication, continuous improvement, child participation, educator accountability and compliance with the Child Safe Standards.

CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS REGISTER

o The Service will maintain a confidential Child Protection Concerns Register to record child protection concerns, disclosures, allegations, observations, reports made, actions taken and outcomes where appropriate.

o The register will be maintained by the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider and stored securely to protect confidentiality.

o Records will be maintained in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law, National Regulations, privacy legislation and the Service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

REPORTING DECISION TREE

o The NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) Reporting Decision Tree will be readily accessible to all educators, staff and management members at all times.

o A copy of the Reporting Decision Tree will be displayed or stored in an accessible location within the Service and included within induction resources for educators.

o Educators will utilise the Reporting Decision Tree where appropriate to assist in determining whether a report to the Child Protection Helpline is required.

CHILD PROTECTION RISK ASSESSMENTS

o Child protection risk assessments will be completed and reviewed regularly to identify, assess and minimise risks to children's safety, welfare and wellbeing.

o Risk assessments will consider, where relevant:
▪ supervision practices
▪ educator-to-child interactions
▪ one-to-one situations
▪ excursions and transport
▪ visitors, volunteers and contractors
▪ digital technology and online environments
▪ physical environments
▪ identified child safety risks
▪ strategies to minimise the likelihood of harm occurring.

o Child protection risk assessments will be reviewed following any child safety concern, serious incident, complaint or identified emerging risk.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS AND ACCOUNTING FOR CHILDREN

o Attendance records will be maintained in accordance with Regulation 158 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
o Educators will actively account for every child throughout each session through regular attendance checks, supervision practices and movement monitoring.
o Attendance records will be checked whenever children:
▪ arrive at the Service
▪ depart the Service
▪ transition between indoor and outdoor environments
▪ attend excursions or regular outings
▪ move between activity areas where applicable
▪ participate in emergency evacuations or lockdowns
▪ whenever educators have concerns regarding a child's whereabouts.
o Any discrepancy between the attendance record and the physical location of a child will be treated as a priority. Immediate action will be taken in accordance with the Safe Arrival of Children Policy, Supervision Policy and Incident Management procedures.

- **VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS:**

    - Visitors and contractors who have a scheduled or unscheduled visit to the service will be requested to make themselves known upon arrival, and they will be required to sign a visitor register. The visitor register will also be used in an emergency evacuation (refer to the emergency evacuation policy).

      The visitor register will have the following:

        - Date
        - Name
        - Time in and time out
        - Purpose of visit
        - Signature

- Educators will request to sight identification for any visitor or contractor not known to them.
- The service will provide an induction protocol for all educators to use with visitors and contractors.
- Regular visitors and contractors may be requested to hold a current Working with Children Check.
- Visitors or contractors will not be left unattended with children in the service at any time.
- If there are any visitors to the indoor or outdoor environment that may pose a risk to the children's health and wellbeing, the service will follow the Lock Down or Emergency Evacuation policies.
- Families will be asked to be vigilant, and aware of unknown visitors to the service and to direct them to educators accordingly.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other Service policies/ Documentation	Other
Sections 2A, 3A, 5AA, 162A, 162B, 165, 166, 166A, 167, 174AA, 174AB, 188 and Part 6A – Devices in education and care services (where applicable) R 84, 99, 102AAB, 102AAC, 115, 122, 123, 136, 145, 149, 155, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176	Standards 2.1, 2.2, 5 & 7 Elements 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 5.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.2.1 Child Safe Standards 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10	- Health and Safety policies and procedures - Staffing policies and procedures - Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy - Privacy - Confidentiality - Code of Conduct - Digital Device and Social Media Use - Child Protection	- NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 - Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 - Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 - Department of Community and Justice (Hotline) - Office of the Children's Guardian - NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Mandatory Reporting Guidelines - NSW Child Protection Interagency Guidelines (2006) - Legislation Amendment (Wood Inquiry Recommendations) Act 2009 No 13 - My Time, Our Place V2.0 - Parent handbook - Staff handbook - Risk Assessments - Safety Checks

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

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