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| A blue building with palm trees and a fence  Description automatically generated A close-up of a logo  Description automatically generated  Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy  (This is a child and youth risk management strategy has been developed to assist community kindergartens meet their obligation under the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act, 2000 and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulations, 2011 to develop and implement risk management strategies to identify and minimise the risk of harm to children and young people in their service environment)  Kenmore District Kindergarten  Prepared by the Management Committee and  Nominated Supervisor  Version: Approved by committee: *August 2024* |

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| BACKGROUND | |
| This document was prepared with reference to the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit. | |
| The Blue Card System | The blue card system aims to create safe and supportive service environments where children and young people can receive services and participate in activities essential to their development and wellbeing.  The blue card system has three key components:  **Blue card screening**   The initial screening assesses a person’s eligibility based on their known past police and disciplinary information. This process prevents people from working with children in regulated service environments if their past behaviour indicates that they are unable to protect a child from harm and promote their wellbeing or are at risk of harming a child. It also disqualifies certain people from applying for a blue card (i.e. those convicted of a serious child-related sex or child pornography offence or the murder of a child).  **Ongoing monitoring of blue card holders**   Blue Card Services monitors the police information of all applicants and card holders. If the information changes, Blue Card Services can take steps to immediately protect children from harm, including suspending or cancelling a card. Blue Card Services also monitors and audits service providers’ compliance with blue card system obligations to ensure that appropriate safeguards are being implemented and maintained. This system is currently under review by the QLD government and we will update our practices in line with all current guidelines.  **Risk management strategies**   Under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (the Act), organisations and self-employed persons who fall within the scope of the blue card system are legislatively required to develop, implement and maintain child and youth focused risk management strategies. A child and youth risk management strategy is the combination of an organisation’s aims, values, protocols, policies and procedures to foster a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people. The purpose of a child and youth risk management strategy is to help to identify potential risks of harm to children and young people and to implement strategies to minimise this risk. A risk is anything that can threaten the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. A well-developed strategy will help your organisation achieve its objectives by providing a clear and consistent framework to guide and support the stakeholders who work or volunteer with your organisation or who benefit from your services. |
| Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy | *The Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2001* require regulated organisations and businesses to develop and implement a child and youth risk management strategy which aims to keep children and young people safe.  To comply with the legislative framework, a child and youth risk management strategy must include eight minimum requirements. These requirements:   address an organisation or business’s **commitment** to creating a safe and supportive service environment within your organisation   strengthen an organisation or business’s **capability** to provide such an environment   assist an organisation or business to manage any particular **concerns** with respect to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who are involved with the organisation or business, and   promote the **consistency** of an organisation or business’s approach to risk management, both within the organisation or business and with respect to its compliance with the requirements under the Act.  **The eight requirements are:**  **Commitment**   A statement of commitment to the principles of safe and supportive service environments (mandatory requirement 1), and   A code of conduct (mandatory requirement 2).  **Capability**   Recruitment, selection, training and management strategies that encourage best practice and enhance the safety and well-being of children and young people (mandatory requirement 3).  **Concerns**   Policies and procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm (mandatory requirement 4)   Policies and procedures for the occasions where there might be a breach of the organisation’s child and youth risk management strategy (mandatory requirement 5), and   A planning process for high risk activities and special events (mandatory requirement 7).  **Consistency**   Policies and procedures for compliance with Chapter 8 of the Act (which regulates the blue card system) [mandatory requirement 6], and   Strategies for communication and support for all stakeholders including children and young people (mandatory requirement 8) |

**Statement of commitment**

Kenmore District Kindergarten is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and the protection of children from harm.

We are committed to creating a safe, positive and supportive environment to develop children’s skills and learning. We are part of a community of care that treats children with respect and understanding at all times.

In order to ensure children and young people are kept safe from harm, we conduct our early childhood program in accordance with the following risk management strategies:

* Ensure all staff and volunteers do not work under the influence of illicit drugs alcohol or other substances which may compromise the appropriate supervision of children at all times;
* Gain consent from parents or carers before photographing or videoing any child.
* Restrict the use of personal recording devices. All staff only take images using the provided centre devices. Staff do not carry or use personal mobile devices that can take images or recordings when working with children.
* Gain consent from parents or carers before communicating by telephone or email with any child (relevant to school-aged children);
* Not support bullying or harassment by anyone to anyone including amongst children;
* Ensure that no visitors or outsiders have unsupervised contact with the children at our service (The Responsible Person will be aware of all visitors inclusive of incursions, trades persons and community members and advise staff accordingly to strategies supporting supervision for the context)
* Notify parents/carers if our service is unable to provide services/conduct activities with your child/children for whatever the reason.
* Monitor children for signs of harms such as dramatic changes in behaviour, unexplained injuries and respond accordingly.

**2. Code of conduct for interacting with children and young people**

Our service:

* Acknowledges children as active and competent learners
* Creates a safe, welcoming and stimulating learning environment to encourage thoughtful play
* Promotes secure attachments and warm trusting relationships and interactions
* Seeks to strengthen resilience, critical thinking and informed risk taking
* Promotes communication and problem solving skills, together with social learning and awareness, and capacity to express and acknowledge feelings
* Fosters mutual respect between staff and volunteers and children regardless of cultural identity and cultural practices/behaviour
* Understands children and young people, their ages, stages of development, special circumstances, individual needs
* Uses language that is age/stage appropriate, clear, non-threatening and non- sexual
* Only use physical contact of private parts when completely necessary e.g. helping wipe bottoms if the child is not capable and avoid any inappropriate touch such as kissing children
* Listens to a child or young person’s opinions/concerns
* Listens to parent/child suggestions, feedback and complaints
* Uses positive discipline practices where necessary and avoid the use of corrective practices that are punitive, humiliating or aggressive including the use of physical discipline such as smacking.

Our children are expected to demonstrate:

* A willingness to engage in the learning process, listen and receive instructions
* Respect for self and others including other children, staff and other families in the centre.
* Safe and age-appropriate responsible behaviour at all times.
* The physical boundaries of other children.

Parents and carers should:

* Feel welcome to stay and observe our program
* Raise any issues or concerns with the Responsible Person, Nominated Supervisor or Management Committee
* Drop off and pick up of child/children in a timely fashion, leaving the child/children in the care of our service only for the time allocated
* Receive feedback regarding their child’s/children’s progress
* Provide the necessary resources/materials relevant to the activity as requested
* Alert the Responsible Person, Nominated Supervisor or Management Committee to any concerns as soon as they arise when possible
* Give constructive feedback on our services policies and procedures
* Work with the Responsible Person, Nominated Supervisor and Management Committee to ensure their time and money is well spent
* Be aware that personal information is treated confidentially and privacy respected.

As a service, the Responsible Person, Nominated Supervisor and Management Committee have the right to:

* Cease the program with a family whose child or young person who is consistently non-compliant or obstructive
* Raise any concerns with parent and/or child (as appropriate)
* Expect that parents make concerns known to us as soon as they arise so that a resolution can occur as quickly as possible
* Allow only a parent, guardian or other nominated person to pick up a child from the service
* Report disclosures and suspicions of harm, as detailed in The Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Child Protection Policy and this Child and Youth Risk management strategy.

Children and young people have the right to:

* Be listened to and feel safe
* Feel valued and important
* Be involved in decisions that affect them
* Have their cultural values respected
* Have their best interests considered
* Be respected and understood
* Have their own bodily autonomy respected
* Be free from harassment, bullying or abuse of any kind
* Ask if they don’t understand.

Parents and carers have the right to:

* Receive regular feedback on their child/children’s progress
* Ask questions or raise concerns about our program and activities or their child/children’s progress
* Make complaints as per procedures in this Strategy
* Stay and observe our program and activities with their child.

**3. Recruitment, training and management procedures**

Our service requires the Nominated Supervisor and Management Committee to manage the behaviour of staff and be responsible for assessing their need for ongoing training.

We acknowledge that delivering a high-quality education program to children requires staff to undertake ongoing training in order to provide a positive contribution to the development and learning of children in our service.

Our service is especially committed to developing the skills of our staff and volunteers in providing child safe practices. To do this our Nominated Supervisor or Administrative Assistant

* Regularly reviews and implements all information sent from Blue Card Services and Gowrie
* Regularly reviews material provided by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the Queensland Police in relation to child protection; and
* Facilitates annual training in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and maintains a record of this training.

In the event that our service needs to engage volunteers or staff to assist with particular activities, services or special events our Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person and Executive Committee assesses their suitability to work within our service and ensures they are made aware of their obligations under this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

All staff will engage in the Individual Performance Appraisal process annually where in addition to reflecting on their position in general and establishing professional goals they will have the opportunity to meet with members of the Executive Management Committee and or Nominated Supervisor to discuss their work and ongoing commitment to providing a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people.

All Lady Gowrie Community Kindergarten Services are able to access support regarding the social and emotional development of children through the Gowrie Early Childhood Wellbeing Advisor.

Recruitment of new staff will incorporate the following steps;

* Review of the relevant position description ensuring that the skills, experience and duties undertaken in the role contribute to an environment which is safe and supportive for children and young people.
* The interview process and referee checks will assist the Management Committee in determining if the applicant shares the service’s values and is committed to the development and wellbeing of children.
* All new employee and volunteer positions will include a probationary period during which the Nominated Supervisor will meet with the person and set goals and arrange training as relevant to the position and the person’s experience. New employees and volunteers will also be offered the opportunity to meet with a representative of the management committee to further discuss these goals if desired.
* All new employees will undertake the induction process with the Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person/mentor as appointed by the Management Committee.
* The staff handbook and induction process includes a statement regarding the service’s commitment to being a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people.

Exit Interviews – All employees leaving the service will have the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Management Committee or provide in writing information which may identify broader issues of concern that may impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the service environment. This process may also share the strategies which are currently working well at the service.

**4. Reporting directions and guideline for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm**

Educators are considered mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect in Queensland. If confronted with a disclosure of harm from a child or young person, or staff have a reasonable suspicion of harm our staff respond professionally and in the best interests of the child or young person subjected to the alleged harm.

Reporting of disclosures and suspicions of harm must be made in accordance with procedures recommended by the Queensland Family and Child Commission. In summary:

* The staff member documents the disclosure or suspicion of harm in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible and does not conduct any investigation but refers the matters to the Responsible Person / Nominated Supervisor and contacts Family and Child Connect for advice Phone: 13 32 64
* The Responsible Person/ Nominated Supervisor notifies the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCS&DS) if, based on information available, he/she suspects or is told that a child is being harmed at home and does not have a parent willing and able to protect them.
* Staff understand they are under no obligation to inform a parent, carer or guardian that this action has been taken
* The staff member with the support of the Responsible Person / Nominated Supervisor may notify the Queensland Police Service (QPS) if it is suspected/told that a child is being harmed outside the home and is under no obligation to inform a parent, carer or guardian that this action has been taken
* The staff member supported by the Responsible Person / Nominated Supervisor talks to the parents if a child is self- harming. If the parent is not acting to support and protect the child, the next step is to notify the DCCS&DSC/QPS
* Liaison with these agencies can also occur if staff, the Responsible Person / Nominated Supervisor or Management Committee are unsure as how to respond to any concerns about a child/ren in the care of our service
* Any reports or documentation on disclosures of harm are kept confidential and secure.

Our service applies the guideline at Appendix 1 for reporting disclosures and suspicions of harm.

**5. Policy and procedures for managing breaches of the risk management strategy**

Procedure for making complaints

Our service is committed to conducting business in an open and accountable way that actively encourage parents, carers, guardians or children to discuss any concerns they have with staff with a view to resolving any problems professionally and sensitively.

In the event open discussions do not effectively resolve the parents’, carers’ or guardians’ concerns, information is provided on where they can receive more information in relation to the practices and procedures of child-related services. For example:

* In relation to blue card matters, or concerns relating to this Strategy, families are informed they can contact the The Queensland Family and Child Commission
* In relation to any alleged criminal behaviour, families are informed of their right to contact the QPS
* In relation to any concerns regarding our service meeting the National Quality Standard, families are informed they can contact the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment as the Regulatory Authority for ECEC.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct by Children

All parties are expected to abide by the code of conduct (see section 2 above) and our policy is to address any breaches promptly.

Where a child is engaging in behavior which is or has the potential to be harmful to themselves, another child, staff or visitor, in the first instance, the matter is discussed with the child involved. If the behaviour continues, our staff speak with the child’s parent / carers.

Breaches could result in changes to future session arrangements, including a plan to assist the child to participate in the activity in a safe and supportive way.

Plan for Managing Breaches of this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

**Purpose**

This plan outlines the steps to be taken following a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy in order to address the breach in a fair and supportive manner.

**Definition**

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy. This includes any breach in relation to:

* statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
* code of conduct for interacting with children and young people
* procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
* policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
* policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register
* risk management plans for high risk activities and special events, and
* strategies for communication and support.

All stakeholders are to be made aware of the actions or inactions that form a breach as well as the potential outcomes of breaching the child and youth risk management strategy.

**Who must comply with this plan?**

* employees, volunteers and contractors
* committee members
* work experience students/students on placement
* parents and carers

**Processes to manage a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy**

Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. The following will occur:

* all people concerned will be advised of the process
* all people concerned will be able to provide their version of events
* the details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded
* matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential, and an appropriate outcome will be decided.

**Suitable outcomes for breaches** depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

* emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct
* providing closer supervision
* further education and training
* mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
* disciplinary procedures if necessary, or
* reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

**Responsible person/officer: Lyndall Hind**

**Date: August 2024**

**Review Date: August 2025**

**6. Policy and procedures for compliance with Chapter 8 of the Act (Blue card Compliance)**

Currency of blue card

Our service maintains a blue card register and our Administration Assistant, working with the Management Committee, ensures that the blue cards for all staff and volunteers are valid. The Administrative Assistant is the contact person for Blue Card Services for our organization.

All staff, volunteers, Education and Care Service Students, Executive Committee Members, General committee members who engage in work at the service during program hours will be required to hold positive notice Blue Cards or Exemption Cards.

Staff are responsible for submitting a renewal to the Blue Card Services at least 30 days prior to their blue card expiring.

While paid employees can commence employment after an application form has been submitted, volunteers and trainee students must not commence regulated employment until they hold a valid blue card and positive notice.

At the initial application stage, our service will:

* notify all applicants that by signing the application form they are consenting to the screening process under the Act
* be able to certify that the ‘contact person’ has sighted documents to confirm an employee’s identity as prescribed under the Act
* carefully check through the application form to ensure all sections have been appropriately completed. This will minimise unnecessary delays that can result if further information is required after receiving an incorrect or incomplete form
* explicitly warn all potential staff (paid employees, volunteers and students) that it is an offence for a ‘disqualified person’ to sign a blue card application form or a renewal form. **It is an offence for an employer not to provide this warning.** A person is disqualified if they:
  + have been convicted of a ‘disqualifying offence’
  + are a ‘reportable offender’ with current reporting obligations under the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004,* or
  + are subject to an offender prohibition order under the *Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008*, or
  + are subject to a sexual offender order under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003*, or
  + are subject to a disqualification order from a court prohibiting them from applying for, or holding a blue card (see Blue Card Services website for further details of all the above).
* inform prospective employees who may be ‘disqualified persons’, that in certain circumstances, they may be able to apply for an ‘Eligibility declaration’ under the Act;

Reporting requirements

Our Management Committee and Nominated Supervisor advise the Blue Card Services if:

* They become aware of a change in police information for a staff member or volunteer and submitted a ‘Change in police information’ form;
* There is a change of business address for the service; or
* New staff are being employed or volunteers are being elected to the Management Committee or rostered to assist with activities, services or special events.

Our service ensures all blue card screening requirements are complied with as outlined on the Blue Card Services website ([www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au)).

Our service undertakes the Authorisation to confirm a valid card form to check the validity of a prospective employee’s card.

Our service notifies the Blue Card Services if an applicant or card holder stops working for our service or if the contact person for our service changes.

Annual review or review after an incident

Our service reviews this child and youth risk management strategy annually (as part of our planning processes) as well as after any significant incident to:

* Check it remains up-to-date with any changes to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) legislation and make changes if necessary
* Ensure it continues to be effective in addressing the risks to children and young people in our kindergarten environment.

The review involves the Nominated Supervisor and Management Committee nominees and covers:

* Whether any incident/s relating to risk management issues occurred
* The actual process used to manage the incident/s
* Whether policies and procedures were followed and how effective they were in preventing or minimising harm to children
* The content and frequency of training as it relates to this strategy.

The outcome of the review is documented and followed up as part of our Management Committee’s regular business to ensure any necessary changes/actions are taken.

**7. Risk management plans for high-risk activities/special events**

Where a high risk activity (one that requires extra planning/supervision) or special event takes place, families are provided with the relevant information, for example:

* The purpose of the event and intended outcome for their child
* The venue and its reputation for conducting special events
* Supervision arrangements
* Any potential risks unique to the special event and how they will be mitigated
* Logistics such as bathroom locations, estimated numbers

Our service uses a risk register for activities to plan for and calculate the likelihood of unsafe situations using a risk analysis matrix (see Appendix 2). This matrix is also used to identify hazards and assess risks (see the supporting documentation policy folder).

**8. Strategies for communication with key stakeholders**

A copy of this child and youth risk management strategy is readily available to staff, parents, volunteers and the Management Committee. It is available in SharePoint and in the policy folder.

Furthermore, stakeholders are notified when material changes are made either to this strategy or to risk management/working with children (risk management and screening) legislation. This occurs using written or verbal communication.

**Appendix 1: Reporting disclosures and suspicions of harm guideline**

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| **RECEIVING A DISCLOSURE**  Remain calm and find a private place to talk. Validate the child for their disclosure and let them know you believe them. Explain why you cannot keep it a secret. Only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter. Try to remember word for word what the child says. Do not attempt to conduct your own investigation. |



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| **DOCUMENTING A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICSION**  Complete an incident report form and include the time, date and place of the disclosure, and ‘word for word’ what happened and what was said including anything you said and any actions that have been taken. Date the report and sign. Alert the nominated supervisor of the disclosure and provide the completed report. |



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| **REPORTING A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICSION**  Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services - 1800 811 810 or the Queensland Police Service (*enter local police station details here*). |



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| **FOLLOWING A DISCLOSURE**  Support and counseling are offered to all relevant parties involved. The policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm are reviewed. |

**Appendix 2: Risk register, risk analysis matrix and legend**

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| **Risk Register** | | | | |
| **Risk** | **Likelihood** | **Consequences** | **Level of Risk** | **Treatment to Prevent or Reduce Harm** |
| Parent does not collect their child | Possible | Major | High | Procedure for drop off and pick up discussed with/provided to all parents  Parents provide two other contacts approved to take on this responsibility if unable to pick up child  Child to be in sight at all times until parent or nominated contact arrives |
| Child says that she/he does not want to go home with a parent | Unlikely | Major | High | Ask the child why and if her/his answer suggests harm to the child from someone at home, report it to relevant authorities  If not, discuss the issue with parent |
| Other parents visit when children are in attendance | Likely | Minor | Moderate | Ensure processes are in place to prevent visitors from being alone with any child |
| Contracted (external) workers visit when children are in attendance | Possible | Moderate | High | Ensure processes are in place to prevent the contracted worker from coming into contact with children |

The following risk analysis matrix and legend have been applied:

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| **Risk Analysis Matrix** | | | | | |
| **Likelihood** | **Consequences** | | | | |
| **Insignificant** | **Minor** | **Moderate** | **Major** | **Catastrophic** |
| Almost certain | Moderate | High | High | Extreme | Extreme |
| Likely | Moderate | Moderate | High | Extreme | Extreme |
| Possible | Low | Moderate | High | High | Extreme |
| Unlikely | Low | Low | Moderate | High | High |
| Rare | Low | Low | Moderate | Moderate | High |

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| **Legend for the Matrix** | |
| Extreme | Act now – Urgent to do something about the risks immediately. Requires immediate attention. |
| High | Highest management decision is required urgently. |
| Moderate | Follow management instructions. |
| Low | Ok for now. Record and review if any equipment/people/materials/work processes or procedures change. |

Useful References

1. **Anti-Discrimination Commission** – deals with discrimination, sexual harassment and acts of public hatred: www.adcq.qld.gov.au

2. **Australian Institute of Family Studies** – information and research concerning families: www.aifs.gov.au

3. **Australian Privacy Commission** *– Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth): www.privacy.gov.au

4. **Australian Sports Commission** – examples of member protection policies, codes of conduct, procedures useful for sporting organisations: www.ausport.gov.au

5. **Blue Card Services**: www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

o Blue Card Enquiries:1800 113 611

6. **Crime and Misconduct Commission** – accepts complaints about official misconduct of public officials: www.cmc.qld.gov.au

7. **Department of Communities Child Safety and Disability Services)** - for information on child protection roles and contacts for reporting: www.childsafety.qld.gov.au

8. Preventing and Responding to the Abuse, Assault and Neglect of People with a Disability Policy and Booklet: www.disability.qld.gov.au

9. **Legislation**: *Child Protection Act 1999* etc: http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm

10. **Queensland Police Service** http://www.police.qld.gov.au/Forms/contact.asp

11. **Play by the Rules** http://www.playbytherules.net.au