



Silky Oaks Children's Haven

# Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy



Children and families reaching their full potential



## **Requirement 1 – Statement of Commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm**

---

Silky Oaks Children's Haven (Silky Oaks) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and families who use our services and is dedicated to protecting them from harm. Silky Oaks will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment through:

- Ensuring that all workers treat children, young people and families with respect and understanding at all times.
- Ensuring that those who regularly deal with children, young people and families within the organisation undergo the Working with Children Check and hold a positive notice Blue Card (where exemptions do not apply).
- Prohibiting any form of abuse against children, young people and families.
- Appropriate use of language.
- Carefully selecting, screening and monitoring people whose roles require them to have regular contact with children, young people and families.
- Ensuring the Silky Oaks Code of Conduct is promoted, enforced and reviewed.
- Providing clear procedures for raising concerns or complaints.
- Respecting cultural identity and dedicating to provide a high quality and culturally appropriate service to all children, young people and families.
- Providing an environment that supports the continuous improvement of processes, education and skill enhancement for the workers and management of Silky Oaks.
- A duty of care to take appropriate action to minimise the risk of harm and to take measures that are reasonable in all circumstances to protect clients and workers from risks of harm that are reasonably foreseen.

### **Reference**

- Strategic Plan
- Code of Conduct
- Duty of Care Policy
- Client Practice Policy
- Client Concern Policy
- Client Advocacy and Social Justice Policy
- Client Access to Service Policy
- Client Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Culturally Competent and Inclusive Practice Policy
- Organisational Purpose Policy
- People and Culture Policy
- People and Culture Handbook
- Residential Support Worker Handbook
- Residential House Manager Handbook
- Inspire – Therapy Program Handbook
- Inspire – Outreach Program Handbook



## Requirement 2 – Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children and Young people

---

### Code of Conduct – Staff Related

Silky Oaks' Code of Conduct is to ensure workers take appropriate measures to minimise risks to the safety and wellbeing of the children, young people and families in our services, fellow workers, volunteers, students and contractors.

Silky Oaks' Code of Conduct is based on the organisational philosophy and outlines the standards that underpin the Code of Conduct which are:

- Set a good example of ethical conduct and encourage behaviour that is in line with the Code of Conduct.
- Treat all workers with respect and in an equitable manner.
- Ensure workers are aware of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct, and policies and procedures.
- Ensure workers understand the standards of performance expected of them and that directions are reasonable.
- Provide fair and equitable access to learning and development opportunities for all workers.

### Code of Conduct for the Interaction with Children and Young People

Silky Oaks is committed to providing best practice services to meet the diverse range of family and individual needs in our community. Our flexible service will enable people within our target client groups to have equal access to all appropriate services' aimed at improving their wellbeing, development, resilience, safety and participation in our society

The Code of Conduct is based on:

- Ensuring codes of professional ethics are congruent with practice standards.
- Promoting collaborative relationships and partnerships between individuals, families, service providers and communities.
- Providing a holistic response and outcome for clients through constructive team work processes.
- Collaborating across programs and other services to ensure client needs are met.
- Maintaining an open door policy, pre and post service delivery within the organisation's capacity.
- Maintaining a client-focused approach and seek feedback to continuously improve service delivery.
- Ensuring record keeping and client files are completed in a professional and timely manner.
- Ensuring that feedback, complaints and appeals are resolved promptly, fairly, and effectively.
- Using the appropriate language when dealing with children, young people and families.

It is the aim of Silky Oaks to ensure that children, young people and families who engage in our services receive the following:

- Emotional support and practical assistance that enhances their health and wellbeing.
- Opportunities through service provisions to build and maintain safe and healthy relationships with peers, family and significant others.
- Facilitation of increased self-worth through participation in activities, education, learning opportunities and social inclusion.
- The right of the client to participate and make choices about the services they receive.



## Reference

- Duty of Care Policy
- Client Practice Policy
- Client Concern Policy
- Client Advocacy and Social Justice Policy
- Client Access to Service Policy
- Client Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Culturally Competent and Inclusive Practice Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement
- People and Culture Policy
- People and Culture Handbook
- Residential Support Worker Handbook
- Residential House Manager Handbook
- Inspire – Therapy Program Handbook
- Inspire – Outreach Program Handbook

## **Requirement 3 – Written Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff and volunteers**

---

To assist with effective child protection strategies, Silky Oaks is committed to recruiting, selecting, training and managing workers in such a way that limits risks to children, young people and families. In particular, Silky Oaks will:

- Ensure that the recruitment and selection procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to children and young people from workers via:
  - Accurate positions descriptions (Roles and Responsibilities Statements),
  - Advertising the position with a clear statement about the organisations commitment to the Blue Card screening, a police check, reference checks, and identification verification.
  - A selection process that includes assessing the application via an interview process and reference and other checks (as identified above) based on the accurate position description.
  - A probationary period of employment, which allows Silky Oaks to further assess the suitability of the new employee and to act as a check on the selection process.
- Ensuring that training and management procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to children and young people from employees via:
  - Management processes that are consistent, fair and supportive;
  - Performance management processes to help employees to improve their performance in appositve manner;
  - Supportive processes for staff when they are experiencing challenges such as mentoring, mediation, conflict resolution, coaching, additional training and external support and counselling services;
  - An induction program which thoroughly addresses the organisations policies and procedures, particularly the expectation to provide a safe and supportive environment for the children and employees;



- Training new and existing staff on an ongoing basis to enhance skills and knowledge and reduce exposure to risk;
- Keeping a record of the training provided to employees;
- Exit interviews to assist with identifying broader issues of concern that may impact on the safety and wellbeing for the children and employees

## Reference

- People and Culture Handbook
- Volunteer Handbook
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Mandatory Training Procedure and Training Matrix
- Code of Conduct
- Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement
- Managing Underperformance Form

## Requirement 4 – Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm

---

Silky Oaks has zero tolerance towards harm of clients, including children and young people, related parties and workers.

Harm is defined as ‘any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a person’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing’. Harm can result from physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse or exploitation.

All Silky Oaks workers have an obligation to report disclosures or suspicions of harm to their line manager as quickly as possible. An investigation into the disclosure or suspicion will be undertaken, escalated, and reported if required. There will be no ramifications for a worker who reports harm.

In the instance a client, young person, related party or worker of Silky Oaks makes a disclosure of harm or there is a suspicion of harm caused by either themselves or others, workers must:

- contact the Queensland Police Service on 000 if the harm is occurring immediately or the risk of the person experiencing harm is imminent
- notify your line manager of the disclosure or suspicion of harm. They will then help you to complete a Reporting Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm Form (BUF-044) or a Critical Incident Report form (CPF-115) depending if the child or young person is on an order with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. During a disclosure or suspicion of harm:
  - remain calm
  - do not make a promise to keep the disclosure a secret; tell the client, related party or worker they have done the right thing in telling you but you will need to tell someone who can help
  - only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter because probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries
  - do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome.

## Reference

- Duty of Care Policy
- All Silky Oaks handbooks
- Handling of Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm Procedure



## **Requirement 5 – Managing Breaches of the Risk Management Strategy**

---

Silky Oaks is committed to ensuring all breaches to the Risk Management Strategy are handled in accordance with the following process:

An investigation may be required under the following situations:

- a complaint, feedback or grievance has been lodged against a worker/s
- an allegation of a breach of standards of care or harm is reported against a worker/s
- an allegation of a breach of policy, procedure, or lawful work instruction
- an allegation of serious misconduct or other formal disciplinary matter is raised against a worker/s

Should an investigation be necessary, Silky Oaks will:

- where necessary, place the worker/s on a period paid suspension leave (depending on circumstances) whilst the investigation takes place
- provide appropriate and timely updates to the worker/s involved in the investigation
- provide the worker/s access to the external EAP provider
- maintain strict confidentiality throughout all investigation processes
- provide any other reasonable support mechanism within organisational resource constraints

Should an investigation be necessary, the worker/s will:

- participate in required investigation processes
- maintain strict confidentiality throughout all investigation processes
- participate in mediation or other mutually agreed resolution activities

In some circumstances, events or activities may be notifiable to relevant authorities or departmental stakeholders. In the event of a confirmed breach to the risk management strategy, appropriate disciplinary action may result, including the termination of employment..

### **Reference**

- People and Culture Handbook
- Residential Handbook
- Inspire Handbook
- Therapy Handbook
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Procedure
- Risk Management Register
- Risk Management Action Plan

## **Requirement 6 – Policies and Procedures for Managing Compliance with the Blue Card System**

---

The safety and wellbeing of children, young people and families in Silky Oaks is of paramount importance. Silky Oaks is committed to providing safe environments for all children, young people and families by developing and implementing robust policies and procedures.



As per our funding agreements, Silky Oaks has policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the blue card system under the following:

- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulations 2011
- Child Protection Act 1999
- Child Protection Regulations
- HSQF Standards

## Reference

- People and Culture Handbook
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Governance Handbook
- All Silky Oaks policies and procedure
- Legislative Index List

## **Requirement 7 – Risk Management Plans for High Risk Activities and Special Events**

---

Silky Oaks is committed to identifying risks, assessing risks, eliminating and minimising risk and the monitoring of risk to the safety of children on an ongoing basis.

Silky Oaks will utilise various risk management tools to assist in this process and will keep appropriate records of decisions made and actions taken in relation to risks to children.

## Reference

- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Procedure
- Risk Management Plans
- Risk Management Register
- WHS Policy
- WHS Handbook
- Client Practice Policy

## **Requirement 8 – Strategies for Communication and Support**

---

Silky Oaks commit to making this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy (hard copy and an electronic version) available to all workers that deal with children and young people within the organisation.

Silky Oaks is committed to provide training on safety and conduct in relation to risks to children and young people to all workers as part of their induction and refresher training annually. This training will be provided via formal training events and professional development, including informal updates at regular staff meetings and discussions between management and workers.



## Reference

- Silky Oaks website (PDF version available)
- Electronic copy on the public (P) drive
- People and Culture Handbook
- Code of Conduct
- Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement
- Mandatory Training Procedure and Training Matrix

## Authorisation

This handbook was approved by Darren Frame, Chief Executive Officer on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2018. This new version supersedes any previous versions distributed.