

Safe Environment Policy and Procedure

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all participants are supported in environments that are physically, emotionally, and culturally safe. Safety is central to the delivery of quality support and services. This policy reflects our commitment to preventing harm and promoting a culture where participants feel secure, respected, and free from abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, or discrimination.

We aim to create spaces where risks are identified and managed proactively, and where staff understand their responsibilities in maintaining safety for both participants and themselves. This includes ensuring support is delivered by qualified, screened, and capable workers who are responsive to individual needs and uphold each participant's rights and dignity.

2.0 Scope

The policy applies to all staff responsible for creating and maintaining safe, inclusive environments for participants.

3.0 Policy

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd is committed to providing safe, inclusive, and responsive environments for all participants, in line with the NDIS Practice Standards, the NDIS Code of Conduct, and the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018.

All workers in risk-assessed roles must hold current NDIS Worker Screening clearance and, where relevant, Working with Children Checks. Staff must act in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities, promoting participant dignity, privacy, and choice in all interactions and care environments.

The organisation conducts environmental safety assessments in all service settings. Risk assessments are undertaken collaboratively with participants, families, carers, and professionals (including health and allied health providers, where relevant). Identified risks are managed through appropriate strategies that are tailored to the needs and preferences of each participant.

Where risks are identified, these are documented, regularly reviewed, and managed in accordance with SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd's risk management procedures. Any incident that causes or could cause harm is managed in line with the Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure. If the incident meets a reportable threshold, it will be reported in accordance with the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018.

All efforts will be made to create and maintain environments that support the wellbeing, autonomy, and safety of every participant.

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Risk Assessment

Participants and their nominated representatives will be actively involved in the risk assessment process to ensure the participant's views, preferences, and choices are considered. Any identified risk will be documented in the participant's Individual Risk Assessment Profile and escalated as per the Incident Management Policy where required. All high-risk issues will be entered into the organisational risk register and monitored through the Continuous Improvement system.

Staff designated to undertake risk assessments must complete a Safe Environment Risk Assessment for non-home environment services. A Safe Environment Checklist – Home is utilised for services provided in the home environment. Collaboration with other services may be undertaken to gain full insight into the potential and real risks.

4.2 Medical emergencies

Emergency planning will be developed in collaboration with the participant, their family, and/or advocate to ensure their preferences and communication needs are reflected. Staff must escalate and report any medical emergency as an incident where required.

The information gained from the participant and their family or supports will be used to create a Medical Emergency Plan within the support plan. Staff will be trained on what constitutes an urgent and non-urgent medical situation, and staff must undertake an immediate response in emergencies.

The Medical Emergency Plan will include the following:

- immediate response
- what constitutes a point of escalation
- to whom to escalate
- identified staff member to contact

4.3 Staff identification

Participants in all environments must be able to identify a staff member easily. Staff identification could be in the form of a uniform or identification tags or badges. The staff must introduce themselves at the beginning of each service delivery. All staff engaged in participant environments must hold a valid NDIS Worker Screening clearance.

4.4 Home supports

All staff must use the identification provided by SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd upon entering a participant's environment. The staff will greet the participant and introduce themselves at the beginning of the service, and our staff will inform the participant when they leave the environment.

Physical identification and identification tags will be worn in a uniform or identification tags when staff undertake home supports.

At access to the service and during the initial support planning design, the Manager will determine if the participant's home environment (where the supports are undertaken) is safe.

Staff will only enter the participant's home with explicit consent and invitation of the participant or their authorised representative. Where a participant exhibits behaviours of concern, a risk management plan will be in place to address any risks to the participant or workers.

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will work with the participant, family and advocate to ensure that the home is safe for the participant and others. The service will assess the premises using a Safe Environment Checklist.

4.5 Establishing a safe environment

If the participant accesses other providers, our team will work with these providers to:

- identify any environmental risks (see Safe Environment Risk Assessment)
- ascertain how to treat the risks
- review the environment to ensure safety
- undertake removal/avoidance of any hazards
- devise a risk management plan to prevent and manage injuries and record it in Risk Management Plan Register

The Safe Environment Risk Assessment must be completed for each site where the participant attends and include infection control.

Participants, their families, and/or advocates will be engaged in establishing a safe environment. Where restrictive practices are required to mitigate safety risks, a Positive Behaviour Support Plan will be developed and implemented according to the NDIS Restrictive Practices and Behaviour Support Rules 2018. Any breach of participant safety will be treated as an incident and reported in line with incident management processes.

4.5.1 Infection prevention and control

All staff must follow our Infection Management Policy and Procedure in all service provision settings. Routine environmental cleaning must be conducted where service occurs (not just in the home environment), and cleaning must occur on frequently touched surfaces.

All staff must comply with NDIS Infection Prevention and Control obligations, including the most current guidance from CDNA and ATAGI. Routine environmental cleaning will be undertaken, including frequently touched surfaces. Staff must use PPE appropriately and in line with current public health directives. Annual infection control training, including updates on communicable diseases such as COVID-19, will be mandatory for all staff.

Management will resource staff to allow them to clean environments when not located in a participant's home. Every staff member is trained in infection prevention and control and PPE use. All staff will undertake a refresher course at least annually. Training will include:

- hand hygiene practices
- respiratory hygiene
- coughing etiquette (using elbow when coughing)

5.0 Related documents

- Employment Check Register
- Food Hygiene Check
- Position Descriptions
- New Employee Details
- Participant Intake Form
- Safe Environment Risk Assessment
- Personal Emergency Preparation Plan
- Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure
- Safe Environment Checklist – Home
- Safe Food Storage Check
- Worker Orientation Checklist
- Staff Personal Protective Equipment Provision Form
- Training Attendance Register – In-house
- Annual Organisational Training Register and Review
- Staff Training Record
- Staff Training Plan
- Support Planning and Service Agreement Collaboration Policy and Procedure
- Support Plan
- Easy Read - Planning With You
- Training Needs Analysis
- Work Health Safety and Environmental Management Policy and Procedure
- NDIS Worker Screening and Risk Assessed Roles Policy and Procedure
- Risk Assessed Role - Employee Register
- Reportable Incident, Accident and Emergency Policy and Procedure

6.0 References

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS Scheme Act 2013 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS Code of Conduct 2018
- NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018
- NDIS (Practice Standards — Worker Screening) Rules 2018
- Child Safe Standards (where working with children)