

## Child Safe Policy

Registered with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian REG0058882

### ABOUT BIG SKY STORIES

#### Our Vision

Our vision is one where all children of far west NSW have equal access to quality reading resources, confident adults, language and text rich environments and the range of learning opportunities needed for improved language and literacy development. We envision a world where children share books, stories, songs and rhymes every day from birth with the important people in their lives to make a positive impact on their future and the community.

#### Our Values

The work of Big Sky Stories is underpinned by a belief in the inherent dignity of humanity and a sense of responsibility to work for the collective good. We believe in working creatively alongside, and on behalf of our community, to enhance individual and collective wellbeing. Big Sky Stories strives to provide accessible support to address the barriers brought about by geographic isolation and low socio-economic status.

<b>Title</b>	Child Safe Policy for Big Sky Stories Ltd
<b>Introduction</b> Describe the policy intent and who it applies to.	<p>At Big Sky Stories we want all infants, children and young people who participate in our initiatives to have a safe and fun time. This policy is to guide all staff, adult education students and volunteers on how to behave with infants, children and young people at Big Sky Stories.</p> <p>Big Sky Stories supports the active participation of all participants under 18 years of age. We listen to infants who indicate needs through sounds and gestures, children developing speech and communication in various ways, and young people who speak, read, write and use other</p>

tools to communicate. We respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions that directly affect them.

**How we treat infants, children and young people:**

Positive – strengths are our focus.

Inclusive – each person has a place at Big Sky Stories and we always aim to minimise the barriers whilst maintaining value.

Respectful – acknowledging that each person has different experiences and skills.

Generous – assume everyone is giving their best.

Creative – always trying new opportunities to help.

We will consider infant, child, young person and caregiver needs in all we do.

We will provide a fun, caring and safe environment.

We will provide opportunities for children to have a voice, to be listened to and to have their input and feedback incorporated.

We will act with honesty and openness and make decisions that are ethical and fair.

We recognise the diversity and cultures within our community and support the rights of all.

We will recruit people who support our vision and agree with our values.

We will value our staff, further education students and volunteers and invest in their professional development to ensure we keep children safe.

**Children's Participation**

Describe how you involve children and get them to actively participate in your organisation.

## Recruitment

Describe how you select suitable workers to work with children.

### Our selection processes:

1. We promote respect, fairness and consideration for all staff, adult education students and volunteers. Bullying, discrimination and harassment in any form or at any level will not be tolerated.
2. All staff, adult education students and volunteers will have a supervisor (who has a Working with Children Check) assigned to support them and their work. Staff, students and volunteers will at all times be directly supervised in their interactions with children and young people at Big Sky Stories, by a supervisor who has a Working with Children Check.
3. Big Sky Stories Ltd will maintain a rigorous and consistent staff, student and volunteer screening and selection process. All potential staff, adult education students, and volunteers will be required to declare that they are not prohibited persons under the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998. Working with Children Checks will be undertaken where required by law and all potential employees, students and volunteers will need to provide a current Working with Children Check number and expiry date which will be validated before they begin. All potential staff will be interviewed and reference checks will be conducted.
4. All new staff, adult education students and volunteers will receive a copy of Big Sky Stories Child-Safe Child-Friendly Policy. All staff, students and volunteers will be expected to sign agreements acknowledging that they have received, read and understood Big Sky Stories' policies and procedures and that they agree to be bound by them.
5. Probationary or trial periods may be imposed on employees, adult education students or volunteers in relation to their provision of services to Big Sky Stories and Big Sky Stories Ltd reserves the right to end contracts or volunteer status if policies have been breached.

## Complaints Management and Reporting

Department of Family and  
Community Services  
NSW Ombudsman  
Office of the Children's Guardian.

### **For complaints about child safety:**

A nominated Child Safety Contact Officer (CSCO) will manage all formal complaints. As at 20th July, 2022, the CSCOs for Big Sky Stories are Jane Vaughan (0409 034 717 / [hello@onemorepage.com.au](mailto:hello@onemorepage.com.au)) and Nicola Wright (0439 286 986 / [hello@tietheknotmacrame.com.au](mailto:hello@tietheknotmacrame.com.au)).

Complaints about any child safety or welfare issue may be addressed to the CSCO orally or in writing (including anonymously). Child safety is paramount.

### **For general complaints:**

Should the complaint relate to something not involving children - for example, workshop content or delivery, bullying, discrimination or harassment, aggressive behaviour, offences that are criminal but not related to child safety such as fraud, etc - the complaint should be made to one of the CSCOs. If either of these areas of complaint relate to a CSCO, a complaint can be filed with the Co-Director Robyn Ewing ([robyn.ewing@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.ewing@sydney.edu.au)).

All complaints are taken seriously at Big Sky Stories, and all are confidential. Once you have reported the incident the following steps will take place.

### **Steps for child-safety complaints:**

The CSCO or other senior staff will follow our internal child safety procedures, which may include making a formal report or conducting an internal investigation. You will be kept informed as to progress where legally possible, and of any action resulting from the complaint.

### **Steps for general complaints:**

We always encourage you to try first speaking with the person who did the wrong. If this is not possible, the staff member handling the complaint will consult with the Directors on how best to proceed. You will be kept

informed as to the progress and of any action resulting from the complaint.

**Steps for discrimination complaints:**

You will be asked for a detailed description of the incident. This can be done in writing, over the phone, or in person.

We may discuss the incident with other senior staff members to determine further actions, and to better support you in regards to the environment where this took place.

If the incident directly involves other senior staff, they will not be involved in this step of the proceedings. We will be guided by the course of action you wish to pursue. This is in regards to whether you would like to address the incident with the parties involved, whether you would like to continue working in that environment, and whether you would like a response from the parties involved.

You will not be judged on the actions you choose – Big Sky Stories Ltd is here to support your needs around this incident and the resulting actions.

The staff member you reported to, or the appropriate senior staff member, will address the incident with the parties involved (or their supervisor). As stated above, you do not need to be part of this process if you do not wish to be.

**Training, support and supervision of workers**  
Describe what training you provide and how you support and supervise your workers.

**Training**

**Paid Staff**

All staff must have completed either online or in-person child safety training as held by the Office of Children’s Guardian or other relevant entity as directed by Big Sky Stories Ltd. When updates are required, this training will always be paid for by Big Sky Stories if any fees apply. Updates should happen every 2 years.



All staff are given copies of all relevant child safety policies and procedures, which are reviewed annually and updated where necessary. Staff are advised as to any changes on an annual basis, or sooner if required.

### **Volunteers and Adult Education Students**

At the start of their activity, Big Sky Stories is able to provide training which incorporates an online child-safety module if required. All volunteers and students are given copies of all relevant child safety policies and procedures, which are reviewed annually and updated where necessary.

Should any support and guidance be required around any issues of child safety - understanding policies, making mandatory reports, clarifying definitions or decisions - volunteers and students can speak with the relevant Child Safety Contact Officer.

### **Needs and Performance Evaluation**

All staff, volunteers and adult education students are supervised by a manager, who oversees their work with Big Sky Stories Ltd. Managers are the best source of evaluation as to how a staff member, volunteer or student is doing their job, and what support they may need. Supervising managers may request formal meetings with staff, volunteers and students if they are concerned there is risk of any Child Safety Policy being breached or misunderstood. This will always be handled in a non-judgemental and open manner. Further support or training may be offered or discussed.

<p><b>Other legislation, industry standards or internal policies</b> List any other legislation or industry standards which may be relevant to your child safe policy.</p>	<p><b>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157</b></p> <p><b>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</b></p>
<p><b>Communication</b> Identify the ways in which you will communicate and educate your stakeholders on the key messages within your child safe policy.</p>	<p><b>Communicating this policy:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new staff, volunteers and adult education students and additionally when there is any change to the policy.</li> <li>2. Young people and parents joining our programs will easily be able to access a copy of Big Sky Stories Child Safe Policy on the website or if requested in hardcopy.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Review</b> Set a date to review and update your child safe policy for continuous improvement purposes.</p>	<p>This policy will be reviewed and updated annually in July each year or sooner if necessary.</p>