

# THE KIDS' CASTLE

## OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT RISK ASSESSMENT

*Modernised for current NQF / NQS terminology*

### 1. Document Control

|                            |                                                                                     |                     |                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Service</b>             | The Kids' Castle                                                                    | <b>Area</b>         | Outdoor environment                                                                                |
| <b>Original assessment</b> | 5 March 2024                                                                        | <b>Updated</b>      | August 2026                                                                                        |
| <b>Completed by</b>        | Director / Responsible Person / Educator                                            | <b>Consultation</b> | Educators and relevant service personnel                                                           |
| <b>Previous incidents</b>  | No incidents recorded in the original assessment                                    | <b>Review cycle</b> | At least annually and whenever the environment, equipment, activities or identified hazards change |
| <b>Related documents</b>   | TKC Master Risk Control Plan; supervision procedures; emergency/incident procedures | <b>Status</b>       | Current working risk assessment                                                                    |

### 2. Purpose and Scope

This risk assessment identifies reasonably foreseeable hazards associated with the outdoor environment used by The Kids' Castle (TKC) and establishes control measures to support children's safety, health, wellbeing, participation and learning. It is intended to be used alongside TKC's supervision, incident, emergency, child protection, sun protection, medical conditions and maintenance procedures.

The assessment adopts current National Quality Framework language, particularly Quality Area 2 (Children's Health and Safety) and Quality Area 3 (Physical Environment). Outdoor spaces are considered both as places that must be safe and well maintained and as environments that support play, exploration, physical activity, agency, inclusion and connection with the natural environment.

### 3. NQF / NQS Alignment

| Reference               | Current wording / requirement | Application to this assessment                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NQS QA2 – Element 2.2.1 | Supervision                   | Educators actively supervise children, position themselves to maintain effective sight and/or sound, scan, listen, anticipate risks and respond promptly. |
| NQS QA2 – Element 2.1.3 | Healthy lifestyle             | Outdoor play and physical activity are supported while considering individual health needs, weather, hydration and sun protection.                        |

| Reference               | Current wording / requirement         | Application to this assessment                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NQS QA3 – Element 3.1.1 | Fit for purpose                       | Outdoor spaces, fixtures, fittings and equipment are suitable for their purpose and support access and participation.             |
| NQS QA3 – Element 3.1.2 | Upkeep                                | Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.                                                            |
| NQS QA3 – Element 3.2.1 | Inclusive environment                 | Outdoor spaces are organised and adapted so every child can participate in quality experiences in built and natural environments. |
| NQS QA3 – Element 3.2.2 | Resources support play-based learning | Equipment and resources are sufficient, appropriately arranged and support play, exploration and active participation.            |
| NQS QA3 – Element 3.2.3 | Environmentally responsible           | Children are supported to engage with and care for the natural environment.                                                       |
| National Law s.167      | Protection from harm and hazards      | Reasonable precautions are taken to protect children from harm and hazards likely to cause injury.                                |

Relevant National Regulations and applicable Australian Standards should also be considered for the service premises, outdoor space, shade, natural environment, supervision and playground equipment/soft-fall. Where a site-specific requirement applies, the service should verify the current requirement against the legislation, regulatory guidance and manufacturer instructions.

## 4. Outdoor Environment Check – Before Children Access the Area

The Responsible Person / delegated educator should complete a visual safety check before each session and whenever conditions change.

- Check play equipment, fixtures, fittings and surfaces for damage, sharp edges, loose components, protrusions or other hazards.
- Check pathways, gates, fences and access points are secure, unobstructed and suitable for the children using the area.
- Check soft-fall / impact-attenuating surfaces are present, in good condition and free from contamination or displacement.
- Check the outdoor environment for broken glass, litter, animal faeces, sharp objects, hazardous plants, insects, pooled water and other foreseeable hazards.
- Check trees and branches, particularly after strong winds or storms. Isolate the area if a tree or branch presents a risk.
- Check weather, heat, UV, wind, rain and storm conditions and modify, relocate or suspend outdoor activities where required.
- Check equipment and activity layouts provide adequate space for movement and do not create unnecessary collision points or access hazards.
- Confirm educators know the planned supervision zones, child numbers, individual medical/health needs and any specific environmental risks for the session.
- Record, report and escalate hazards that cannot be immediately controlled. Prevent access to unsafe areas/equipment until the hazard is addressed.

## 5. Outdoor Environment Risk Assessment

Risk ratings should be reviewed after controls are applied and whenever the circumstances change. The rating is a prompt for management action, not a substitute for active supervision or professional judgement.

| Area / activity                                                                                                       | Potential hazards / possible harm                                                                                                                     | Key control measures                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Responsible                                  | When / review                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outdoor play equipment and playground<br>(monkey bars, climbing frames, slides, rubber poles; wooden bridge, climbing | Falls from equipment; collision with children/equipment; trips; entrapment or unsafe use; splinters or sharp edges; insects/ticks; equipment failure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-use visual inspection and routine maintenance.</li> <li>• Equipment remains fit for purpose and manufacturer guidance is followed.</li> <li>• Unsafe equipment/area is</li> </ul> | Responsible Person / Coordinator / Educators | Before each session; ongoing; formal review at least annually and after any incident, near miss or change. |

| Area / activity                                                          | Potential hazards / possible harm                                                                                                    | Key control measures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Responsible | When / review                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| poles, ropes, statues and seating)                                       |                                                                                                                                      | <p>immediately isolated, reported and not used until safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate impact-attenuating/soft-fall surfacing maintained where required.</li> <li>• Active supervision with educator positioning that maintains effective sight/sound and anticipates foreseeable risks.</li> <li>• Children are supported to use equipment safely and according to its intended purpose.</li> <li>• Clear expectations: one child at a time on monkey bars; no skipping bars; move in one direction; no climbing/sitting on prohibited structures.</li> <li>• Adequate clearance between equipment and other play areas.</li> <li>• Children's agency and appropriate challenge are supported while educators manage foreseeable risk.</li> </ul> |             |                                                             |
| Games and activities at targets area<br>(in front of children's toilets) | Collisions; trips; children climbing on targets; interaction with nearby windows/buildings; movement outside the intended play area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up activities to provide adequate space for movement and safe traffic flow.</li> <li>• Targets are not used as climbing equipment.</li> <li>• Educators actively supervise the area and reposition as needed to maintain effective supervision.</li> <li>• Consider group size and activity intensity when allocating space.</li> <li>• Use boundaries/cones where needed to define the play area.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Educators   | During all use; review when activity or group size changes. |
| Games and activities on oval                                             | Collisions between children; trips/falls; collision with equipment; children moving into another activity zone.                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and set up activities with adequate separation and clear movement pathways.</li> <li>• Use cones or other visual boundaries when more than one activity/group is using the oval.</li> <li>• Match activity intensity and equipment to available space.</li> <li>• Active supervision; educators monitor developing play, speed and proximity between children.</li> <li>• Modify or pause activities when the area becomes congested or conditions change.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Educators   | During all use.                                             |

| Area / activity                                           | Potential hazards / possible harm                                                                                                                                         | Key control measures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Responsible                    | When / review                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Games and activities on handball courts                   | Collisions; trips/falls; balls travelling beyond the intended area; balls rolling under buildings or into inaccessible areas; children leaving the designated play space. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish clear activity boundaries and safe movement expectations.</li> <li>Active supervision and regular scanning of the whole play area.</li> <li>Educators retrieve balls from unsafe/inaccessible locations rather than children entering hazardous spaces.</li> <li>Remind children to manage speed and spacing.</li> <li>Modify activities if the court becomes congested.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                         | Educators                      | During all use.                     |
| Games and activities under COLA                           | Collisions; trips; contact with lights, fixtures or powerpoints; equipment becoming damaged or creating a hazard; proximity to gates/access points.                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine inspection of the COLA, fixtures and equipment.</li> <li>Keep powerpoints and electrical infrastructure protected and inaccessible where required.</li> <li>Keep pathways and access/egress routes clear.</li> <li>Position tables, chairs and equipment to allow safe movement and effective supervision.</li> <li>Active supervision and prompt removal/isolation of damaged equipment.</li> <li>Sandpit and other resources maintained and stored appropriately when not in use.</li> </ul>                                                                                | Responsible Person / Educators | Before each session; during use.    |
| Sandpit and surrounding area                              | Trips/falls; falls onto surrounding rocks; sharp or foreign objects in sand; contamination; sandpit located near boundary/fence; children moving outside intended area.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check sandpit before use and remove hazards/contamination.</li> <li>Rake/sift sand regularly and maintain appropriate depth/condition.</li> <li>Keep sandpit covered when not in use; store cover safely while children are playing.</li> <li>Store sand toys when the sandpit is closed.</li> <li>Maintain clear access and adequate space around the sandpit.</li> <li>Consider the location of the sandpit in relation to fencing and supervision zones.</li> <li>Active supervision, including monitoring children's movement around surrounding rocks and boundaries.</li> </ul> | Educators                      | Before each use; ongoing.           |
| General outdoor play – weather, heat, UV, cold and storms | Sunburn, dehydration, heat-related illness, cold stress, asthma/medical triggers, reduced visibility or unsafe conditions during wind/rain/storm activity.                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor weather and environmental conditions before and during outdoor play.</li> <li>Provide and use available shade for active and passive</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Responsible Person / Educators | Before and throughout each session. |

| Area / activity                                | Potential hazards / possible harm                                                                                                                 | Key control measures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Responsible                        | When / review                                            |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                |                                                                                                                                                   | play.<br>• Implement TKC Sun Protection practices, including sunscreen and hats as applicable.<br>• Encourage regular access to drinking water and rest/cooling breaks in hot conditions.<br>• Support children to dress appropriately for weather conditions.<br>• Consider individual medical management plans, known triggers and symptoms.<br>• Relocate, modify or suspend outdoor activities where conditions create an unacceptable risk, including severe weather/storm conditions.<br>• Educators know the service emergency arrangements and how to respond to weather-related risks. |                                    |                                                          |
| Trees, branches and natural environment        | Falling branches; unstable trees; slips/trips on natural materials; hazardous plants or environmental contamination; insects/ticks.               | • Include trees and natural areas in routine environmental checks.<br>• Inspect after storms, strong winds or other events that may alter conditions.<br>• Isolate areas where branches/trees appear unstable or where a hazard cannot be immediately controlled.<br>• Report maintenance concerns promptly to the appropriate person/site authority.<br>• Consider local environmental hazards and children's known allergies/medical needs.<br>• Support children to interact with the natural environment safely and respectfully.                                                           | Responsible Person / Educators     | Before each session; after significant weather; ongoing. |
| Outdoor transitions and movement between areas | Children separated from the group; child entering an unauthorised/unsafe area; collision during transitions; reduced supervision during movement. | • Educators communicate movements and maintain active supervision during transitions.<br>• Use agreed transition points, headcounts/roll checks and visual confirmation of children as appropriate to the service procedure.<br>• Maintain clear staff communication and designated supervision positions.<br>• Never rely solely on another                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Responsible Person / All Educators | Every transition.                                        |

| Area / activity | Potential hazards / possible harm | Key control measures                                                                                                                                          | Responsible | When / review |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
|                 |                                   | educator's assumption that a child has moved with the group.<br>• Investigate and respond immediately to any unexplained change in child location or numbers. |             |               |

## 6. Supervision Expectations

- Supervision is active, purposeful and responsive. Educators position themselves so children can be effectively seen and/or heard, scan the environment, listen, anticipate foreseeable risks and intervene when necessary.
- Supervision plans consider the layout of the outdoor environment, activity type, number and ages of children, individual needs, educator positioning, visibility, sound, access points and changing conditions.
- Educators communicate significant child movements and environmental hazards to the Responsible Person and relevant team members.
- Supervision is not replaced by equipment, cameras, assumptions or routine checks. Educators remain responsible for active supervision while children are in the outdoor environment.
- Where an area cannot be safely supervised or a hazard cannot be adequately controlled, the area/activity is modified, restricted or closed until safe arrangements are established.

## 7. Incident, Hazard and Review Requirements

- All hazards identified during routine checks are addressed immediately where practicable, recorded where required and escalated to the Responsible Person.
- Any incident, injury, near miss, equipment failure, repeated unsafe behaviour or environmental change should trigger consideration of whether this risk assessment and associated controls remain effective.
- Where a control is not effective, additional controls must be considered using the hierarchy of control and the service's risk management procedures.
- This assessment should be reviewed following significant changes to the outdoor environment, equipment, activities, site arrangements, legislation/regulatory guidance or identified risks.
- Control measures should also be reflected in the TKC Master Risk Control Plan and relevant service procedures.

## 8. Risk Rating Matrix

Use the matrix to determine the level of management attention required after considering existing controls.

| Likelihood ↓ / Consequence → | 1 – Insignificant | 2 – Minor | 3 – Moderate | 4 – Major | 5 – Catastrophic | Action                                                     |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A – Almost certain</b>    | Medium            | High      | High         | Extreme   | Extreme          | Immediate action; escalate to management.                  |
| <b>B – Likely</b>            | Medium            | Medium    | High         | High      | Extreme          | Prompt action; senior/Responsible Person oversight.        |
| <b>C – Possible</b>          | Low               | Medium    | Medium       | High      | Extreme          | Manage and monitor; strengthen controls where practicable. |

|                     |     |     |        |        |      |                                                   |
|---------------------|-----|-----|--------|--------|------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>D – Unlikely</b> | Low | Low | Medium | Medium | High | Manage through routine controls and monitoring.   |
| <b>E – Rare</b>     | Low | Low | Medium | Medium | High | Routine controls; review if circumstances change. |

Consequence should be considered in relation to the potential harm to a child or other person, not financial or reputational impact alone. A high or extreme rating requires the service to take action to reduce risk before the activity/area proceeds or continues.

## 9. Responsibilities

| Role                                             | Responsibility                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person</b> | Ensure appropriate risk controls, supervision arrangements and escalation are in place; respond to hazards that cannot be immediately resolved.      |
| <b>Coordinator / Director</b>                    | Oversee implementation, maintenance, review and continuous improvement of the risk assessment and related procedures.                                |
| <b>Educators</b>                                 | Complete/participate in environmental checks, maintain active supervision, implement controls, communicate hazards and report incidents/near misses. |
| <b>All staff</b>                                 | Take reasonable precautions to protect children from foreseeable harm and follow service procedures, directions and site-specific controls.          |

## 10. Review and Approval

|                                            |                                                                                                                                     |                              |             |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Assessment completed/reviewed by</b>    |                                                                                                                                     | <b>Date</b>                  |             |
| <b>Consultation with</b>                   | Educators / Responsible Person / relevant site personnel                                                                            | <b>Next scheduled review</b> | August 2027 |
| <b>Approved by</b>                         |                                                                                                                                     | <b>Date</b>                  |             |
| <b>Review trigger</b>                      | Annual review or earlier where incidents, near misses, hazards, environmental/equipment changes or regulatory requirements indicate | <b>Version</b>               | 2026.1      |
| <b>Related master control plan updated</b> |                                                                                                                                     | <b>Date</b>                  |             |

Reference basis: National Quality Framework / National Quality Standard – Quality Areas 2 and 3; current ACECQA guidance; applicable National Regulations; relevant Australian Standards and manufacturer guidance.