Gardening: **Risk Assessment**

Lapstone Activity Centre

Risk Rating Key

Very Low/ Low/ Moderate / High / Very High

Activity	Hazard	Risk Assessment (use Matrix)	Control Measure	Who	When
Supervising children in garden	Children being out of sight or inadequately supervised	**Moderate**	• The safety, wellbeing and best interests of children are the **paramount consideration** when determining whether the garden can be accessed. • The garden must only be opened when an educator is stationed in the garden whilst it is being used. • Children are informed that they must wait for an educator to open the space before entering. • Active supervision strategies are used by all educators • Educators supervise using **PAT – Position, Awareness and Teamwork**. • Educators must maintain clear sight and sound of children. • Educators consider individual children's age, development, capabilities and behaviours when determining supervision requirements.	All educators	Throughout the session
Accessing garden	Child leaving designated garden area or	**Moderate**	• Garden boundaries and access points are checked before children enter.	Educators	Prior to and throughout session

	accessing an unsafe area		• Children are reminded of garden boundaries and expectations. • Educators position themselves to monitor entry and exit points. • Gates/doors are secured where appropriate. • The garden will be closed if adequate supervision or safe access cannot be maintained. • The **safety and wellbeing of children remains the paramount consideration** when determining access to the area.		
Using gardening tools	Children using tools incorrectly; cuts, bruises or other injuries	**Moderate**	• Gloves are available for children using tools. • Children must wear closed-in shoes. • Children are not to use adult-sized tools unless an educator has assessed the tool as appropriate and granted permission. • Tools are used only for their intended purpose and within the designated garden area. • Children who are younger or who require additional support will be closely monitored and assisted. • Children who cannot follow garden safety expectations will be redirected to another activity. • The suitability of tools will be determined with the **child's safety, age, development and capability as the paramount consideration**.	Educators / RP	Throughout session

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Storage of gardening tools	Sharp tools being accessible to children; damaged or unsafe equipment	**Moderate**	• Gardening tools are counted and checked before and after use. • Damaged, broken or unsafe tools are immediately removed from use. • Tools are stored securely and out of children's reach when not being used. • Children do not have unsupervised access to gardening equipment.	Educators / RP	Before, during and after session
Digging and turning soil	Hidden sharp objects, glass, wire, rocks, animal/insect hazards; hand injuries	**Moderate**	• Educators inspect the area before digging activities commence. • Children are encouraged to wear gloves when digging or turning over sticks and rocks. • Children are supervised according to their age and ability. • Children are instructed not to place hands into areas that have not been checked. • Any hazardous objects are removed safely by educators.	Educators / Children	Prior to and throughout session
Plants and vegetation	Poisonous, irritating, thorny or allergenic plants; ingestion or skin/eye irritation	**High**	• Plants within the garden are identified and assessed for potential hazards. • Poisonous, highly irritating or unsuitable plants are not accessible to children.	Educators / RP	Prior to and throughout session

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			• Children are instructed not to eat plants, berries, flowers or other garden materials unless specifically provided as part of an approved activity. • Educators consider known allergies and individual needs. • Any suspected hazardous plant is isolated and assessed before children access the area. • The **health, safety and wellbeing of children is the paramount consideration** when selecting plants and gardening activities.		
Soil, compost, mulch and potting mix	Inhalation, ingestion, contamination, bacteria/fungi, eye irritation	**Moderate**	• Children are supervised when handling soil, compost, mulch and potting mix. • Children are reminded not to place garden materials in their mouths or near their eyes. • Gloves may be used. • Dust-generating activities are minimised. • Children wash their hands after gardening and before eating. • Any material suspected of contamination is removed from use.	Educators / Children	Throughout session / after activity
Use of fertilisers, pesticides	Poisoning, skin/eye exposure or inhalation	**High**	• Children must not have access to fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides or other hazardous chemicals. • Chemicals are stored securely and in accordance with manufacturer instructions.	RP / Educators	At all times

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or chemicals			• Chemicals are not used while children are participating in or accessing the garden. • Educators follow the service's chemical storage and use procedures. • Where there is any uncertainty regarding the safety of a product, it will not be used around children.		
Watering plants / using hoses	Slips, trips, falls or water-related hazards	**Moderate**	• Hoses are positioned away from walkways where possible. • Children are supervised when using hoses or watering equipment. • Excess water is removed where it creates a slip hazard. • Watering equipment is stored safely when not in use.	Educators / Children	Throughout session / pack-up
Garden paths and surfaces	Uneven ground, holes, roots, rocks, wet surfaces; slips, trips and falls	**Moderate**	• Garden paths, surfaces and play areas are inspected as part of the safety checklist. • Hazards such as holes, exposed roots, rocks or unstable surfaces are addressed or isolated. • Children are reminded to walk rather than run where required. • Educators modify activities where environmental conditions create an unacceptable risk.	Educators / RP	Prior to and throughout session

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Insects and animals	Stings, bites, allergic reactions, snakes or other harmful animals	**High**	• The garden is kept clutter-free to minimise opportunities for snakes, spiders or other animals to hide. • Educators check the area before children enter and complete the safety checklist. • Children are encouraged to use gloves when digging and turning over sticks or rocks. • Children are instructed not to touch or disturb insects, spiders or animals. • If a potentially dangerous animal is identified, children are moved away and the area is closed until the hazard has been appropriately addressed. • First Aid trained educators and First Aid Kits are available during operational hours.	Children / Educators	Prior to and throughout session
Garden debris / rubbish	Broken glass, wire, nails, sticks or other sharp objects	**High**	• The garden is inspected before use. • Broken glass, sharp objects, rubbish or other hazards are removed safely by educators. • Children are not permitted to handle potentially hazardous objects. • Garden areas are maintained in a clean and safe condition.	Educators / RP	Prior to and throughout session

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Manual handling	Lifting bags of soil, pots, garden equipment or other heavy objects; strains or injuries	**Moderate**	• Children are not required to lift heavy bags, pots or equipment. • Educators assess loads before lifting and use appropriate manual-handling techniques. • Heavy items are stored where practical to minimise lifting. • Children are provided with appropriately sized equipment for their age and capabilities.	Educators / RP	Throughout session
Weather conditions	Falling branches, sun exposure, heat, dehydration, rain, wind or storms	**Moderate–High**	• Educators monitor weather conditions before and throughout the activity. • Staff follow sun-safe procedures, including hats, sunscreen and access to shade in accordance with the service's Sun Protection Policy and UV conditions. • Children have access to drinking water. • Staff record any seemingly dangerous branches or environmental hazards identified during the safety checklist. • Gardening activities are modified, postponed or ceased when weather conditions are unsafe. • The **safety, wellbeing and best interests of children are the paramount consideration** when deciding whether outdoor gardening activities proceed.	Educators / RP	Prior to and throughout session

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Allergies / sensitivities	Allergic reaction to plants, insects, soil, compost or other garden materials	**Moderate–High**	• Educators are aware of children's documented medical conditions, allergies and individual needs. • Gardening activities and materials are modified where required. • Medical Management Plans and relevant procedures are followed. • Children are supervised closely where an identified allergy or sensitivity may increase risk. • Appropriate first aid and emergency medication are accessible in accordance with service procedures.	Educators / RP	Throughout session
Hygiene following gardening	Germs, bacteria, soil contamination; illness from eating without washing hands	**Moderate**	• Children wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after gardening and before eating. • Gloves are removed appropriately. • Reusable equipment is cleaned as required. • Educators model and reinforce appropriate hygiene practices.	Educators / Children	After gardening / before meals
Pack-up of gardening area	Tools or equipment left accessible; trip hazards; children entering area during pack-up	**Moderate**	• Children are supervised during pack-up. • Children are not permitted to access areas where educators are handling potentially hazardous equipment. • All tools and equipment are returned to their designated secure storage area. • Hoses and other trip hazards are removed.	Educators / RP	During and after pack-up

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			• The garden is checked before being reopened for general use.		
Emergency / injury occurring during gardening	Injury, allergic reaction, bite/sting or other incident	**High**	• Educators maintain active supervision and have access to First Aid Kits and communication equipment. • First Aid is administered by appropriately trained educators in accordance with service procedures. • Emergency services are contacted where required. • Parents/guardians and the Regulatory Authority are notified where required under legislation and service procedures. • The activity and environment are reviewed following an incident, with controls amended where necessary. • The **immediate safety and wellbeing of the child is the paramount consideration**.	Educators / Nominated Supervisor / RP	During and following an incident

Completed by: Leesa Mantzos **Signature:** **Date:** 1.9.26	**Approved By:** Jessie McCulloch **Signature:** **Date:**

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Risk Matrix

Consequences	Likelihood					
		Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
	Major	Moderate	High	High	Very High	Very High
	Significant	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Very High
	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
	Minor	Very low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Insignificant	Very low	Very low	Low	Moderate	Moderate

Risk Assessment Communication Record -

Date of Review: 1.9.26	**Person/s who completed Review:** Leesa Mantzos		**Date of Review:**	**Person/s who completed Review:**	
Changes Made: YES / NO			**Changes Made: YES / NO**		
Notes: Format updated, areas reworded and Paramount consideration written within control measuers.			**Notes:**		
Educator/Staff Name	**I have read and understood this Risk Assessment (tick)**	**Date & Signature**	**Educator/Staff Name**	**I have read and understood this Risk Assessment (tick)**	**Date & Signature**

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