



# Mealtime Management Policy

*For Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd*

## Document Control

- **Policy Title:** Mealtime Management Policy
  - **Date Policy Developed:** 27/09/2025
  - **Review Date:** 27/09/2027
  - **Version:** 1.0
  - **Policy Owner:** Director
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## 1. Purpose

To ensure that all participants of Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd receive safe and supportive mealtime assistance. Where participants have swallowing difficulties (dysphagia), they will be referred to qualified healthcare professionals for assessment and management. This policy aligns with NDIS Practice Standards and promotes the safety and wellbeing of participants.

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## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, and volunteers of Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd involved in mealtime assistance for NDIS participants, particularly those with identified or suspected swallowing difficulties.

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## 3. Definitions

- **Dysphagia:** Difficulty swallowing, which may include coughing, choking, wet/gurgly voice, or food refusal during meals.
  - **Mealtime Management Plan:** A plan developed by a qualified healthcare professional (e.g., speech pathologist or dietitian) to guide safe eating and drinking.
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## **4. Policy Statement**

Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd is committed to:

- Providing safe and person-centred mealtime assistance.
  - Observing participants for signs of swallowing difficulties and referring them to qualified healthcare professionals when required.
  - Following instructions from healthcare professionals regarding safe mealtime support.
  - Ensuring staff are trained in recognising dysphagia and basic safe eating and drinking strategies.
  - Complying with NDIS Practice Standards and the NDIS Code of Conduct.
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## **5. Procedures**

### **1. Identification and Referral**

- If staff observe participants eating or drinking, they must observe participants for any signs of swallowing difficulties.
- Staff are to consider information from family and carers and other providers, regarding any signs of swallowing difficulties.
- Suspected dysphagia or mealtime risks must be referred to a qualified healthcare professional.

### **2. Supporting Participants**

- Staff follow healthcare professional recommendations when supporting participants.
- Staff ensure that support workers who support participants when they are eating or drinking, have the Mealtime Management Plan and are appropriately trained.
- Staff advise the relevant healthcare professional of any changes in participant condition or incidents that occur during meals, and ensure that a timely professional review occurs.

### **3. Staff Training**

- All staff involved in mealtime support will receive training on:

- Recognising signs of dysphagia
- Safe eating and drinking strategies and mealtime management
- Emergency response procedures

#### 4. Monitoring

- Management monitors adherence to procedures and ensures timely referral to healthcare professionals.
- Feedback from participants, families, and staff is used for continuous improvement.

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### 6. Responsibilities

- **Management:** Ensure staff training, supervise mealtime assistance, and maintain referral pathways.
- **Staff:** Observe participants, provide safe support, collate data from other providers and family, and refer when swallowing difficulties are suspected.
- **Healthcare Professionals:** Assess participants and provide Mealtime Management Plans as required.

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### 7. References

- NDIS Practice Alert: Dysphagia, safe swallowing and mealtime management ([NDIS Commission](#))
- NDIS Mealtime Management Guidelines ([NDIS](#))

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### 8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every **two years**, or earlier if:

- Legislative or regulatory changes occur
- Feedback indicates improvements are required
- An incident highlights gaps

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### Approval

**Approved By:** Kathryn Soar

**Position:** Director, Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd

**Date:** 27/09/2025