POLICY 4.4 – PARTICIPANTS' MONEY & PROPERTY

Purpose:

Participants have the right to have their money and personal property protected while being supported by Wonderland Community Services (WCS). Where WCS has access to a participant's money or property, processes are in place to ensure it is properly managed, safeguarded, and accounted for. These processes are reviewed regularly and made accessible to participants and guardians via the WCS website on the Policy page.

Participants' money and property will only be used with their consent and solely for the purposes they intend. Participants are supported to access and spend their own money as they determine. WCS does not provide financial advice, other than what is reasonably required under a participant's NDIS plan.

PROCESSES

1. Short Term Accommodation (STA) and Respite

1. Participants are asked not to bring money to retreats as all costs (food, outings, snacks, travel, etc.) are covered.
2. Clothing should be labelled with the participant's name or initials.
3. If money is brought, participants may request staff to store it securely, in a safe. Staff must take photos of the money.
4. Personal items (e.g., iPads, phones, headsets) may also be stored in the safe. All technology items are photographed at check-in and check-out by staff and uploaded to the participant's Care Board.
5. WCS cannot comply with guardian instructions to restrict items unless authorised through appropriate NDIS restrictive practices procedures. However, standard house rules may include scheduled internet "off" times. *See "House Rules"*
6. At the end of a retreat, staff will assist participants to pack and ensure all items stored in the safe are returned.
7. Lost property will be stored and reviewed periodically. Labelled items will be returned where possible. After 6 months, unclaimed, unlabelled items may be used as spares or donated to a second-hand store.

2. In-home Care (IHC) and Community Access (CA)

1. Participants may bring and spend their money as they choose during community access.
2. For participants with guardians, the amount of money provided should be documented by both guardian and support worker. Receipts should be retained by participants.
3. Support workers must record financial activity in their care notes via their smartphones.
4. Guardians noticing discrepancies should contact the WCS Site Manager for a resolution.
5. Any personal items taken from home should be photographed at the beginning and end of the shift to ensure their return.

3. Supported Independent Living (SIL)

1. Participants manage their own money. In some cases, funds may be deposited by a public trustee. Participants decide how to use these funds, with encouragement and assistance from staff when appropriate.
2. Personal property should be clearly labelled with participant initials to avoid confusion.
3. When housing is provided by WCS (or a landlord), an Asset Register is maintained with photographic records identifying the ownership of all furnishings, equipment, and items.
4. Rental tenancy agreements are explained and signed by participants when applicable.
5. If a participant cannot manage their money, support workers may assist under direction from the Client Care Officer or Team Leader. This includes managing a designated amount of participant funds, which are tracked and topped up as required.

4. Child Safety – Supported Youth

1. Funds for youth in care are deposited into a WCS account regularly. Staff access funds via WEEL cards and must keep and submit receipts for all transactions.
2. Clothing and personal items provided at the beginning of a young person's stay are photographed and recorded in their care plan.
3. All furnishings are provided by WCS, except for specialist equipment where needed.

Who Should Read This Policy?
- Participants (where possible)
- Youth (where applicable)
- Guardians/Parents
- Coordinators of Support
- Care Workers
- Administrators

DATE	PERSON/S	DETAILS
21.11.2021	Toni Mehigan	Policy created
06.03.2024	Bronwyn McMullen	Review and update
23.07.2025	Becci Fazldeen	Review and update