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Participant Handbook & Policies

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Part A: Participant Handbook

1. Welcome to Ironbark Adventure Mentoring

Welcome! Ironbark provides personalised, outdoor-based experiences for anyone aged 8 and up looking to spend time outdoors with a consistent, qualified adult.

All activities are led by a mentor/guide, these terms are used interchangeably throughout this handbook. Both refer to the same role: a qualified adult who supports participants safely and respectfully, provides guidance in the outdoors, and fosters personal growth and connection.

We offer practical, active experiences in real outdoor environments, not classrooms or clinics. Activities include mountain biking, hiking, fishing, camping, and custom adventures tailored to individual interests, abilities, and experience.

Ironbark is not a clinical therapy service. Instead, we offer time, space, movement, challenge, and connection in the outdoors, guided by a skilled mentor who understands risk management, safety, environmental responsibility, and working with people of diverse backgrounds.

All activities are conducted in accordance with the Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS), Good Practice Guides (GPG), and relevant park, council, and environmental regulations. This handbook explains how Ironbark operates, what participants and families can expect, and how we work together to create safe, positive outdoor experiences.

2. Our Approach & Philosophy

Ironbark is guided by a practical, experience-based approach: growth happens through real outdoor experiences with the right level of support from your mentor.

- **Tailored Experiences:** Adventures combine practical outdoor skills with encouragement, guidance, and space for personal development, tailored to each participant's abilities and goals.
- **Core Outcomes:** Every adventure, from riding trails, hiking, and fishing to setting up camp, is designed to build confidence, resilience, independence, and problem-solving skills.
- **Safety & Standards:** Safety, professionalism, and environmental responsibility underpin everything we do. Adventures are planned using AAAS guidance alongside Ironbark's Environmental Policy and Equipment Maintenance & Safety Program (EMP).
- **Real-World Growth:** The natural environment provides genuine, unscripted situations encouraging self-reliance, teamwork, and decision-making. Participants are supported by their mentor to engage safely and develop confidence through real-world experience.

3. Who Our Adventures Are For

Our adventures are suitable for anyone aged 8 and up with general physical capability.

- Most participants are welcome, including those with physical limitations who still want to engage in nature (e.g., partial limb use, vision impairment).
- For safety reasons during outdoor pursuits, we do not work with participants who present severe, high-risk physical aggression or extreme unmanaged behavioural risks.
- Suitability is assessed through an initial discovery chat and intake process conducted in accordance with AAAS guidance and Ironbark risk assessment procedures.

4. Types of Adventures We Offer

- Mountain Biking
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Camping
- Create Your Own Adventure (e.g., tennis, basketball, sports practice)
- Group Adventures

Service Options:

- **1:1 Adventure Mentoring:** Flexible, tailored individual sessions (minimum 90 minutes up to 7 hours). Where appropriate, siblings or friends may attend together (up to a 1:2 ratio).
- **Adventure Day Programs (3+ Hours):** Full-day or half-day experiences with a strict maximum ratio of 1:3 (1 mentor to 3 participants). Designed around social connection, skill building, and challenge-by-choice.
- **Overnight Camping Programs:** Immersive 24-hour+ wilderness camping experiences delivered 1:1 or in small groups (max ratio 1:3). Includes mentoring, camping gear, meals, and activity transport.
- **Outdoor Wellbeing Programs (Schools & Organisations):** Structured term-based or single-day outdoor programs designed for small groups or individuals (max ratio 1:3).

5. What Participants Can Expect

Participants can expect:

- A safe, supportive outdoor experience with a consistent mentor.
- Opportunities to learn practical outdoor skills (e.g., mountain bike technique, fishing knots, campsite setup).
- Pre-activity briefings covering terrain, safety protocols, and environmental responsibilities.
- Time for conversation, reflection, or quiet companionship in nature.
- Relationship-focused mentoring built on mutual trust and rapport over time.
- Flexible adventure structures adapted to individual energy levels and goals.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

Participants:

- Follow safety instructions and guidance from your mentor.
- Respect other participants, the natural environment, and activity equipment.
- Disclose relevant health, medical, or support needs prior to sessions.
- Take personal responsibility for safe engagement during activities.

Parents / Guardians:

- Provide accurate medical, support, and emergency contact details.
- Support participant adherence to safety rules and expectations.
- Review and acknowledge this Participant Handbook prior to participation.

Mentor / Guide (Provider):

- Plan and deliver structured, safe outdoor experiences.
- Maintain dynamic supervision, manage activity risks, and inspect gear.
- Respond to concerns and uphold mandatory reporting obligations.
- Practice environmental stewardship in line with Ironbark guidelines.

7. Safety, Risk & Outdoor Environments

Outdoor adventures carry inherent risks, including mountain biking on variable trails, hiking on uneven ground, fishing near water, and camping hazards (e.g., campfires, gas stoves, weather changes, wildlife).

Mentors actively mitigate risks by:

- Conducting session planning and risk assessments prior to every activity.
- Carrying remote first aid kits, emergency communications, and backup supplies.
- Maintaining strict supervision ratios (maximum 1:3 for group activities).
- Delivering pre-activity safety briefings covering terrain, gear use, and emergency procedures.

8. Equipment, Clothing & Preparation

- **Participant Supply:** Participants provide their own personal clothing, footwear, mountain bike, and helmet (external bike hire options available upon request).
- **Provided Equipment:** Tents, sleeping mats, cooking equipment, fishing gear, and specialized group safety gear are provided by Ironbark at no additional equipment hire cost.
- **Meals & Catering:** High-quality food and water are provided for full Adventure Days, Overnight Camping, and School Programs. 1:1 short mentoring sessions do not include meals unless pre-arranged.
- **Health & Hygiene:** Participants must stay home if unwell or experiencing contagious symptoms. Standard hygiene practices apply across all outdoor activities.

9. Weather, Cancellations & Changes

Adventures proceed in most standard weather conditions. Sessions may be rescheduled, relocated, or cancelled by the provider due to extreme heat, lightning, flooding, bushfire threat, or mentor illness. Provider-initiated safety cancellations incur no charge.

Participant-Initiated Cancellation Rules:

Standard Mentoring Sessions (Up to 3 Hours):

- 48+ hours' notice: Full refund or fee-free reschedule.
- 24 to 48 hours' notice: 50% session fee applies.
- Less than 24 hours' notice (or no-show): 100% session fee applies.

Adventure Days (3+ Hours) & Overnight Camping Programs:

- 7+ clear days' notice: Full refund or fee-free reschedule.
- Less than 7 clear days' notice: Up to 100% of the scheduled support fee applies (to cover committed staffing, vehicle logistics, and reserved program capacity).

10. Health, Behaviour & Boundaries

- Participants must behave safely and respectfully towards mentors, peers, and the public.
- Unsafe, aggressive, or severely disruptive behaviour may result in immediate suspension or termination of session activities.
- Relevant medical conditions, injuries, or behavioural support plans must be disclosed during intake.
- Mentoring is voluntary; personal physical and psychological boundaries are respected at all times.
- All safety incidents and near-misses are formally recorded and reviewed.

11. Communication & Contact

For bookings, support updates, or general enquiries:

- Email: hello@ironbarkadventure.com.au
- Phone: 0427 802 078

- Website: www.ironbarkadventure.com.au

12. NDIS Information & Billing

Ironbark Adventure Mentoring supports self-managed and plan-managed NDIS participants as a non-registered provider, voluntarily aligning pricing with the official NDIS Pricing Schedule.

- Support Invoicing: Direct mentoring supports are invoiced post-activity (in arrears) and submitted directly to your Plan Manager or self-managed portal.
- Out-of-Pocket Activity Expenses: NDIS funding covers mentoring time and vehicle transport lines. Direct personal/activity expenses (e.g., commercial venue entry fees, lift tickets) are not funded by NDIS support codes and must be paid privately. Upfront deposit requirements for group/camping events apply exclusively to private, self-funded bookings.
- Non-Face-to-Face (NF2F) Support: Necessary individualized preparation, risk assessments, emergency planning, case notes, and NDIS progress reporting are claimed as Non-Face-to-Face support under your Core support line item for actual time spent.
- Short-Notice Cancellations: In accordance with NDIS pricing guidelines, cancellations made within the short-notice window (less than 24 hours for short sessions; less than 7 days for 3+ hour/overnight programs) are claimable at up to 100% of the agreed support fee if the mentor time cannot be reallocated.
- Funding Availability: Participants/guardians remain responsible for ensuring sufficient funding is available in their NDIS plan prior to service delivery.

13. Media, Photos & Privacy

- Personal details are collected strictly to deliver safe, high-quality outdoor mentoring services.
- Photos or videos are taken and used for promotional purposes strictly with prior written consent, which can be modified or withdrawn at any time.
- Information is stored securely in digital formats and retained for a minimum of 7 years in accordance with legal and insurance requirements.

14. Feedback, Concerns & Complaints

- Feedback is welcomed to help improve our service quality and safety.
- Concerns can be raised directly with the mentor/owner, via phone, email, or through the online Complaints Form.
- Unresolved complaints can be escalated to external authorities, including the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, Queensland Ombudsman, or the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

15. Acknowledgement & Consent

Before participating, participants and/or legal guardians acknowledge and consent to:

1. Participation & Safety: Understanding that outdoor activities carry inherent risks, agreeing to follow safety instructions, and disclosing accurate health information.
2. Handbook & Policies: Having read and understood the terms in this Participant Handbook and Associated Policies.
3. Emergency Medical Care: Authorising the mentor to administer standard first aid and seek emergency medical assistance if required.
4. Environmental Responsibility: Agreeing to follow Leave No Trace principles and respect park/council regulations during activities.

Part B: Participant Policies

Section 1: Welcome & Overview

This document sets out the legal, governance, and operational policies for Ironbark Adventure Mentoring. It incorporates our Privacy Policy, Child Safe Policy, and Complaints, Feedback & Governance Policy. By engaging our services, participants, guardians, and support coordinators acknowledge and agree to the policy terms set out below. Alternative document formats are available upon request by contacting hello@ironbarkadventure.com.au.

Section 2: Privacy Policy

Purpose & Scope:

Ironbark Adventure Mentoring is committed to protecting participant privacy in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), applicable Queensland privacy legislation, and NDIS Practice Standards. This policy applies to all participants, families, support coordinators, staff, and contractors.

Information We Collect:

We may collect and hold:

- Personal details (full name, date of birth, residential address, contact details).
- Emergency contacts and guardian information.
- Medical and health details (allergies, conditions, physical capability, behavioural support notes).
- NDIS information (plan management details, funding categories, support coordinator details).
- Session records (attendance, case notes, progress tracking, incident reports).
- Financial and billing data.

How Information Is Used:

Information is collected solely to:

- Deliver safe, tailored, and effective outdoor mentoring.
- Assess and manage activity-specific risks and emergency protocols.
- Communicate with families, carers, and support coordinators.
- Process billing and NDIS claims.
- Fulfill insurance, legal, and regulatory obligations.

Sharing of Information:

Personal information is kept confidential and shared only when:

- Necessary to deliver support services or protect participant health and safety.
- Required by law, court order, or NDIS Commission audit obligations.
- Explicit written consent is provided (e.g., media release or allied health collaboration).

Data Security & Storage:

- Electronic records are stored using secure, password-protected digital systems with restricted access.
- Records are retained for a minimum of 7 years (or until a minor reaches age 25, whichever is longer) in accordance with statutory requirements.

Privacy Breaches & Escalation:

In the event of an identified privacy breach, Ironbark will contain the breach, notify affected individuals promptly, and report the incident to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) and NDIS Commission where required. Privacy concerns may be escalated to:

- OAIC: www.oaic.gov.au
- NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission: www.ndiscommission.gov.au

Section 3: Child Safe Policy

Commitment to Child Safety:

Ironbark Adventure Mentoring has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, or harm. We are dedicated to creating a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for children and young people. This policy aligns with the Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD), NDIS Practice Standards, and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Key Safeguards:

Screening: All mentors and personnel hold valid Working with Children Checks (Blue Card), NDIS Worker Screening clearances, and National Police Checks.

Risk Management:

High-risk outdoor environments are assessed to eliminate opportunities for physical, emotional, or cultural harm.

Inclusion & Diversity:

We actively support the rights of neurodivergent youth, children with disabilities, First Nations young people, and LGBTQIA+ youth.

Reporting & Action:

Any suspicion, disclosure, or allegation of child harm or abuse will be acted upon immediately. Mandatory reporting disclosures are lodged with Queensland Child Safety Services, the Queensland Police Service, and the NDIS Commission as legally required.

Section 4: Complaints, Feedback & Governance Policy

Policy Statement:

Ironbark Adventure Mentoring welcomes feedback and handles complaints transparently, promptly, and fairly. Participants, families, and stakeholders have the right to raise concerns without fear of negative impacts on their service delivery.

Service Ratios & Operational Governance:

To maintain safety and quality:

- All group activities operate at a strict maximum ratio of 1:3 (1 mentor to 3 participants).
- Pre- and post-activity documentation (case notes, risk reports) is billed strictly for actual time spent in accordance with NDIS Non-Face-to-Face rules.

Complaint Resolution Procedure:

1. **Lodge Feedback:** Speak directly with the business owner, complete the website Complaints Form, or email hello@ironbarkadventure.com.au.
2. **Acknowledgement:** Written complaints are acknowledged within 48 hours.
3. **Assessment & Action:** We investigate the matter, consult relevant records, and discuss resolutions with the complainant within 10 business days.
4. **Outcome & Follow-Up:** Corrective actions are implemented and documented securely.

External Escalation:

If a complaint cannot be resolved directly with Ironbark, you may contact:

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission: 1800 035 544
- Queensland Ombudsman: (07) 3005 7000
- Queensland Human Rights Commission: 1300 130 670