

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Policy Number	P-Q6-M001	Version Number	5.00
Drafted by	Director of Education	Review Date: Next Review:	October 2021 October 2022
Responsibility	The Board of Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children’s Centre Association (Inc.)		
Related Service Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy ▪ Complaints and Grievances Policy ▪ Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fees Policy ▪ Inclusion and Equity Policy ▪ Privacy and Confidentiality Policy 	
Legislation and Standards	<p>Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 • Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) • Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) • Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) • Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 • Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 177, 183 • Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) • Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011 • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities • Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) • Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015 (Vic) • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) <p>The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:</p> <p>Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/ Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: https://www.legislation.gov.au/</p>		
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register • The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-legislation • Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: www.acecqa.gov.au/ • Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au/ • The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training): www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx • Department of Health and Human Services, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit ▪ Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation 		

AUTHORISATION

This policy was initially adopted by the Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Board of Governance on the 15th August 2016.

PURPOSE

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre
- the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services

PRINCIPLES

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting families to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, Persons in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Acceptable Immunisation Documentation: documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* as acceptable evidence that a child is fully vaccinated for their age, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind their vaccinations; or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated; or has been assessed as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

Authorised Nominee: (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need to consider a risk assessment on an individual basis to determine if a person under the age of 18 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Subsidy. Details are available at: www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

Eligible child: A child attending an early childhood education and care service as described in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* or a child in a kindergarten program who meets the requirements of both *The Kindergarten Guide* and the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services*.

Enrolment Administration fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

Enrolment record: The collection of information which contains details on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including the enrolment form; details of any court orders; and immunisation documentation as specified in the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services*. This information is kept confidential by the service.

Fee: A charge for a place within a program at the service.

Online Enrolment Registration: A family's account that collects contact and billing details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information is retained as the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Sibling Priority – A child who has a sibling attending the service at the time the enrolment offers are made. Past enrolment of siblings is not applicable.

BACKGROUND

The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2) (k)).

It is intended that all eligible children (refer to Definitions) will have access to one year of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, a priority system for access must be determined by the Nominated Supervisor in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places will vary from service to service, but is generally based on a service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act 2012. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Criteria for access and inclusion are outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to Sources). Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved care (refer to Definitions) must abide by the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for families childcare package) Act 2017 (refer to Legislation and standards) and the Commonwealth Government's Priority for allocating places in child care services (refer to Sources).

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 have legislative responsibilities under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to Definitions).

ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider (Board of Governance) is responsible for:

The Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Board is the Approved Provider and has ultimate responsibility for the management and control of the service.

The Board delegates operational responsibility and day to day management of the service to the Nominated Supervisor and monitors the performance of the organisation, including responsibilities contained in this policy, through regular reporting and by ensuring appropriate resources are available to carry out the organisation's functions.

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy
- considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program
- complying with the Inclusion and Equity Policy
- appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy
- providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the child's immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16 week grace period
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
- advising parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services
- taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- ensuring that the enrolment form (refer to Definitions) complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records (refer to Definitions) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183)
- ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).
- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.
- ensuring the sessional kindergarten waitlists are advertised and made available to families via the family memo, family handbook and on the centre website.

All educators are responsible for:

- responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
- developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into the service
 - become familiar with service policies and procedures
 - share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
 - share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs
 - discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning
 - provide comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
 - comply with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing the enrolment application form and the enrolment form prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child's immunisation status
- where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
- ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur
- registering their child on the applicable internal sessional kindergarten waitlists in writing to the service
- ensuring their details and care requirements for Long Day Care are updated and maintained with the City Of Port Phillip's Centralised Waitlist.
- payment of fees charged in full when care ceases and children are absent from care over their notice period, in accordance with Child Care Subsidy legislation

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

PROCEDURES

EARLY YEARS PROGRAM (EYP) ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

Eligibility and Priority of Access is determined by City Of Port Phillip council and outlined on their website – www.portphillip.vic.gov.au

Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating places – Child care places are made according to Australian Government Priority of Access Guidelines, which all children's services are required to comply with. Families who live, work or study in City of Port Phillip are also given priority on the Children's Services Waiting List. This is in addition to the criteria set by the Commonwealth Government Priority of Access Guidelines.

EYP ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Waitlist Process -

Families can request to be waitlisted for the service by contacting the City Of Port Phillips Centralised Waiting List on (03) 92096360

The service receives families' applications for care via the Centralised Waiting List based on a priority of access as outlined in priority of access criteria

Access to the centralised waitlist will be restricted to the Enrolment Officer, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge unless otherwise specified by the Nominated Supervisor.

Current families attending the service can request to be waitlisted for alternative days via email to the Enrolment Officer to be then placed on the service's internal waitlist

Offers Process

Tentative places will be offered in writing to families in accordance with their requested days of care and start date as outlined by the centralised waitlist.

The service may withdraw an offer of a place should the family –

- Not formally accept their offer in writing by the specified date outlined in letter of offer
- Failure to make payment of Enrolment Administration Fee by the specified date outlined in letter of offer

The person responsible for the enrolment process advises the parent/guardian in writing whether all requirements have been met and the enrolment can proceed.

An Online Enrolment Registration will be made available to the parent/guardian after a confirmed place has been accepted and the Enrolment Administration Fee has been paid

Note: Families are responsible for acquiring the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any outstanding fees owed to the service by the family is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the service (refer to *Fees Policy*).

Enrolment Process

Families must provide an up to date immunisation statement or authorised catch up schedule before enrolment can be formalised. The service is required to request and obtain an up to date immunisation statement twice per financial year for each child.

Families are invited to attend a maximum of 3 orientation sessions at 1 hour per session to enable a successful transition from home to care. Families

Families are to complete all required information on their online account to ensure the service has all mandatory information on their child, emergency contacts and billing before their child's first day of care.

Families will be referred to the service's policy manual and website to ensure their access and understanding of policies surrounding all aspects of daily operations.

The Enrolment Officer is available to discuss any queries in relation to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

SESSIONAL 3 & 4 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

The following children are eligible for attendance in the sessional kindergarten program:

- Children who enrol in the 3 year old sessional kindergarten program will have placement in this program for 1 year only without eligibility to repeat a second year of 3 year old kindergarten.
- Children must turn three years of age before 30th April in the year of commencement to enrol in the 3 year old program. Children can begin attending the program once they have turned 3 years old.
- Children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of four year old kindergarten in accordance with *The Kindergarten Guide* available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- Children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend four year old kindergarten
- Children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET (refer to *The Kindergarten Guide*, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/default.aspx>)
- Children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be

unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs

- Three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at:
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.

Priority of Access

To determine the order of priority of access, the service follows the Priority of Access criteria as outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* available at:

www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx

- Children at risk
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- Children with additional needs

When demand exceeds availability, the Nominated Supervisor will refer to the following criteria, including the service's values, philosophy and *Inclusion and Equity Policy* to determine the priority of access.

- Children enrolled into the 3 year old sessional kindergarten program
- Date of waitlist application
- Children currently enrolled in the service at time of offer
- Siblings of children currently enrolled in the service at time of offer
- All other children (external families)

3 & 4 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Waitlist Process

Advertisement of sessional waitlists are made available via the family memo, family handbook and on the centre website.

Families are responsible for registering their child on the applicable internal sessional kindergarten waitlist in writing.

Waitlist applications will be accepted any time unless the service deems the waitlist as exhausting its maximum capacity of applications.

Waitlist applications must be made via email to the appropriate employee at the service stating the specific program they wish to attend and their child's full name and date of birth.

Parents/guardians of children currently attending a three-year-old program or applying for a second year of funded kindergarten must also submit a waitlist application for the following year.

Access to the waitlist will be restricted to the Enrolment Officer, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge unless otherwise specified by the Nominated Supervisor.

Applications will be entered on the waiting list using date of application being received in writing and will also highlight priority of access (if applicable).

Applications received after the closure of the waitlist will be considered by the service if there are available places, and after all other applicants have been offered a place, in line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria.

Offers Process

Tentative places will be offered in writing to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of the service making clear that confirmation of enrolment is not final until an up to date immunisation statement and birth certificate has been received, assessed and found acceptable. Payment of the kindergarten enrolment deposit is non-refundable and applied to term 1 fees.

The service may withdraw an offer of a place should the family –

- Not formally accept their offer in writing
- Failure to make payment for Kindergarten Enrolment Fee by the specified date outlined in letter of offer

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- Do not provide an up to date immunisation statement and birth certificate by the specified date outlined in letter of offer

The service is required to request and obtain an up to date immunisation statement twice per financial year for each child.

The person responsible for the enrolment process advises the parent/guardian in writing whether a confirmed place is offered and the enrolment can proceed.

Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a tentative or confirmed place, or intend to withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify the Enrolment Officer in writing.

An Online Enrolment Registration will be made available to the parent/guardian after a confirmed place has been accepted and the fee has been paid. This must be completed by commencement of term one in their child’s program.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any outstanding fees owed to the service by the family is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the service (refer to *Fees Policy*).

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Nominated Supervisor/Person in day-to-day Charge will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

Relevant Forms/Documents
Enrolment Form Family Handbook Fee Schedule

Version History			
Date	Version	Author/s	Details
July 2014	1.00	Public officer	New policy
April 2016	2.00	Chief Executive Officer	Revision for updated format, document ID, related policies and relevant legislation and standards. Addition of definitions and evaluation.
December 2020	3.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed and updated.
April 2020	4.00	Director of Education	3 year old kindergarten eligibility criteria given further detail.
October 2020	5.00	Director of Education and Enrolment Officer	Given further detail to Priority of Access Criteria.
October 2021	6.00	Executive Officer and Enrolment Officer	3 year old funded kindergarten criteria and kindergarten priority of access updated and information on CCS allowable absences updated

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