



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Kindergarten Enrolment and Orientation Policy

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose and Scope

This purpose of this policy is to outline the criteria for enrolment and allocation of all children wanting to access a place in a Warrnambool City Council (WCC) managed kindergarten.

TERM	DEFINITION
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
Eligible child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child who will turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they attend kindergarten • A child who has received funding for a second year of four year old Kindergarten; • A child who was eligible to attend the four year old program in the previous year, but deferred; • A child turning six years of age in their year of kindergarten who has been granted an exemption from school entry age requirements by their regional office of DEECD; • A child who is not eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten but whose families will pay the funding amount plus fees in order to access a second year of kindergarten. These children will only be allocated a kindergarten place after first and second round offers and only if a place is available; • A child is eligible to enrol in the three year old program provided they have turned three years of age. • A child who is younger than the eligible age, but whose parents / guardians have submitted a written request for their child to attend school the following year to their regional office of DEECD or non-government school – please refer to the section in this policy relating to children under 4 years of age. • Gifted children – - please refer to the section in this policy relating to children under 4 years of age.
Kindergarten	Kindergarten is a universal early childhood program, funded by the state government, for children in the year prior to commencing primary school. It may also include an unfunded program for three year old children.

1.2. References

Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
- Sex and Age Discrimination Amendment Act 2011
- Information Privacy Act 2000
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- The Kindergarten Guide 2014
- WCC Kindergarten Enrolment Procedure June 2012

Supporting Documentation

- DEECD Children's Services Guide, www.education.vic.gov.au
- DEECD – The Kindergarten Guide 2014

WCC Policies

- WCC Early Years Learning & Development Kindergarten Fees Policy 2014
- WCC Early Years Learning & Development Complaints Grievances Policy 2012
- WCC Early Years Learning & Development Inclusion and Equity Policy 2012
- WCC Early Years Learning & Development Privacy Policy 2012

2. POLICY

2.1. Policy Statement

WCC is committed to:

- Ensuring kindergarten places are allocated in accordance with the priority of access criteria as set out in this policy in a transparent, equitable and fair manner
- Compliance with relevant legislation, regulations and standards
- Compliance with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) funding requirements
- Maintaining confidentiality in all aspects of the registration and enrolment process.

2.2 Priority of Access Criteria

The following criteria are to be used to determine the priority of access for each application for enrolment received. All applications will be prioritised based on the total number of points allocated to each application.

3 points

- Children identified as vulnerable

2 points

- Children assessed as having special needs, a disability or developmental delay

1 point:

- Children who have had a sibling attend a kindergarten program at the preferred kinder.
- Children who have attended one of the following programs at the preferred kinder:
 - Three year old kindergarten program
 - Early Start placement
 - Childcare
- Children of WCC ratepayers or who are living within the City of Warrnambool

2.3 Group Allocation

WCC reserves the right to determine group allocations based on, but not limited to, the following:

- Total numbers;
- Gender balance;
- Children with additional needs;
- Children requiring a second year of kindergarten;
- Early Start placements;
- Capping policy.

2.4 Capping Policy

WCC will implement a capping policy to ensure equity for children, parents and staff across all its kindergarten sites. This policy ensures the “cap” on each kindergarten group is commensurate with the predicted enrolment for each year.

To ensure equity for all children, there will be a specified number of places allocated at each kindergarten for children requiring a second year of kindergarten, children with special needs and children in early start places.

2.5 Request for Review Process

A Request for Review process will be available to all families following completion of the allocation process. These will be mediated by the Director, Community Development. All requests for review will be responded to in a timely and collaborative manner which seeks a satisfactory resolution for all parties.

2.6 Children less than four years of age

If a child is less than four years of age by 30 April in the year they are to attend a funded kindergarten program and the child is deemed gifted, the parents must first request approval for early school entry for their child to attend school in the following year. Requests must be made in writing to the appropriate Departmental regional office in accordance with government school entry processes, or directly to the

non-government school that the child will be attending. It is unlikely that the regional office or the non-government school will be able to determine the outcome of the request for early school entry until close to the school commencement date.

Families need to be aware that their child is not guaranteed early school entry as a result of being enrolled to attend a kindergarten early. Early school entry must be approved by the appropriate Departmental regional Director and is only granted in exceptional circumstances when there are strong grounds for believing long term educational disadvantage would otherwise occur.

Most applications for early school entry are unsuccessful and children granted early entry to kindergarten, are **not eligible** to apply for another year of funded kindergarten in the following year if the child does not attend school.

A copy of the written request for early school entry must accompany the child's application for kindergarten enrolment. WCC must sight this request and include a copy in the child's enrolment record. If the family has previously been a client of another WCC service eg. Maternal & Child Health, WCC Three Year Old Kinder, a letter of recommendation from each of these services will also be needed to support the application for early entry. It is WCC policy that families requesting early entry to kinder who have the completed necessary paper work and recommendations if applicable will be placed after all other offers are made and only if there are places remaining will an offer be made to the family.

For more information visit the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website: www.education.vic.gov.au.

2.7 Children who have already received a funded year of kinder.

Children who have been identified as already receiving a funded year of kinder and have not been approved for a second year of funding through the DEECD, can apply for a kinder place but will be placed last after all other offers are made and only if there are places remaining will an offer be made to the family of a non- funded kinder place. The kinder place will be a non- funded place and the family will be charged fees accordingly to a non- fund place

2.8 Orientation Process

All families will receive the following information upon confirmation of their kindergarten enrolment;

- Kindergarten Enrolment Form
- Kindergarten Handbook
- Transition to Kindergarten Form
- Policy Disclosure Statement

Families will be required to complete and return the kindergarten enrolment form, acceptance of policies form, transition to kindergarten form and where relevant any medical plans or family custody plans prior to their child's commencement date.

The children will be invited to an orientation visit in December. Parents will be encouraged to discuss any separation concerns or the need for an individualised orientation program for their child on this day.

Families will be encouraged to make an appointment with the kindergarten teacher if there are any matters of a sensitive nature that they need to share with the kindergarten team. This may include custody plans, medical plans, risk minimisation plans, behavioural issues or separation anxieties.

The kindergarten teacher will read the transition to kindergarten forms prior to the children's kindergarten commencement to assist the children with the transition process.

Families will be encouraged to communicate with the kindergarten staff regarding their child's settling and strategies may be implemented to assist children who may be having difficulty settling in to the kindergarten program. Strategies may include a family member staying with the child, attending for shorter session times or bringing in a comfort toy, as agreed on by the child's family and kindergarten staff.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Owner

The Service Manager, Early Years Learning and Development is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy.

3.2. Compliance Responsibility

All relevant employees are responsible to implementing this policy as written

3.3. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.