



ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at Olympic Avenue Kindergarten;
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Olympic Avenue Kindergarten;
- the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated;
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Olympic Avenue Kindergarten; and
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Olympic Avenue Kindergarten 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; and
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Olympic Avenue Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

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 Approved Provider 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.

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*).



Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *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
 - Standard 6.1: Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained
 - Element 6.1.1: There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

4. 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. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) is the only type of acceptable immunisation record for the purpose of confirming enrolment and must be provided within the two months prior to the child starting at the service. The Immunisation History Statement must show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.

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. The Committee of Management has determined that an authorised nominee cannot be under the age of 16 years.

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 application fee: A payment to Bayside Council when registering for a place, to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

Enrolment acceptance fee: A non-refundable fee payable to the kindergarten on acceptance of a place

Enrolment application form: A form to apply for a place at the service, completed online via Bayside Council.

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Enrolment record: The collection of documents which contains information 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.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:
www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- *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/
- *Priority for allocating places in child care services*: <http://education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>
- *The Kindergarten Guide* (Department of Education and Training):
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services*:
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkitn>
- Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Participating in Bayside Council's Central Registration Service
- 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 (refer also to Attachment 1 – General enrolment procedures).
- 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 **prior to enrolment** to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements.
- 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 (see Attachment 2 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation).
- Advising parents that if a 3yo place is offered, accepted and fees paid, it is expected that the child will attend kindergarten for the number of hours offered (exceptional circumstances will apply such as medical reasons etc). If a child does not start for personal reasons such as family relocation etc, the spot will be held for a maximum of one term, and fees for the term need to be paid in full. After one term if Bayside Council advise us that a family is waiting for a place, the enrolled family will either need to commence at the kindergarten or forfeit the spot.
- Advising parents that unfunded 4yo children will only be accepted into the program from February in the year of attendance if there are places available. Note however that unfunded enrolments are granted on a temporary basis, and if a funded child wants to enrol in the kindergarten during the year the unfunded child will need to vacate. Unfunded children will need to pay the term fees plus the Department of Education and Training per capita funding amount for the current year. If the unfunded child is asked to vacate the fees will be refunded pro-rata.
- 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 that 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).

The Nominated Supervisor and early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- 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; and
 - 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 regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service.
- Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.

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.
- 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.
- 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; and
 - discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning.
- Providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members.
- Complying 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 (Immunisation History Statement) of their child's immunisation status.
- Ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service.
- Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, including supplying updated Immunisation History Statement when vaccines are due and/or when contraindications expire.
- For unfunded 4yo children only, paying the relevant per capita funding on top of regular fees, and vacating their position if a funded 4yo child seeks to enrol at the service.

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

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider 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.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Olympic Avenue Kindergarten enrolment procedures
- Attachment 2: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Olympic Avenue Kindergarten on 1 May 2019.

REVIEW DATE: April 2021



ATTACHMENT 1 GENERAL ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Olympic Avenue Kindergarten participates in the Bayside Central Registration Service.

1. Application for a place

- For 3 year old enrolment, your child must have turned three years of age by 30 April in the year attending but cannot attend until their 3rd birthday. If a child has not turned three at the commencement of term 1 and the kindergarten is fully subscribed in the 3yo group, the full term fee is payable even though the child will not commence until they turn three. If a child has not turned three at the commencement of term 1 and the kindergarten is **not** fully subscribed in the 3yo group, a \$100 non refundable acceptance fee is required to be paid, and providing that the kindergarten is still under subscribed at the time the child turns three, the family will be charged pro-rata term fees from the child's commencement date. If the 3yo groups start to fill up prior to the child turning three, the family will be advised that fees need to be paid from that date in order for the spot to be held.
- For 4 year old enrolment, your child must have turned four years of age by 30 April in the year attending but can commence at the start of the year.
- Enrolment applications for registration are done online via Bayside Council's website <https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-registration>
- A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the service.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment applications should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).
- Parents/guardians of children applying for a second year of funded kindergarten do not need to submit an application.
- Parents/guardians currently attending a three-year-old program must submit an enrolment application form for the following year.
- A copy of the child's birth certificate must be submitted with all applications.
- All applications must be accompanied by an enrolment application fee payable to Bayside City Council. This fee is to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application and is not refundable.

2. Offer of places via Central Registration System

- Enrolments for kindergarten will be accepted by Bayside Council between 1 April and 30 April in the year prior to the child's attendance in a kindergarten program. Information regarding the criteria for the Bayside Council Central Registration Service can be obtained from the council's website at: <https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/how-do-kindergarten-offers-work>
- Places will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of Bayside Council Central Registration System.
- Applicants will be notified via email from Bayside Council of a confirmed place, or they will be notified that they are on the waitlist for a subsequent offer.
- Offers will be sent by Bayside Council as per their timeline, which commences early June in the year prior to attendance.
- Upon offer of a place by Bayside Council, families will accept or decline the offer via the Bayside Kindergarten Portal. Upon acceptance, they will be directed to the Olympic Avenue Kindergarten website containing the



Finalisation of Enrolment form which will need to be completed and returned via email to the kindergarten by the date indicated, indicating the preferred group and session time, the required acceptance fee, and copies of Immunisation History Statement and birth certificate to enrolmentsolympicave@gmail.com. A non-refundable acceptance fee of \$100 must be paid by the date specified on the form by direct deposit to hold the place for the following year.

- Enrolment in the extended care program will be done at the time of finalisation of enrolment, and this is done directly with the kindergarten via the Finalisation of Enrolment form.
- Further kindergarten enrolment forms and other relevant information will be provided after immunisation paperwork is checked, the place is accepted and the non-refundable deposit has been paid.
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted to the Enrolment Officer and Compliance Officer, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
- Parents/guardians who intend to withdraw their enrolment are requested to notify the enrolment officer in writing as soon as possible.

3. Allocation of places in kindergarten groups and the extended care program

- Allocation of places in groups and in the extended care program will be on a first-come-first-served basis, taking into account the list of priorities below.
- A specific date and time in June will be provided to families, after which time they can return their Finalisation of Enrolment form (with the group and session time preferences completed and, if applicable, the extended care enrolment section completed), together with the required acceptance fee, and copies of Immunisation History Statement and birth certificate to enrolmentsolympicave@gmail.com.
- Any forms received prior to the specified date and time will not be accepted and families will be asked to resubmit their forms after the set time. Acceptance letters may be posted, emailed or hand delivered, however email is the preferred and most efficient method.
- If groups within the kindergarten or the extended care program are oversubscribed, applications will be allocated by the executive committee in conjunction with the teaching staff, using the following priority of access criteria:
 1. Children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with The Kindergarten Funding Guide (available at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx> (relevant to the 4yo groups only).
 2. Children at risk of abuse or neglect.
 3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
 4. Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (relevant to the 4yo groups only)
 5. Children with additional needs, defined as children who:
 - require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program;
 - require a combination of services which are individually planned; or
 - have an identified specific disability or developmental delay.
 6. Current Olympic Avenue Kindergarten 3yo children going into 4yo kindergarten at Olympic Avenue Kindergarten (relevant to the 4yo groups only).
 7. Families with children applying for places in both 3yo and 4yo programs in the one year (ie one sibling attending the 3yo program and one sibling attending the 4yo program in the same year).



- Olympic Avenue Kindergarten will endeavour to accommodate preferred session times but will also consider teacher's input to ensure balanced groups. The final decision lies with the teaching staff and the executive committee.
- Families will be notified of the allocation of their session time as soon as practicable after the places have been allocated.

4. Closing dates for enrolment applications

The closing dates for enrolment applications are 30th April in the year prior to attendance via Bayside Council's Central Registration Service.

5. Procedure for a late application for enrolment

Applications received after the closing date will be considered by Bayside Council after all on-time registrations are finalised.



ATTACHMENT 2

Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

Date

Dear [insert name]

Re: Kindergarten enrolment for 2020

I am contacting you regarding your application to enrol your child at Olympic Avenue Kindergarten in 2020.

To finalise your child's application to enrol we are required to see copies of the following:

- **A current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register showing that your child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.**

This is the only form of documentation accepted for the purpose of enrolling in an early childhood education and care service, and your child's enrolment cannot be confirmed until we receive this.

Other immunisation records, such as 'homeopathic immunisation' or a statutory declaration from you are not acceptable. Neither is a letter from a GP or local council.

The quickest way to get your statement is by using your Medicare online account through myGov or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app. Alternatively, you can request an Immunisation History Statement in person at your local Medical service centre or call the Australian Immunisation Register enquiries line on 1800 653 809 to request a statement is posted to you. It can take 14 days to get your statement in the post.

If you are experiencing difficulties accessing vaccinations or required related documents, please contact us for assistance as soon as you are able. You can also contact Bayside Council's Immunisation Department on 9599-4307, or the Royal Children's Hospital Immunisation Clinic on 1300 882 924.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Role]

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