

BEACONSFIELD KINDERGARTEN INC.

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- the criteria for enrolment at Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc.
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc
- the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc
- 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

Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc 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
- complying with DET funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in government-funded kindergarten places
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided on enrolment forms
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc.

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), as amended 2011
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2011
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2012
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 177, 183
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, including 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)

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: As of 28 February 2018, an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is the only documentation accepted by early childhood education and care services for the purposes of confirming a child's enrolment in their service. The Immunisation History Statement is provided as 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.

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.

Although the National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee, Beaconsfield Kindergarten has determined that persons under the age of 18 are not able to be an authorised nominee and are not permitted to collect a child from the service.

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*).

Deferral: When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place, or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the April data collection. DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DET funding in the following year.

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 cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

Enrolment application form: A form to apply for a place at the service.

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. This is completed after a place has been offered by the service and accepted by the applicant. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Enrolment record: Contains information on each child, as required under the National Regulations, including contact details, names of authorised nominees (refer to *Definitions*), names of persons authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication, names of persons authorised to take the child outside the service, details of any court orders, personal and health information including specific healthcare needs, medical management plans and dietary restrictions etc. (Regulations 160, 161, 162), and immunisation documentation. 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 2015*: www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit
- Victorian 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 and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- participating in and complying with Cardinia Shire's Kindergarten Central Enrolment Policy
- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy

- developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program, and considering any barriers to access that may exist
- 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
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation **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 (see Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)
- 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 enrolment forms (refer to *Definitions*) comply 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 person responsible for the enrolment process is accountable for the following:

- providing enrolment application forms
- offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- storing completed enrolment application forms in a lockable file (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*) as soon as is practicable
- complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service
- making families aware of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* at time of enrolment.

The Nominated Supervisor and early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service

- 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 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
- 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)
- 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
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
- 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 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.

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: Cardinia Shire Council Kindergarten Central Enrolment Policy and Procedure Document
- Attachment 2: Kindergarten Fee Subsidy Form
- Attachment 3: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation
- Attachment 4: School exemption procedures
- Attachment 5: Exemption from school due to attendance in a funded kindergarten program form

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc on 17th March 2014.

REVIEW DATE: 20/06/2018

REVIEW FREQUENCY: 2 Years

NEXT REVIEW DUE: April 2019

ATTACHMENT 1

Please see file 'Enrolment and Orientation Policy attachment 1 - Kindergarten Central Enrolment Registration Policy January 2017 Updated'

ATTACHMENT 2

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

DET provides a fee subsidy for eligible families. Please indicate if you are eligible for one of the following concessions, or meet one of the following criteria:

Health Care Card

Pensioner Concession Card

DVA Gold Card

Bridging Visas A–F

Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 or 786

Resolution of Status Visa (RoS) Visa Class CD, Subclass 851

Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visas 200–217

Triples or Quadruplets

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Supporting documentation will need to be sighted on commencement at Beaconsfield Kindergarten by the Enrolment Officer/Administration Officer.

Note: the eligibility of concessions may vary from time-to-time. Up-to-date information can be found at:

www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/support/Pages/financialassist.aspx

Children with additional needs

Does your child have additional needs?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify: _____

You are encouraged to discuss your child's needs with the educator when your child's place is confirmed.

Is your child registered with a specific support service/agency?

Yes

No

Name of support service/agency: _____

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT 3

Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

[Insert service letterhead]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Beaconsfield Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Beaconsfield Kindergarten in the [insert 3 year old or 4 year old program or Kinder Readiness Program] in [insert year].

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided acceptable immunisation documentation.

Acceptable immunisation documentation includes evidence that your child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated
- has been assessed by our service as being eligible for a 16-week grace period.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

- your doctor
- Cardinia Shire Council's website (search immunisations)
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register Tel 1800 653 809
- Better Health Channel website: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/no-jab-no-play>

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], please renew your application through Cardinia Shire Council's online Central Registration System. We are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by acceptable immunisation documentation. The new application would be considered in line with Beaconsfield Kindergarten's Enrolment and Orientation policy.

Yours sincerely,

[insert name]

Centre Manager
Beaconsfield Kindergarten

ATTACHMENT 4

School Exemption Procedure

Children attending kindergarten who turn six before the end of the school year must have a school exemption. Although it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to seek this exemption from the Department, the kindergarten teacher should assist the family in completing the necessary paperwork.

First Year of Funded Kindergarten

If the child will turn six before or during their first funded year of kindergarten, an exemption from school may be applied for if one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- the family has moved from interstate or overseas where the school entry age criteria are different from those in Victoria
- the child's early education has been delayed due to chronic illness, disability or developmental delay
- the child is a refugee/asylum seeker who has suffered trauma and would benefit significantly from a year of kindergarten before enrolling in school
- the child has not been able to access kindergarten previously due to transient family circumstances, or
- other special considerations.

The school exemption form must be accompanied by written confirmation from a relevant professional (e.g. kindergarten teacher, medical practitioner or an allied health professional) verifying the reason for exemption and why it is in your child's best interest to attend kindergarten rather than commence at school.

Second Year of Funded Kindergarten

If the child will turn six during their second funded year of kindergarten, an exemption from school can be applied for if a Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten has been submitted by the child's early childhood teacher in the Kindergarten Information Management system. This Declaration confirms the child is eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten because the teacher has identified the child has developmental delays in two or more key areas.

Procedures for Staff

When kindergarten groupings are completed, teachers should identify any children in their group whose date of birth indicates that they will turn six prior to the end of the school year.

Relevant families should be approached to discuss applying for a school exemption. The Information Night would be a good time to initiate this discussion. The ECT should give the family a copy of any relevant information, including the 'Exemption from school due to attendance in a funded kindergarten program' form.

The ECT should then follow up with the family during the family orientation session at the beginning of Term 1. The family should be supported through the process and a copy of the school exemption form placed with the child's enrolment records when complete.

EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL DUE TO ATTENDANCE IN A FUNDED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Children who are turning six (compulsory school age) during the first or second year of funded kindergarten must be approved for kindergarten per capita funding and exempted from attending school by the Department of Education and Training (DET).

Please forward this completed form to the relevant DET regional office to request an exemption from school for your child.

Regional office addresses can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/

The following child seeks exemption from attending school for the year _____.

Family details

<i>Parent/Guardian name:</i>	<u>Family name</u>	<u>Given name/s</u>
<i>Parent/Guardian address:</i>		Daytime contact number:
<i>Child's name:</i>	<u>Family name</u>	<u>Given name/s</u>
<i>Child's address:</i>		
Child's date of birth:/...../..... Child's gender: <input type="checkbox"/> male <input type="checkbox"/> female		

School information

Name and location of school child is expected to attend:	
Have you spoken to the school about enrolling your child? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If 'yes', please explain the discussion.	

Children turning six during the **FIRST** year of funded kindergarten

Complete the following for children turning six during the first year of funded kindergarten.

Name and location of the early childhood service your child will be attending for their first year of funded kindergarten:

An exemption from school is requested because (*please select a reason*):

- The family has moved from interstate or overseas where the school entry age criteria is different to that applied in Victoria
- The child's early education has been delayed due to chronic illness, disability or developmental delay
- The child is a refugee/asylum seeker who has suffered trauma and would benefit significantly from a year of kindergarten before enrolling in school
- The child has not been able to access kindergarten previously due to transient family circumstances
- Other special considerations (*please provide details below*):

The parent/guardian is required to obtain written confirmation from a relevant professional (e.g. kindergarten teacher, medical practitioner or an allied health professional) verifying the reason for exemption and why it is in the child's best interest to attend kindergarten rather than commence at school. A copy of this written evidence and any other written advice that supports the child's exemption from school must be attached to this form.

Children turning six during the **SECOND** year of funded kindergarten

Complete the following for children turning six during the second year of funded kindergarten:

Name & location of early childhood service where child is currently attending their first year of funded kindergarten:

Name & location of early childhood service child will be attending for a second year of funded kindergarten:

Has a *Declaration of Eligibility for a Second Year of Funded Kindergarten* been completed by the child's current early childhood service?

- Yes No

Signature

Name of parent/guardian:

Date submitted:/...../.....

Signature of parent/guardian:

Do you give permission for the Department to discuss this application with the child's kindergarten teacher, the professional(s) verifying the exemption, and the school?

Yes No

DET Office Use Only

A copy of the completed second year declaration form has been submitted in KIM. Yes No N/A

Written confirmation from a relevant professional is attached Yes No N/A

After consideration of the circumstances kindergarten per capita funding and a school attendance exemption request has been

recommended

not recommended

for

(insert child's names)

for the year

(insert school year)

If applicable - any additional comments:

Name of DET recommending officer:

Position of recommending officer:

Contact Telephone Number:

Signature of recommending officer:

Date of Recommendation:

...../...../.....