

BEACONSFIELD KINDERGARTEN

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for:

- enrolling a child at Beaconsfield Kindergarten
 - ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education and Training [DET] Kindergarten Funding Guide
 - procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Beaconsfield Kindergarten
 - ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
 - ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment
 - adhering to the DET's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children.
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POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged
- 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
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten (refer to Definitions) eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

SCOPE

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

RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Providing a funded kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, and offering at least 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or 600 hours per year	R				
Providing a funded kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering a minimum of 5 hours per week	R				
Participating in and complying with Cardinia Shire's Kindergarten Central Registration Policy	√	√	√	√	√
Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	R				
Following the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Beaconsfield Kindergarten, as described in Department of Education and Training's [DET] <i>The Kindergarten Funding Guide</i> (refer to Attachment 1)	R	√	√		
Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April	√	√	√		
Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (refer to Definitions) • Early Start Kindergarten (refer to Definitions) • Early Start Kindergarten extension grants (refer to Definitions) • Access to Early Learning (refer to Definitions) • Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten (refer to Definitions) 	R	√	√		
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption	√	√	√		
Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	√			

Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access a kindergarten program	R	√	√		
Complying with the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>	R	R	√	√	√
Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity, utilisation of services and to meet School Readiness Funding requirements	R	R			
Ensuring families have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent handbook • <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i> • <i>Fees Policy</i> • <i>Privacy & Confidentiality Policy</i> • <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> 	R	√	√		
Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy	R				
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	√	√	√		
Considering access and inclusion for vulnerable children in the allocation of places at the service (refer to Attachment 1)	R	√			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	√	√
Providing opportunities 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, 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, early childhood teachers or educators under the <i>National Law: Section 167</i> .	R	√	√		
Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) and accessing immunisation services	R	√	√		
Ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period	R	√	√		
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (refer to Sources) 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 (refer to Definitions)	R	√	√		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements (refer to Definitions) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period (refer to Definitions) have confirmed places in the program	R	√	√		
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) and who are not eligible for the grace period that their children are not	R	√	√		

able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (refer to Attachment 2)					
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).	R	√	√		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) of their child's immunisation status				√	
Where a child is eligible for the 16-week grace period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) to the service				√	
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (<i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring all authorised nominees (refer to Definitions) have been completed on the enrolment record (refer to Definitions) (Regulations 160 and 161)	R	√		√	
Ensuring that the enrolment record (refer to Definitions), both digital and/or hard copy, complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	R	√	√		
Ensuring that enrolment record (refer to Definitions) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that the service is made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances (e.g. if a child acquires a Health Care Card the child becomes available for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy; if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection, the child becomes eligible for Early Start Kindergarten and Early Start Kindergarten Extension grant).	R	√	√	√	√
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 (1a) (2d))	R	√	√		
Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	√	√		
Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	√	√	√	
Ensuring that the orientation program meets the individual needs of children and families, and complies with DET funding criteria	R	√	√	√	

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 (Regulation 157), 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, early childhood teachers or educators under the National Law: Section 167	R	R	√	√	√
Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (refer to Attachment 3)	√	√	√		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to Definitions and the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	√	√	√		
Encouraging parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period make contact with educators 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 such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	√	√	√	√	
Developing strategies to assist new families to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel welcomed into the service become familiar with service policies and procedures share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs 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 	√	√	√	√	
Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>	R	R	R	√	√
Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example obtaining or the cancellation of a Health Care Card; if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				√	
Notifying Beaconsfield Kindergarten in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				√	

PROCEDURES

GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

Beaconsfield Kindergarten offers a staggered entry orientation at the beginning of the year. This may include shorter sessions and smaller groups for the first few kinder sessions. This program has been designed to ensure that all children are individually supported in their transition to kindergarten.

However, the time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- Families are able to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service.
- Parents/guardians are able to stay with their child if needed during orientation and once the child commences. Families will be provided with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child.

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 by 2022 all eligible children (refer to Definitions) will have access to two years 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, Approved Provider's must adhere to their eligibility and priority of access criteria (refer to Definitions and Attachment 1) in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (refer to Sources), the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. 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.

The Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), co-designed by DET provides access to families to register for and secure a place for their children in kindergarten. It is a collaborative model that brings together councils, service providers, MCH staff, support services and other stakeholders to support children and their families. In 2020 more than half of all local councils across Victoria operate a form of central enrolment or central registration scheme. These schemes provide a single point of entry for families, simplifying the kindergarten enrolment process and improving equity of access.

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* and *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement (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*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017*

- *National Quality Standard*, including Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

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.

Access to Early Learning (AEL): a program for a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment, providing intensive support to eligible families with multiple and complex needs, assisting them to access universal kindergarten programs.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. Parents/carers must provide a copy of their most recent AIR Immunisation History Statement, which shows that the child is up to date with their immunisations upon enrolment and when a child has received or been due to receive a vaccination while attending the service. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form, and supplies it to the AIR. In order to confirm enrolment, the Immunisation History Statement must show the child is up to date with the vaccines they can have, any medical contraindications and indicate the due date for the next vaccinations the child is able to receive in the future if applicable.

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/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the *Kindergarten Funding Guide*).

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

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES): CRES provides a single point for families to apply for multiple kindergarten services within a local government area, helping them secure a place that meets their needs and enabling funded kindergartens to work collaboratively with other services to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

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.

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher. ESK is available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- known to child protection.

These children can also access free or low cost year-before-school kindergarten through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

Early Start Kindergarten extension grants: provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified VIT registered teacher. The ESK extension grants are available to children attending kindergarten in the year-before-school and are:

- not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- known to child protection.
- A child is not required to access ESK in the previous year to access the ESK extension grant.

Eligible child: as defined by the Kindergarten Funding Guide; a child who is at least four years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a 4-year-old program; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service. Or a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment and is enrolled in a funded 3-year-old kindergarten program. Any child who is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicate that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or qualifies for the 16-weeks grace period.

Enrolment record: The collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

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

Grace period: allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) or when the statement is assessed as not being up-to-date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with families during enrolment, and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the grace period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) and to encourage families to access immunisation services.

Kindergarten registration 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, if applicable.

Kindergarten registration form: The process of families providing initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the CRES Provider (refer to Definition) or by the kindergarten service. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS): Promotes kindergarten participation by enabling eligible children in funded three and four-year-old groups to access up to 15 hours of kindergarten delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher free of charge or at low cost.

Local Government Area (LGA): A geographic area governed by a local council or shire.

Priority of access: in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate spaces using the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Funding Guide*.

Registration: The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the service provider/EYM/CRES Provider. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.

School Readiness Funding: funding provided by DET for programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.

Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten: second year eligibility may be considered when a child shows delays in key outcomes of learning and development. An assessment is carried out for each child by an early childhood teacher in Term 4 (the year before the child is to attend school) when a second year is being considered.

Vulnerable Children/Families: Children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child being vulnerable include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, known to Child Protection, Out of Home Care, substance abuse, or mental health; Aboriginal and/or Torre Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the *Kindergarten Funding Guide*).

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:
www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- Australian Government Department of Health, *National Immunisation Program Schedule*:
<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-throughout-life/national-immunisation-program-schedule>
- 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>
- *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 of Access Guidelines for child care service:
<https://www.dese.gov.au/uncategorised/resources/priority-access-guidelines-child-care-services>
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training)*:
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
 - *Compliments and Complaints Policy*
 - *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
 - *Fees Policy*
 - *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
 - *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
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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, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (Regulation 172).
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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Cardinia Shire Council Kindergarten Central Registration Policy and Procedure Document
 - Attachment 2: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation
 - Attachment 3: Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance
 - Attachment 4: School exemption procedures
 - Attachment 5: Exemption from school due to attendance in a funded kindergarten program form
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AUTHORISATION

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

REVIEW DATE: 03/04/2023

REVIEW FREQUENCY: 2 Years

NEXT REVIEW DUE: April 2025

ATTACHMENT 1

Please see file 'Kindergarten Central Registration Policy and Procedures - Dec 2022'.

ATTACHMENT 2

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] 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 an AIR Immunisation History Statement.

An AIR Immunisation History Statement includes evidence of immunisation and is used to assess whether your child is fully vaccinated for their age..

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, and your child is not eligible for the 16-week grace period, 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
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register>
- 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 an AIR History Statement. 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 3

Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance

Cancellation of Enrolment

Families MUST notify Beaconsfield Kindergarten in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment. Fees (if applicable) will continue to be generated for that place until Beaconsfield Kindergarten is notified.

Note: This process does not apply to vulnerable children (refer to *Definitions*). Children and families who are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending, educators will need to inform their Case Officer.

Non-attendance

- Term 1
Families who have accepted a place and have not completed an enrolment form and not attend the service within the first three weeks of Term 1 will be contacted and informed their placement will be cancelled.
- Families traveling
Families are required to notify the service prior to extended periods of travel, and ensure any applicable fees paid if they wish to return to the service.
- Non-contactable families
 - After one week of a child not attending the service, early childhood teacher/educator to call the family. If there is no response, educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
 - After second week of the child not attending and the family has made no attempts to contact the service, educator to contact the family via phone/text and/or email. If there is no response, educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
 - After third week of non-attendance, educator to inform Centre Manager and cross check families contact details.
- Centre Manager to email family, ensuring a response date is documented in the email.
- If the family have made no attempt to communicate with the service before the response date, post a final attempt letter, ensuring a response date is documented in the letter.
- If the family has not responded to the final attempt letter before the response date, their placement will be cancelled.

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
- 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		
Parent/Guardian name:	<u>Family name</u>	<u>Given name/s</u>
Parent/Guardian address:		Daytime contact number:
		Email:
Child's name:	<u>Family name</u>	<u>Given name/s</u>
Child's address:		
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. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Written confirmation from a relevant professional is attached <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
After consideration of the circumstances kindergarten per capita funding and a school attendance exemption request has been	
<input type="checkbox"/> recommended	
<input type="checkbox"/> not recommended	
for (insert child's names)	for the year (insert school year)
If applicable - any additional comments:	
Name:	
Position:	
Contact Telephone Number:	
Signature:	Date of Recommendation:/...../.....