
ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

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

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Home Road Kindergarten is committed to:

- equal access for all children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- complying with DEECD 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, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Home Road 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 for four year old kindergarten are outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide 2013* (refer to *Sources*). Home Road Kindergarten participates in Hobsons Bay City Council's central enrolment scheme and is required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme. Home Road Kindergarten has developed enrolment requirements for three year old kindergarten, as this is not a funded program.

Families should note that as three year old kindergarten is managed by the centre and four year old kindergarten is managed by Council, applications for each are treated separately.

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, 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
- *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.

Administration fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with enrolling a child at the centre for three year old kindergarten.

Approved care: Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers. Details are available at www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

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

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

Deferral: When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place, or officially withdraws from a service prior to the end of Term 2. DEECD considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DEECD funding in the following year.

Eligible child: A child who meets the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide 2013*.

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). This information is kept confidential by the service.

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

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:*
www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard:*
www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/
- *The Kindergarten Guide 2013:*
www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/
- *Hobsons Bay City Council Central Enrolment Policy:*
http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Community/Families_and_children/Kindergartens

Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Home Road Kindergarten, based on funding requirements, Hobsons Bay City Council's Central Enrolment Policy 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
- ensuring that enrolment forms (refer to *Definitions*) comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162
- reviewing the enrolment form to determine its effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and 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 DEECD 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:

- responding to enrolment enquiries and providing enrolment application forms (refer to Attachment 2 – Enrolment Application Form)
- collating enrolments
- maintaining a waiting list
- overseeing the collection, receipting and banking of enrolment fees
- 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
- offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- providing a monthly report to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered
- 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
- providing a copy of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* with the enrolment application form.

The Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor and other 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 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
- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs and medical conditions (refer to 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
- ensuring that enrolment forms and other required documentation are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service
- 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
- 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
- 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
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required
- 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 enrolment forms prior to their child's commencement at the service
- ensuring that all 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: General enrolment procedures for 3 Year Old Kindergarten
- Attachment 2: General enrolment procedures for 4 Year Old Kindergarten
- Attachment 3: Three Year Old Kindergarten Enrolment Application Form

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Home Road Kindergarten on 17 April 2013.

REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2014

ATTACHMENT 1

General enrolment procedures for 3 Year Old Kindergarten

1. Application for a place on the Enrolment Register

- Children can be registered for three year old kindergarten at Home Road Kindergarten from 1 June each year, 18 months prior to their eligible year.
- If decided by the Approved Provider, early bird applications may be taken at the Kindergarten Open Day in that same year. For example; if your child is eligible to attend three year old kindergarten in 2016, their name can be placed on the register from 1 June 2014 or if applicable, as an early bird application on the 2014 Open Day (usually held in March each year).
- Enrolment applications are only accepted on the Home Road Kindergarten Three Year Old Enrolment Application form. This application form is available from the centre or from our website and one is attached to this policy.
- Once completed, the enrolment application form can either be hand delivered into the red safe box inside the kindergarten foyer, emailed to the Administration Manager or mailed to 3 Year Old Enrolments, Home Road Kindergarten, 44 Home Road, Newport VIC 3015. Enrolment forms should not be handed over to the educators as they will not be held responsible if such forms are mislaid.
- A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the centre.
- 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 needing a second year of three year old kindergarten must confirm their intentions with the Teacher and Administration Manager before June of the first year of attendance.
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
- An enrolment application only places a child on the Enrolment Register and does not automatically mean an offer of placement into the three year old program will occur.
- All applications received prior to 1 June in the year before your child is eligible to attend three year old kindergarten will be considered for first round offers, i.e. for a child eligible to attend three year old kinder in 2014, applications made up until 1 June 2013 will be considered for first round offers. Applications lodged after this date will be placed at the bottom of the register in order of arrival and where no more places are available, these will form the waiting list for second and subsequent offers.

2. Eligibility and access criteria for three year old children

Children are eligible for attendance in the three year old program provided they have turned three prior to commencement. Children must turn three years of age prior to 30 April in the year that they are to attend.

The Approved Provider has determined the eligibility and access criteria applicable to the centre. Children are allocated places at the kindergarten based on a points system. Children are awarded points based on the following criteria:

- Their place on the register (based on date of application); where if there are 50 three year old places for that year, the first 50 children on the register are allocated 1 point.
- Siblings; if children have previously had a sibling attend the kinder they are allocated 1 point.
- Suburb; children that live within the immediate local area (i.e. Newport) are allocated 1.1 points.

In June of the year prior to attendance, the Enrolment Register will be sorted based on the number of points each child has received and places will be allocated according to ranking. Children with the same number of points will be ranked based on the date of their application. In the case of multiple children having the same number of points and date of application, a ballot will be performed to decide places.

Where a parent/guardian requests that their child attends a second year of three year old kindergarten and it is advised or agreed upon by their teacher, that child will be guaranteed a place for the following year. Places will only be guaranteed where the teacher and parent have agreed upon the child doing a second year prior to first round offers being sent out for the following year (i.e. prior to June of the first kinder year).

Where a parent chooses to defer their child to the following year, that child will be placed on the register for the following year with the same date as their initial application, i.e. if the application for 2013 was made on 1 May 2012, this will be the date the child is placed on the register for 2014. In this way, the child will be higher on the register and based on the points system may have a greater probability of being offered a place in our three year old program for the following year. Please note, however, that there will be no guarantee of enrolment for any child that has deferred.

3. Starting Kindergarten Criteria

- As Home Road Kindergarten does not have the facilities or staffing requirements to offer places to children who require nappy or pull-up changes, it is a condition of acceptance of enrolment that all children be fully toilet trained before they can commence at Home Road Kindergarten.
- Children who have not yet turned three are able to attend kindergarten from two weeks prior to their third birthday ONLY when accompanied by an adult. After they have turned three they are able to attend kindergarten unaccompanied.
- Except in the case of late offers, in order to hold a child's place in the program, the fees for the entire first term must be paid regardless of when the child is actually able to commence kinder.

4. Offer of places

- Places will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and access criteria of the centre.
- Applicants who are successful will be notified, in writing, of a confirmed place. First round offers will be sent in June of the preceding year of your child starting kinder. Subsequent offers will be sent out later that year where applicable. Each place will be held for two weeks from the date of the letter of offer, before being offered to another child on the waiting list where applicable.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing once placements have been confirmed. At this time, parents/guardians that wish to remain on the waiting list will be requested to allocate the groups that they are willing to accept.
- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place, intend to withdraw their enrolment, or have accepted an offer elsewhere are requested to notify the Administration Manager as soon as possible and they will be removed from the Enrolment Register.
- An administration fee of \$50.00 must be paid to hold the place for the following year. This fee is non-refundable but will be deducted from Term One fees.
- An enrolment form and other relevant information will be provided after the place is accepted and administration fee paid.
- Where an offer of a place is declined, the child is removed from the Enrolment Register. If the parent/guardian later changes their mind and wants to be considered for a placement, this child will be added to the bottom of the waiting list.

- In all matters of enrolment, onus is on parents/guardians to ensure that all address details held by the kindergarten are current and accurate. The kindergarten will not be accountable for mislaid mail. This also includes occasions when parents may be away from home when offer letters are being sent out. The Administration staff must be notified of any absence at these times otherwise the child's place will not be held for them.
- Families must provide all requested information and pay the administration fee by the date specified in the letter of offer in order to retain three year old program placement. If no response is received from two follow up phone calls and one email (if applicable), the child will be deleted from the Enrolment Register and the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any substantial debt owed by the family to the centre is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the centre. (Refer to the Fees policy.)

5. Group Allocation

- Wherever possible, children will be allocated their first preference of kindergarten group. However, in cases of excess numbers for a particular group, children may be allocated their second or subsequent preference.
- In cases of excess numbers for a particular group, places in that group will be allocated based on the children's position on the enrolment register. Please note that all groups will be filled based on first preferences, with the children not awarded their first preference then being offered their second preference and so on until all groups are filled.
- In cases where it has not been possible to allocate a child any of their preferred kindergarten groups, they will be contacted by the Administration Manager to discuss their options.
- When a child has not been allocated their first preference, parents are entitled to contact the Administration Manager to be placed on a waiting list for a particular group. Please note that the Administration Manager is the only person who can re-allocate places.
- Changing of groups will only be permitted prior to the commencement of Term One. In order to prevent disruption to multiple groups, all kindergarten vacancies will be filled directly from the waiting list once the year commences.
- Home Road Kindergarten is committed to fostering the best possible environment within each group for all children enrolled in the three year old kindergarten program. Should the initial group allocation be likely to impact this commitment in any way, Home Road Kindergarten may reserve the right to adjust group allocations accordingly. If such adjustments are deemed necessary in the interests of all children, they will be made in accordance with the next available preference, based on the child's position on the enrolment register.

ATTACHMENT 2

General enrolment procedures for 4 Year Old Kindergarten

1. Application process

- Hobsons Bay City Council provides a central enrolment service (Kindergarten Central Enrolment Policy) for the four year old kindergarten program in Hobsons Bay.
- Home Road Kindergarten participates in the Council's Kindergarten Central Enrolment Policy; and as such, does not accept enrolment applications, nor allocate kindergarten places for the four year old kindergarten program.
- Full details of the Kindergarten Central Enrolment Scheme are available from the Council's Kindergarten Access Officer via telephone (03) 9932 1162; or from the Council's website at <http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au>
- In brief, children are eligible for the four year old kindergarten program as long as they turn four years of age prior to the 30th of April in the year they attend.
- Families are encouraged to apply for four year old kindergarten once their child turns 2 years of age. Placements are allocated according to Hobsons Bay City Council's Kindergarten Central Enrolment policy and their Priority of Access guidelines.

2. Confirmation of place and group

- In accordance with the Hobsons Bay City Council's Kindergarten Central Enrolment policy, the Council will communicate directly with the applicant in relation to application, offer and acceptance of a place in the four year old kindergarten program at Home Road Kindergarten.
- Upon acceptance of all offered places in the four year old kindergarten program, Hobsons Bay City Council will advise Home Road Kindergarten of placements and group preferences.
- Group preferences will be reviewed and allocated by Home Road Kindergarten prior to confirmation. First preferences will be confirmed wherever possible.
- Home Road Kindergarten is committed to fostering the best possible environment within each group for all children enrolled in the four year old kindergarten program. Should the initial group allocation be likely to impact this commitment in any way, Home Road Kindergarten may reserve the right to adjust group allocations accordingly. If such adjustments are deemed necessary in the interests of all children, they will be made in accordance with the next available preference, based on the list provided by Council.
- Home Road Kindergarten will confirm group allocations in writing and will issue an Information Pack for each enrolled child.
- Families must complete and return the required information and pay first term fees by the dates specified in order to retain four year old program placement. If no response is received from two follow up phone calls and one email (if applicable), the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.
- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place or intend to withdraw their enrolment are requested to notify the administration manager as soon as possible and must also advise Hobsons Bay City Council of their decision.
- Places will not be allocated to children until any substantial debt owed by the family to the centre is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the centre. (Refer to the Fees policy.)
- In cases of excess numbers for any particular group, a waiting list is automatically formed based on the list provided by Council. If a vacancy arises, you will be contacted by the administration manager. Changing of groups will only be permitted prior to the commencement of Term One and the administration manager is the only person who can reallocate places. In order to prevent disruption to multiple groups, all kindergarten vacancies during the year will be filled directly from the Council waiting list.



44 HOME ROAD
NEWPORT VIC 3015
PHONE: 9391 2958
FAX: 9391 3758

EMAIL: home.rd.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au
WEB: www.homeroadkindergarten.vic.edu.au

Enrolment application form

Three Year Old Program

Please note that your child must turn three years of age on or before 30 April in the year that they are to attend. Please refer to our Enrolment & Orientation policy when completing this application.

Complete this enrolment application form and forward to the kindergarten via email, mail or place in the red safe box in the kindergarten foyer. Please notify the centre of any changes to your address or other relevant information via our contact details listed above.

This application is for my child to attend in (please circle): 2014 2015

Child's family name: _____

Child's given name: _____

Date of birth: / / Male Female

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes No Known to Child Protection/At Risk? Yes No

Parents'/guardians' names: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone number: (Home) _____ (Business) _____

(Mobile) _____ (Email) _____

Language/s spoken at home : _____

Have any siblings of this child attended Home Road Kindergarten? Yes No

If yes, sibling's name and year attended? (If more than one, latest year will suffice)

Name: _____ Year attended: _____

Does your child have additional needs or are you concerned about any aspect of your child's development (eg. physical, speech, social skills)? Yes No

If yes, please specify: _____

If your child has additional needs or you have any questions regarding how we can support you and your child, please feel welcome to contact kindergarten staff on 9391 2958.

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____