

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

QUALITY AREA 6

The Stables Kindergarten adheres to the Child Safe Standards by incorporating the following into our program and practice:

- provide a safe environment for all children which ensures their safety, health, and wellbeing
- promote the cultural safety of all children
- identify, reduce, and remove risks of child abuse
- intervene when a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect
- involve children in child safety including listening to children and incorporating their views about how to provide a safe environment
- make staff aware of their legal and duty of care obligations to report child abuse and neglect



PURPOSE

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

- enrolling a child at Stables Kindergarten and the process to be followed
- the orientation of new families and children into Stables 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.
- 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



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Stables Kindergarten is committed to:

- families feeling respected, safe, welcomed, and supported during the enrolment process
- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten (*refer to Definitions*) eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Stables Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

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
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	√				
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	√				
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	√				
Following the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Stables Kindergarten, as described in Department of Education and Training's [DET] <i>The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1)</i>	√	√	√		
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): Kindergarten Fee Subsidy <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> Early Start Kindergarten <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> Early Start Kindergarten extension grants <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> Access to Early Learning <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten <i>(refer to Definitions)</i>	√	√	√		
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption <i>(refer to Attachment 2)</i>	√	√	√		
Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	√	√			

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	√	√	√		
Complying with the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>	√	√	√	√	√
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	√	√			
Ensuring families have access to: Parent handbook <i>Child Safe Environment Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</i> <i>Fees Policy</i> Privacy Statement <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>	√	√	√		
Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>)	√				
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	√	√	√		
Where applicable, considering access and inclusion for vulnerable children in the allocation of places at the service (<i>refer to Attachment 1 and 2</i>)	√	√			
Where applicable, providing families with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>)	√	√			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	√	√	√	√	√
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> .	√	√	√		
Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and accessing immunisation services	√	√	√		
Ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period	√	√	√		
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (<i>refer to Sources</i>) 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 (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)					
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have confirmed places in the program	√	√	√		
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and who are not eligible for the grace period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (<i>refer to Attachment 3</i>)	√	√	√		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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).	√	√	√		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) of their child's immunisation status				√	
Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks 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 (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to the service				√	
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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>)	√	√	√		
Ensuring that the enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of <i>Regulations 160, 161, 162</i> and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	√	√	√		
Ensuring all authorised nominees (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been completed on the enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) (<i>Regulations 160 and 161</i>)	√	√	√	√	
Ensuring that enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are 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).	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that enrolment records (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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 (<i>Regulation 183 (1a) (2d)</i>)	√	√	√		

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.	√	√	√		
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 whilst the child is being educated and cared for (<i>Regulation 157</i>), 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>	√	√	√	√	√
Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (<i>refer to Attachment 4</i>)	√	√	√		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (<i>refer to Definitions</i> and the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	√	√	√		
Encouraging parents/guardians to: 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 into 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: 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>	√	√	√	√	√
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 Stables Kindergarten in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				√	
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PROCEDURES

GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

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.

- Offer families the opportunity 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
- Families may be asked to assist in the settling in process.
- Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- Asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.

Reassure the family:

- they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time – this is planned and implemented in partnership with the Early Childhood Teacher
 - they may call and speak to their child's early childhood teacher or educator(s) at an agreed time
 - the early childhood teacher/educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in
 - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Refer to [Attachment 2](#) for the general kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
 - Refer to [Attachment 4](#) for cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance procedures.

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 by 2022 that all eligible Victorian children ([refer to Definitions](#)) will have access to two years of kindergarten before commencing school. Where demand is higher than availability, approved providers must adhere to their eligibility and DET's 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 DET's 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. Services participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme are required to comply with the registration and/or 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:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, 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 regularly used terms e.g., approved provider, nominated supervisor, notifiable complaints, serious incidents, duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

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. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable).

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.

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*) (*refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition*).

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 annual confirmation in April DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for a DET funded kindergarten place 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 Victorian DET Kindergarten Funding Guide:

- a child who is at least four years old on 30 April in the year of attendance; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service
- a child who is at least three years old on 30 April in the year of attendance and is enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for a minimum of 5 hours per week
- any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualifies for the 16-weeks grace period

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, if applicable.

Online enrolment 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.

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; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

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 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

‘No Jab, No Play’: The Public Health Amendment (No Jab No Play) Act 2015 means that early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided documentation that shows the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age, or;
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations; or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated

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 DET Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Attachment 1 and Sources*).

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.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au
- Department of Health and Human Services, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- 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 childcare service: www.dese.gov.au
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Victorian Department of Education and Training): www.education.vic.gov.au

Service Policies

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



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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172](#)).



ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program
- Attachment 2: General kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Attachment 3: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation
- Attachment 4: Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance



AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Stables Kindergarten on 12 September 2021

REVIEW DATE: 12 September 2023

ATTACHMENT 1. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

FOR A FUNDED KINDERGARTEN THREE OR FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The approved provider must notify all families of the priority of access (PoA) policy that applies when they enrol their child.

In instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available, services must:

prioritise children based on the Department of Education and Training (DET) criteria listed below
work with other local kindergarten services and the regional DET office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

These criteria must be used by the approved provider when prioritising enrolments. Guidance is available from the Department's regional offices if required.

Service providers should build flexibility into their enrolment processes that consider the circumstances of families from priority groups.

If participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme, the CRES provider will allocate places in accordance with DET's PoA criteria, and other local criteria if applicable.

Services must first apply the DET's PoA criteria, and following this may apply locally developed criteria, as per examples below.

All information relating to PoA criteria should be respectfully collected from families upon enrolment, recorded in the child's confidential enrolment record and entered into the Kindergarten Information Management (KIM) system, where applicable.

DET's Priority of Access criteria	Process that could be used to verify need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	The child is: This information can be obtained from the child's carer/family as part of the enrolment process and/or received from a referral source which may include: Child Protection Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) Maternal and Child Health nurse, or Out-of-Home Care provider
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?'
Asylum seeker and refugee children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers should respectfully ask whether the family/child holds a visa or ImmiCard identifying the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or Multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets). Asylum seeker and/or refugee children
Children with additional needs, defined as children who: require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program require a combination of services which are individually planned have an identified specific disability or developmental delay	The child: is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of 4-year-old kindergarten, or holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, or has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by: the National Disability Insurance Scheme Early Childhood Intervention Service Preschool Field Officer, or Maternal and Child Health nurse

Examples to consider for second priority

children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten; or
children who turn three years of age* by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET
children who have a sibling that has previously attended the same kindergarten as their first preference
home address falls within the same suburb as the kindergarten
family lives, works, studies or attends childcare in the City of Whittlesea

Examples to consider for third priority

service for transient families e.g., RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers
date of application
local community zoning

Note: DET's PoA guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten programs are available to those children who stand to benefit the most from attending early education. In mixed age groups, PoA guideline will equally prioritise three and four-year-old children that are considered high priority. Where programs for three and four-year old children are provided separately, the PoA criteria will be applied separately for each age cohort.

* Early Start Kindergarten and Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

During the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) (*refer to Definitions*) will continue to provide 15 hours a week of funded kindergarten for all eligible children up until 2029, when three-year-old children across the state will have access to 15 hours

It is important to continue to enrol eligible children in ESK, even if funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is available at the service.

This guarantees that children experiencing vulnerability will continue to be enrolled in the full 15 hours of kindergarten in all service settings, including long day care. It also ensures that service providers can continue to receive all funding entitlements.

Service providers are expected to continue to provide the full 15 hours funded through Early Start Kindergarten, even in instances where three-year-old groups are being offered fewer than 15 hours.

ESK is available to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment and who:

- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- are known to Child Protection
- have a refugee or asylum seeker background*

*Children/families without a current refugee visa or ImmiCard who have a recent refugee experience may be eligible by exception for Early Start Kindergarten, for more information contact your local Department of Education and Training office.

Refer to the Department of Education and Training website for up-to-date information: www.education.vic.gov.au

ATTACHMENT 2. GENERAL KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

The Stables Kindergarten is part of the City of Whittlesea Central Enrolment System. All applications must be lodged with the City of Whittlesea Kindergarten Enrolment and Support Officer (keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au)

If your child attends a 3-year-old program at the Stables Kindergarten, **they do not automatically receive a place for 4-year-old kindergarten.** Parents need to make a separate application through Council's Kindergarten Enrolment and Liaison Officer.

City of Whittlesea – Kindergarten Application Process:

Applications are accepted from the first working day in February each year, one year prior to the year of attendance (3-year-old) and two years prior to the year of kindergarten attendance (4-year-old).

Applications will close temporarily on 30 June in the year prior to attendance kindergarten in preparation for sending placement offers.

Applications received after 30 June will be accepted and processed later in the year.

Kindergarten offers are made according to the date they are received with priority given to at risk/vulnerable children. Families living, working, studying or accessing any type of childcare within the City of Whittlesea are eligible to apply.

Parents of children born in the months of January to April, have the choice of which year to enrol their child, including the year the child is eligible or the following year.

You can apply for 3 & 4 year old kindergarten using either the online form or by downloading the application form from <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten-applications/>

You will be required to provide the following information:

1. Fill in your child's details and nominate three kindergartens, in order of preference

If you are applying for 3-year-old kindergarten in 2022- and 4-year-old in 2023 please nominate the three kindergartens in order of preference for both kindergarten years

2. Provide the following supporting documents:

- proof that you live in the City of Whittlesea (e.g., a copy of your current driver's licence; rates notice; or telephone, gas, electricity, or water bill). If you are a non-resident, provide proof of primary childcare and/or work arrangements within the municipality, (e.g., a signed Statutory Declaration)
- proof of child's birth (eg. a copy of their birth certificate, passport, or Immunisation History Statement)
- a copy of your Concession/Health Care Card/ Bridging Visa or other eligible exemption, if applicable
- if there is no exemption or concession a non-refundable application fee is payable of \$23.50 for one year (either 3- or 4-year-old kindergarten) or \$45.00 for two years (both 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten).

3. Apply online or submit your completed application form by:

- email: keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
- mail: Kindergarten Central Applications
City of Whittlesea
Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC VIC 3083

If you speak a language other than English and would like assistance to apply for kindergarten, or to find out more information, please contact Council's Early Years team on 9217 2170. You are welcome to contact the Interpreting Service 131 450

Confirmation of Placement

Kindergarten placement offers will be made via mail, starting in July the year before your child attends. These offers are made based on the date of application with consideration of priority of access children.

Council's Kindergarten Enrolment Officer will confirm your child's kindergarten placement in writing.

If applications for a specific kindergarten are oversubscribed, either the second preference or third preference are offered.

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

Enrolment

Once a kindergarten place has been accepted, the enrolment process can begin.

To enrol a child, families will need to provide copies of (if not already done so):

Proof of identity: child's birth certificate, birth notice or passport

Proof of residence: a utilities bill, rental agreement or rates notice with your family name and address (this must be the main residence of your child).

Concession cards and immigration visas (where applicable).

Documents from Family Support Services or a Maternal and Child Health nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).

Immunisation History Statement (unless experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, at which point they can take advantage of a 16-week 'grace period'. More information is available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>

Documents detailing any medical conditions or requirements the child has.

Kindergartens may also require additional documentation. The kindergarten should ensure that information regarding any additional documentation is easily accessible for families, carers and support services.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any outstanding fees owed to the service by the family is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the service (*refer to Fees Policy*).

Enrolment Records

Enrolment records (*refer to Definitions*) form part of the enrolment procedure and are completed by families after they have been allocated a place, and before commencing attendance. An example enrolment form can be found on the DET website: www.education.vic.gov.au

'No Jab, No Play'

The Public Health Amendment (No Jab No Play) Act 2015 means that early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided documentation that shows the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age, or;
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations; or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated

'No Jab, No Play' grace period provision:

Under the No Jab No Play law, a vulnerable and disadvantaged family can enrol a child in a kindergarten program under a grace period of 16 weeks, without having provided proof of up-to-date immunisation. The grace period provisions allow a family to continue to access early childhood education and care services while receiving information and assistance to get their child's immunisations up to date and to obtain the required immunisation documentation that needs to be provided to the service.

Under the new 'No Jab, No Play' legislation (effective January 2016), as part of this process, the kindergarten/early childhood service must obtain evidence, in the form of an Immunisation Statement that the child is:

- Fully immunised for their age OR
- On a vaccination catch-up program OR
- Unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons

If a child's immunisation record is not up to date, enrolment cannot be confirmed, and the child cannot attend kindergarten.

An immunisation history statement can be obtained from ACIR by calling 1800 653 809, emailing acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au or by accessing online www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online

NOTE: For vulnerable and disadvantaged families, where a child's immunisation is not up-to-date, or the appropriate documentation has not been provided, the child may be able to be enrolled under the 'No Jab, No Play' grace period provisions.

Second Year Registration

Families of children who have been determined as eligible for a second year must complete and submit a kindergarten registration form for a second year, signed and dated by the early childhood teacher.

It will be weighted with the relevant points and allocated accordingly.

A Declaration of Eligibility Form for a second year of kindergarten must be completed and submitted to the relevant funding authority.

Children Younger than the Eligible Preschool Age

If a child is aged less than four by April 30 in the year, they are to attend Kindergarten, the family must request early school entry approval in writing for their child to attend school in the following year. Requests should be made to the officer in charge, usually a director of the relevant government education authority region, or the non-government school that the child will be attending.

Should the child not attend school the following year, the child will not be eligible for another year of funded preschool, as identified in the relevant funding criteria.

Children Older than the Eligible Preschool Age

Some children may turn six years of age during their preschool year. This is usually relevant in the case of children who have been identified as requiring a second year of preschool.

Children who will turn six during the preschool year must apply for an exemption from school from the relevant Regional Director of the education department.

Families must complete an 'Exemption from School due to attendance in kindergarten program' form before the child starts kindergarten and submit it to relevant regional office of the education department authority. The form is available on the website or by contacting the Regional Office.

The kindergarten service must sight the approved exemption letter from relevant education authority and note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record. Data on the number of children attending Kindergarten who are six years plus, and confirmation that the exemption was sighted for each child, must be provided as part of funding data collection process.

Allocation within groups

Where the service provides more than one funded kindergarten program or three-year-old program, places within the programs will be allocated to groups by the service in line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria.

Considerations will include:

- Children requiring a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten
- Children with additional needs
- Vulnerable children known to Child Protection
- Programming requirements
- Parents that have work commitments
- Families that rely on carers for the delivery and collection of children

Whilst every attempt is made to meet requests for particular groups, there may be circumstances where this is not possible.

Withdrawal/Deferral

Some children who have commenced Kindergarten may benefit from withdrawing from the program, in order to access Kindergarten in the following year.

A withdrawal can occur without any impact on government funding for that child's place the following year, only if it is implemented **before** the first funding data collection that occurs in, or around April each year.

If a withdrawal occurs later in the year, the government funding will not be available in the next year.

When a withdrawal occurs, a fee adjustment will be made of either correct invoicing or fee reimbursement.

To have a Change of Information or Deferment of Kindergarten Application sent to you, contact Council's Kindergarten Enrolment Officer. Alternatively, you may submit an online form or download hard copy:

Phone: 9404 8825

Email: keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Download: www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Cancellations

Families are to notify Stables Kindergarten in writing of their intention to leave the service. If the service is not informed, fees will continue to be generated for that place.

ATTACHMENT 3. LETTER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WITHOUT ACCEPTABLE IMMUNISATION DOCUMENTATION

Stables Kindergarten

284 Childs Road, Mill Park VIC 3082

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Stables Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Stables 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 immunisations 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

Whittlesea Council - <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/health-safety/immunisation/>

National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811

Australian Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register

Better Health Channel website: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by an AIR Immunisation History Statement. The new application would be considered in line with Stables Kindergarten's *Enrolment and Orientation policy*.


Yours sincerely

Nadia Totham

Manager

Stables Kindergarten

Example of an immunisation history statement


Australian Government
 Department of Human Services


Immunisation history statement

As at: 01 June 2019

For: ARMANDO D BOWERS

Date of birth: 01 Nov 2017

Immunisation status: up to date

Schedule	Immunisation	Date given	Brand name given	Provider type
Birth	Hepatitis B	01 Nov 2017	Engerix-B	Hospital
2 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 Jan 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
4 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 Mar 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
6 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 May 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
12 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Meningococcal C Hib	01 Nov 2018	MMR II Menitorix	GP
18 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella	01 May 2019	Priorix-Tetra	GP
Next immunisation/s due Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Poliomyelitis				Date due 01 Nov 2020

ATTACHMENT 4. CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT AND NON-ATTENDANCE

FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

Cancellation of Enrolment

Families **MUST** notify Stables Kindergarten and/or an Enrolment Officer in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment. Fees will continue to be generated for that place until Stables Kindergarten is notified.

Note: This process does not apply to vulnerable children (*refer to Definitions*). Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; early childhood teacher or educator will need to inform their Case Officer.

Non-attendance

Term One

Families that have accepted a placement and have not completed an enrolment form and not attended the service within the first 3 weeks of Term One will be contacted and informed their placement has been cancelled.

Families Traveling Overseas

Families are required to notify Stables Kindergarten prior to extended periods of travel, and ensure any applicable fees are paid if they wish to return to the service.

Non-contactable Families

- After two/three weeks of a child not attending the service, early childhood teacher or 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, early childhood teacher or 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, early childhood teacher or educator to inform nominated supervisor and cross check families contact details.
- Nominated supervisor or approved provider 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.