**Greater Dandenong Central Enrolment Policy**

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| File Number: |  | Authority: | Mark Doubleday |
| Directorate: | Community Services | Responsible Officer: | Martin Fidler  Jacqueline Gray |
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1. **Purpose**

The central enrolment scheme administers the allocation of kindergarten places in the municipality and is a central contact for families with children enrolling into state funded kindergarten.

**2. Background**

This policy is developed in response to increased demand for kindergarten places in the municipality and changes to priority of access guidelines for state funded kindergarten programs.

In 2015, the State Government introduced policy changes to kindergarten central enrolment schemes and state funding agreements for kindergarten service providers, to support the inclusion of vulnerable children, requiring priority of access into a high quality kindergarten program.

This policy is written in conjunction with other Council’s Policies; Federal and State Policies; in support of the central enrolment allocation process and priority of access guidelines for enrolment into a state funded kindergarten program.

**3. Scope**

This policy applies to Council staff, kindergarten service providers operating in council owned facilities, other kindergarten service providers participating in the central enrolment scheme and families with children enrolling into kindergarten services within the municipality.

Kindergarten service providers have a legal obligation and responsibility to comply with this procedure, in line with Council’s kindergarten service and license agreements to maximise the availability of kindergarten places and comply with the priority of access guide to support the allocation of places in a fair and transparent process.

All kindergarten service providers in conjunction with the approval of Council will develop program models that optimise the number of available places to reach full capacity of the registered space available, unless enrolments are lower than capacity.

1. **Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter – Compatibility Statement**

All matters relevant to the Victorian Human Rights Charter have been considered in the preparation of this procedure and are consistent with the standards set by the Charter.

Freedom of expression – all families will have a right to free expression in relation to enrolment of a child for kindergarten,

* Right to a fair hearing – all families will have a right to a fair hearing in the case of a dispute in relation to enrolment of a child for kindergarten
* Right to be free from discrimination and to be equal before the law – all children of eligible age have the right to enrol for four year old kindergarten
* Right to privacy – all personal information will be considered private and confidential and used only for the purpose of enrolment for kindergarten

**5. References**

This procedure is underpinned by the following documents:

* + Council Plan 2013- 2017
  + Imagine 2030 Community Plan
  + Children’s Plan 2015-2019
  + National Quality Framework;
  + Education and Care Services National Law 2010;
  + Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011;
  + The Kindergarten Guide 2015 (Department of Education and Training)
  + Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia;
  + National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education
  + Age Discrimination Act 2004;
  + Disability and Discrimination Act 1992;
  + Racial Discrimination Act 1975;
  + UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
  + Equal Opportunity Act 2010;
  + Privacy and Data Collection Act 2006;
  + Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
  + Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005;
  + Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
  + Victorian Auditor General Early Childhood Development Services: Access and Quality 2011;

**6. Definitions**

* **Kindergarten Service Providers –** A cluster manager or volunteer committee of parents/guardians responsible for the day-to day management of a kindergarten service.
* **DET** – Department of Education and Training. The Victorian regulatory authority primarily responsible for the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services in Victoria.
* **Priority of Access Allocation Criteria** – The criteria for the allocation of places to participating funded kindergartens within the central enrolment scheme.
* **Allocation Priority** – Allocation criteria assigned to applicants with the highest priority to attend kindergarten services as outlined by DET in the Kindergarten Guide 2015.
* **Allocation of Places**– The process for the allocation of places to participating funded kindergarten programs within the central enrolment scheme.
* **Change of details** – The adjustment of information provided to the central enrolment scheme in the original Application for Enrolment Form.
* **Application Form** – The application form for parents/guardians who wish to enrol their child/ren in a funded kindergarten participating in central enrolment scheme
* **Early Start Kindergarten** – A DET program that provides free or low cost kindergarten to eligible three year old children where programs are delivered by a qualified teacher.
* **Eligible Child** – A child who is eligible to apply for a place in a participating kindergarten.
* **Enrolment Form** – The enrolment form for parents/guardians who wish to enrol their child/ren in a funded kindergarten participating in central enrolment scheme.
* **Funded Kindergarten** – also known as four year old kindergarten.
* **Health Care Card** – A concession card that entitles the person to cheaper medicines and concessions.
* **State funded kindergarten (also known as Preschool)** – The term kindergarten refers to both kindergarten and preschool. Kindergarten is a universal early childhood program funded by the Victorian Government for children in the year prior to commencing primary school.
* **Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer** – The Greater Dandenong City Council employee responsible for administering the central enrolment scheme.
* **Child Protection -** A government agency that responds to reports of child abuse or neglect.
* **Child FIRST** – Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Teams is a community based referral point into family services
* **Resident** – A person living in the City of Greater Dandenong.
* **Full capacity of registered space** - each kindergarten room, accommodating 2 groups x15 hours of funded kindergarten, per week, over 40 weeks, operating at the licensed capacity of the room;

**7. Access to Kindergarten Applications, Places and Eligibility Criteria**

Applications for kindergarten places will be accepted by the central enrolment scheme throughout the year, from after the birth of a child, up until 5pm (or prior business day) on 30 April of the year the child is due to attend state funded kindergarten.

It is preferable, that all applications for enrolment into kindergarten programs are received by Council, on 30 June, the year prior to your child starting kindergarten.

It is important, that three preferred kindergarten choices are listed in the application form.

Eligible year to attend state funded kindergarten:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Child's date of birth** | **Eligible year** |
| 01/05/2011 - 30/04/2012 | 2016 |
| 01/05/2012 - 30/04/2013 | 2017 |
| 01/05/2013 - 30/04/2014 | 2018 |
| 01/05/2014 - 30/04/2015 | 2019 |
| 01/05/2015 - 30/04/2016 | 2020 |

Kindergarten application forms are available online on Council’s website:

<http://www.greaterdandenong.com/document/19354/kindergarten>

Enrolment information is available from Greater Dandenong City Council Customer Service Offices, Kindergartens, Maternal and Child Health Centres. This information can be mailed to families by the Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer on request (03) 8571 1817.

Applications can be posted to Central Enrolment Officer, Po Box 200 Dandenong or emailed to [ChildrenServAdminSupport@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:ChildrenServAdminSupport@cgd.vic.gov.au)

As part of the Council’s auditing process, parents and guardians may be asked by the Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer to provide the following documentation to demonstrate:

* Proof of the child’s Date of Birth (E.g. copy of birth certificate, birth extract, or a copy of the Child’s Health Record accompanied by a Statutory Declaration verifying your child’s date of birth to be true and correct);
* Current proof of the applicants residency (E.g. copy of a rates notice or amenities bill that includes the parent/guardian’s name and address and is issued within the last 3 months);
* Current proof of working, studying or using childcare in the City of Greater Dandenong (pay slip, enrolment notice or childcare payment advice).

The Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer will confirm receipt of the application and application details by letter or email as stated in the Greater Dandenong City Council’s Customer Service Charter.

**Allocation Priority**

Kindergarten Places will be allocated on the basis of the following priority criteria:

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| **Priority 1**  (all criteria of equal priority) | **City of Greater Dandenong Resident** applicants in highest priority criteria:   * Children at risk of abuse or neglect, or in Out-of-Home Care * Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children * Asylum seeker and refugee children * Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy * 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 |
| **Priority 2** | **City of Greater Dandenong Resident** applicants:   * not identified in the highest priority criteria |
| **Priority 3** | **Non resident** **applicants of the City of Greater Dandenong** :   * with children who attend childcare within the municipality for a minimum of three days per week * whose parent / guardian works or volunteers within the Municipality for a minimum of three days per week. |
| **Priority 4** | **Non resident applicants of the City of Greater Dandenong:**   * Other |

Services providers who qualify for Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate are required to comply with the Commonwealth Government’s Priority for allocating places policy.

<https://www.education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>

The services should consider the Commonwealth policy in conjunction with the priority of access criteria above;

**Confirmation of details**

In the year prior to starting kindergarten, applicants will be contacted in May to confirm application details, any change of preferred kindergartens, hours and session times. This information will assist in the allocation of first round offers and kindergarten session planning with service providers.

**Allocation offers**

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| **First Round Offers** | 1 August |
| **Second Round Offers** | 1 September |
| **Late Offers** | Late applications received after September 1, will be offered where vacancies exist, in accordance with the priority of access criteria |

**Allocation of places**

Council cannot guarantee applicants will receive a place at the kindergarten of first choice; this will depend on the number of applicants and the number of funded kindergarten places available against the priority of access allocation criteria; In a situation where the same number of priority criteria is met, kindergarten places will be allocated on the highest vulnerability of children at risk of abuse or neglect, or in out of home care*.*

If the first preference kindergarten is not available, the Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer, will offer a place at the second and third preference kindergartens listed on the application form or where a vacancy exists throughout the municipality in consultation with the family.

Change of preferences must be lodged in writing to the Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer by 30 June in the year preceding entry to kindergarten.

Applicants who are successful will be notified in writing of a confirmed place.

Parents or guardians will need to complete the acceptance form and return to the Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer by email [ChildrenServAdminSupport@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:ChildrenServAdminSupport@cgd.vic.gov.au) or by post to

Po Box 200 Dandenong, within 5 business days.

Acceptance of a place forfeits the right to remain on a waiting list for another kindergarten in the municipality.

Parents / guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place, withdraw or defer their enrolment application, will be requested to notify the Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer within 5 business days in writing or by email [ChildrenServAdminSupport@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:ChildrenServAdminSupport@cgd.vic.gov.au).

# Managing Waiting Lists

Children on waiting lists will be allocated places once vacancies arise at individual Kindergartens. Places are allocated in order of the computer generated waiting list and in line with the central enrolment allocation priorities of this policy.

# Disclaimer

While the general intent of this procedure will be adhered to, Greater Dandenong City Council may, at its discretion, make modifications to such procedures where extenuating circumstances require such action. Where incorrect information has been supplied on the Application Kindergarten form, offers for places may be retracted.

**Related Documents**

* References to Legislation
* Attachment 1 Central Enrolment Form
* Attachment 2 Updated details Form
* Attachment 3 Kindergarten Location Map
* Attachment 3 Kindergarten service and license agreements (service providers in council owned facilities only)

# References to Legislation and other documents

| **Name** | **Location** |
| --- | --- |
| *Education and Care Services National Regulations* 2011 | <http://www.education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/24085/EducationCareServicesNationalRegulations.pdf> |
| *Education and Care Services National Law Act* 2010 | <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/B73164FE5DA2112DCA2577BA0014D9ED/$FILE/10-069a.pdf> |
| *Disability Discrimination  Act* 1992 *(Commonwealth)* | <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00013> |
| *Equal Opportunity Act* 2010 *(Victoria)* | <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/7CAFB78A7EE91429CA25771200123812/$FILE/10-016a.pdf> |
| *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act* 1986 *(Commonwealth)* | <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/hraeoca1986512/> |
| *Sex Discrimination Act* 1984 *(Commonwealth)* | <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00002> |
| *Sex and Age Discrimination Amendment Act* 2011 | <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/saadlaa2011427/sch1.html> |
| *Information Privacy Act* 2000 | <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/4BE13AE4A4C3973ECA256E5B00213F50/$FILE/00-098a.pdf> |
| *Child Wellbeing and  Safety Act* 2005 | <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/LTObjSt6.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/6606BB1B2DC56CE3CA257974000E4879/$FILE/05-83aa014%20authorised.pdf> |
| *Children, Youth and  Families Act* 2005 | <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/edfb620cf7503d1aca256da4001b08af/15A4CD9FB84C7196CA2570D00022769A/$FILE/05-096a.pdf> |
| *Victorian Charter of  Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006 | <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/54D73763EF9DCA36CA2571B6002428B0/$FILE/06-043a.pdf> |
| *Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria.* | <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx> |