
ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at Gray Court Pre-School
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Gray Court Pre-School
- the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Gray Court Pre-School
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Gray Court Pre-School is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting families to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with management or control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Gray Court Pre-School.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2)(k)).

It is intended that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to one year of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, a priority system for access must be determined by the Approved Provider in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places will vary from service to service, but is generally based on a service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2012*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Criteria for access and inclusion are outlined in the *Kindergarten Funding Guide* (refer to *Sources*). Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for filling child care places* (refer to *Sources*).

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act*

2008 to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions*).

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*, including Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 177, 183
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *National Quality Standard*, including Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Acceptable immunisation documentation: documentation as defined by the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood services* (refer to *Sources*) as acceptable evidence that a child is fully vaccinated for their age, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind their vaccinations; or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated; or has been assessed as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

Approved care: Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Australian Government Department of Human Services to receive the Child Care Subsidy 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:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

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

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

Eligible child: A child attending an early childhood education and care service as described in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood services* or a child in a kindergarten program who meets the requirements of both the *Kindergarten Funding Guide* and the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood services*.

Enrolment application fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

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

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Enrolment record: The collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including the enrolment form; details of any court orders; and immunisation documentation as specified in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood services*. This information is kept confidential by the service.

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

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *Priority for filling child care places*: <https://www.education.gov.au/priority-filling-child-care-places>
- *Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training)*: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood services*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- Department of Health and Human Services: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation>

Service policies

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

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Gray Court Pre-School, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy (refer also to Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria)
- considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program
- 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 (refer also to Attachment 2 – General enrolment procedures and Attachment 3 – Sample enrolment application form)
- providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program

- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the child's immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation **prior to enrolment** to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16 week grace period
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
- advising parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (see Attachment 5 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)
- taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- ensuring that the enrolment form (refer to *Definitions*) complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records (refer to *Definitions*) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183)
- ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and 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
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.

All 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 parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- 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
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing the enrolment application form and the enrolment form prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child's immunisation status
- where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
- ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- welcome 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: Eligibility and priority of access criteria
- Attachment 2: General enrolment procedures
- Attachment 3: Enrolment Application Form – 4-year-old
- Attachment 4: Enrolment Application Form – 3-year-old
- Attachment 5: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Committee of Management of Gray Court Pre-School on 20/12/2018.

REVIEW FREQUENCY: 1 YEAR

REVIEW DATE: 20/12/2019

ATTACHMENT 1

Eligibility and priority of access criteria

1. Eligibility and priority of access criteria for the funded kindergarten program

The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded kindergarten program:

- children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with the *Kindergarten Funding Guide* available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year, but:
 - deferred
 - withdrew from the service prior to the April data collection
- children who turn four 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 (refer to the *Kindergarten Funding Guide*, available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)
- children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs
- three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/comms/earlystartkinderatsic.pdf>

When demand exceeds availability, the Approved Provider will refer to the service's values, philosophy and *Inclusion and Equity Policy* to determine the priority of access. This will include:

- children who have received funding for a second year of kindergarten
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred or withdrew from the service prior to the April data collection.
- priority of access criteria as outlined in the *Kindergarten Funding Guide* available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx

Other considerations may include date of application, siblings already enrolled at the service, attendance in the three-year-old program and local community zoning.

If participating in a central enrolment scheme, the priority of access for that scheme will be implemented. Childcare services providing approved care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for filling child care places* (refer to *Sources*).

2. Eligibility and access criteria for the three-year-old kindergarten program

Children are eligible for attendance in the three-year-old kindergarten program provided they have turned three prior to commencement.

Children will only be able to attend a second year of three-year-old kindergarten in exceptional circumstances (after consideration by the Approved Provider) or when all eligible children on the waiting list have been offered a place.

The Approved Provider must determine eligibility and access criteria applicable to the service. Considerations may include:

- children recommended by an educator for an additional year in the three-year-old program
- date of application – for example, families can enrol for the program when their child has turned two, or applications for the three-year-old program can open at the start of Term 1 in the year prior to commencement
- siblings attending the service
- places allocated by the service for transient families e.g. RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers
- local community zoning.

3. 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 may include:

- Needs of individual children
- Needs of the group
- Parental wishes.

ATTACHMENT 2

General enrolment procedures

1. Application for a place

- Enrolment application forms are available from the service.
- A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the service.
- 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 applying for a second year of funded kindergarten or currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application form for the following year.
- All applications must be accompanied by an enrolment application fee of **\$50 for 3 year old and 4 year old kinder**. This fee is to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application and is **not refundable**.
- Completed enrolment application forms are to be forwarded to the Enrolments Officer at Gray Court Pre-School 6 Gray Court, Mooroolbark.
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted to the Enrolments Officer who is responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
- Applications will be entered on the waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria.

2. Procedure for a late application for enrolment

Applications received after the closing date will be considered after all other applicants have been offered a place, in line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of Gray Court Pre-School.

3. Allocation within groups

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

4. Offer of places

- Places will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of the service.
- Offer of places in the three-year-old program/s and the funded kindergarten program will be made at the same time.
- Applicants who are successful will be notified in writing of a confirmed place.
- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place, or intend to withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify the Approved Provider, or the Enrolment Officer at the service, in writing as soon as possible.
- Second-round offers will be made **once a position becomes available**.
- **Term 1 Fees must be paid by the AGM to hold a place for the following year.**
- An enrolment form and other relevant information will be provided after the place is accepted and the deposit has been paid.

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*).



ATTACHMENT 3

Enrolment Application Form – 4-year-old

This form, along with the deposit, should be forwarded to: Enrolment Officer
Gray Court Pre-School
6 Gray Court, Mooroolbark, Vic 3138

4-Year-Old Kinder Enrolment Application – [Year]

Children enrolling in 4-Year-Old kinder must be 4 years old before the 30th April of the year they are attending

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Male / Female (please circle)

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode: _____

#1: Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: (B/H) _____ (A/H) _____ (Mobile) _____

Email Address: _____ please tick to receive notices via email

#2: Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: (B/H) _____ (A/H) _____ (Mobile) _____

Email Address: _____ please tick to receive notices via email

Does your child require any additional needs (medical, intellectual, etc)? Yes / No (please circle)

If yes, please provide details or contact the Pre-School to discuss with our teacher/s:

- I hereby apply for a position for my child named above at Gray Court Pre-School in [Year] in the 4-Year-Old program.
- I enclose \$50 cash / cheque or I have made a direct deposit as an enrolment fee to be payable to Gray Court Pre-School.
(Gray Court Pre-School Direct Deposit Details: BSB 063-231 | Account 10064554 | Child's SURNAME as reference)
- I acknowledge that the deposit is to secure my child's spot at Gray Court Pre-School; enrolment will not occur until the deposit has been paid; the deposit is non-refundable and is in addition to the term fees.
- I acknowledge the policy of **NO JAB NO PLAY**. I understand an up-to-date Medicare Immunisation History Statement is required for my child to be enrolled and that my child cannot legally attend any session of kinder until this is received.

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date received: _____ Fee Enclosed: Yes / No Immunisation Statement: Yes / No

Amount received: _____ Receipt Number: _____ Waitlisted: Yes / No

Enrolment officer signature: _____ Date: _____



ATTACHMENT 3

Enrolment Application Form – 3-year-old

This form, along with the deposit, should be forwarded to: Enrolment Officer
Gray Court Pre-School
6 Gray Court, Mooroolbark, Vic 3138

3-Year-Old Kinder Enrolment Application – [Year]

Children enrolling in 3-Year-Old kinder must be 3 years old before the 31st January of the year they are attending

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Male / Female (please circle)

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode: _____

#1: Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: (B/H) _____ (A/H) _____ (Mobile) _____

Email Address: _____ please tick to receive notices via email

#2: Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: (B/H) _____ (A/H) _____ (Mobile) _____

Email Address: _____ please tick to receive notices via email

Does your child require any additional needs (medical, intellectual, etc)? Yes / No (please circle)

If yes, please provide details or contact the Pre-School to discuss with our teacher/s:

- I hereby apply for a position for my child named above at Gray Court Pre-School in [Year] in the 3-Year-Old program.
- I enclose \$50 cash / cheque or I have made a direct deposit as an enrolment fee to be payable to Gray Court Pre-School.
(Gray Court Pre-School Direct Deposit Details: BSB 063-231 | Account 10064554 | Child's SURNAME as reference)
- I acknowledge that the deposit is to secure my child's spot at Gray Court Pre-School; enrolment will not occur until the deposit has been paid; the deposit is non-refundable and is in addition to the term fees.
- I acknowledge the policy of **NO JAB NO PLAY**. I understand an up-to-date Medicare Immunisation History Statement is required for my child to be enrolled and that my child cannot legally attend any session of kinder until this is received.

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date received: _____ Fee Enclosed: Yes / No Immunisation Statement: Yes / No

Amount received: _____ Receipt Number: _____ Waitlisted: Yes / No

Enrolment officer signature: _____ Date: _____



ATTACHMENT 5

Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

Gray Court Pre-School

6 Gray Court, Mooroolbark VIC 3138

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name],

Re: Enrolment at Gray Court Pre-School for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Gray Court Pre-School 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 acceptable immunisation documentation.

Acceptable immunisation documentation includes evidence that your child:

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

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

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

- Your doctor
- Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation service 1300 368 333
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register Tel 1800 653 809
- Better Health Channel website: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/no-jab-no-play>

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by acceptable immunisation documentation. The new application would be considered in line with Gray Court Pre-School's Enrolment and Orientation policy.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

Enrolment Officer

Gray Court Pre-School