
Enrolment And Orientation Policy

1. Authorisation

The Emmanuel Anglican Kindergarten Committee of Management adopted this policy on 11th June 2014.

2. Review Date

This policy shall be reviewed in May 2015.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the Committee, staff, and parents/guardians/guardians who wish to have their children enrolled at the kinder, or have children already enrolled at the kinder.

Included with this policy are:

Appendix 1: Enrolment Procedure for Four-Year-Old Groups

Appendix 2: Enrolment Procedure for Three-Year-Old Groups.

This policy is has an accompanying extract for the convenience of parents/guardians.

4. Background and Legislation

Background

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved kinders 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/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 kinder to kinder, but is generally based on a kinder'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 *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* (refer to *Sources*). Kinders participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic), as amended 2011
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2011
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2012

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- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
 - *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
 - *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 177, 183
 - *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
 - *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*
 - *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
 - Standard 6.1: Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained
 - Element 6.1.1: There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
 - *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

5. 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.

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

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

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

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

DEECD: Department of Education and Early Childhood Services.

EAK: Emmanuel Anglican Kindergarten

Eligible child: A child who meets the criteria outlined in the *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*.

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

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 kinder.

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians/guardians about their child. This is completed after a place has been offered by the kinder and accepted by the applicant. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the kinder.

Enrolment record: Contains information on each child, as required under the National Regulations, including contact details, names of authorised nominees (refer to *Definitions*), names of persons authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication, names of persons authorised to take the child outside the kinder, details of any court orders, personal and health information including specific healthcare needs, medical management plans and dietary restrictions etc. (Regulations 160, 161, 162). This information is kept confidential by the kinder.

Fees: Payments for participation in a kinder program.

Groups: The aggregation of the children into their appropriate sessions, determined by age and timetable.

Selection Criteria: The criteria under which applications for the enrolment of children are accepted for a kinder, and places in the programs offered by the kinder are allocated.

Siblings: Sisters and brothers.

Vacancy: A place in a program that becomes free as a result of a child leaving the kinder, or is available because all places are not filled.

6. Policy Statement

Values

This kinder is committed to:

- Equal access for all children, based on the selection criteria set out in this policy.
- Compliance with the Children's Services Regulations 1998.
- Compliance with the DEECD funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in government funded preschool places.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the details on enrolment forms.
- Ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the kinder.

Purpose

This policy will outline, for current and future users, staff and the Committee:

- The criteria for enrolment at the kinder.
- The process to be followed when enrolling a child, and the basis on which places within the programs are allocated
- Procedures for the orientation of new families and children into the kinder.

7. Procedures

After consultation with the current and future users of the kinder, the Committee will determine the programs and hours of attendance to be offered at the kinder, based on enrolments received and the financial viability of the programs to be offered.

The procedure for enrolment for Three and Four Year Old Groups is through the Monash City Council Central Enrolments Scheme. The procedure is outlined below.

General enrolment procedures

1. Application for a place

- Applications to be placed on the Central Enrolment Scheme for the City of Monash will be accepted any time after the child has turned 18 months of age.
- Applications will be entered on the waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria.
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the kinder, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.

2. Closing dates for placement applications

The closing dates for placement applications are:

- 30 June 2014 for children to attend the funded kindergarten program in 2015
- 30 June 2014 for children to attend the three-year-old program in 2015.

3. 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 the Central Enrolment Scheme for the City of Monash

4. Offer of places

- Places will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria (below) and of the kinder. Refer to Appendices 1 and 2.
- Offer of places in the three-year-old program/s and the funded kindergarten program will be mailed by a date set by Monash City Council.
- 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 person responsible for managing the enrolment process at the kinder.
- Second-round offers will be made 2 weeks after first-round offers. Third-round offers will be made 2 weeks after second-round offers.
- After the place is accepted and the deposit has been paid, an enrolment form and other relevant information will be provided at the AGM.

5. 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 *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* (available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/)
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year, but:
 - deferred
 - withdrew from the kinder on or before the last day of Term 2 and have completed the *Kindergarten withdrawal and deferment form* (available from the kinder)
- 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 DEECD (refer to *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*, available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/)
- 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 DEECD, 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 DEECD. 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 DEECD 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 www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/earllystart/

When demand exceeds availability, the Approved Provider will refer to the kinder'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 kinder on or before the last day of Term 2.

Other considerations may include date of application, siblings already enrolled at the kinder, 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 *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

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

Children are eligible for attendance in the three-year-old 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 kinder. 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 kinder
- places allocated by the kinder for transient families e.g. RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers
- local community zoning.

8. Key Responsibilities and Authorities

The Committee is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy
- Approving any changes to this policy
- Dealing with any questions/concerns that arise in relation to any aspect of the policy.

The Enrolment Officers (or the delegated person) are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy, which includes:

- Providing Enrolment Application Forms at the kinder, that is compliant with the Regulations.
- Secure storage of the completed Enrolment Application Forms.
- Maintaining the confidential status of Enrolment Application Forms and the information contained within the forms.
- Collating enrolments.
- Collecting, receipting and forwarding enrolment deposits to the Fees Officer.
- Offering places in accordance with this policy.
- Sending letters to unsuccessful applicants and advising them of their placement on the waiting list.
- Sending Enrolment Forms and relevant information to families on their acceptance of a place.
- Providing a monthly report to the Committee regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered.
- Ensuring teachers are aware of any children who are enrolled who have medical conditions. This is to ensure that the child's needs are met and that the parents/guardians of the children are aware of the Centre's Health and Welfare Policy and if necessary a Health Management Plan negotiated between parent/s and teacher.
- Mailing out information regarding the Annual General Meeting including any information required and invoices for first term fees and details of the orientation sessions
- Collating all information and organising enrolment and deposit collection

The staff 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
- Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- Responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- Ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the kinder
- Ensuring that parents/guardians/guardians of a child attending the kinder can enter the kinder premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157)
- Developing strategies to assist new families to:

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- Feel welcomed into the kinder
 - Become familiar with kinder policies and procedures
 - Share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
 - Share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs
 - Discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning
 - Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
 - Encouraging parents/guardians/guardians to:
 - Stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - Make contact with educators and carers at the kinder, when required
 - Assisting parents/guardians/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
 - Providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
 - Sharing information with parents/guardians/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the kinder
 - Discussing support kinders for children with parents/guardians/guardians, where required
 - Complying with the kinder's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- Completing enrolment forms prior to their child's commencement at the kinder
- Ensuring that all required information is provided to the kinder
- Updating information by notifying the kinder of any changes as they occur.

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

9. Sources and related policies

Sources

- *Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Kinders for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000*, included in the *Legislative Extracts*:
www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/Operation/Pages/InstructionSheets.aspx
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*:
www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*:
www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/
- *Priority for allocating places in child care services*:
www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/Operation/Pages/Priorityforallocatingplacesinchildcareservices.aspx

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- *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria:*
www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/
 - DEECD Kinder guide 2014
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/funding/kinderpolicycriteria.pdf>

Kinder policies

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

10. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes set out under 'Policy Statement', the Committee 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 kinder's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

Appendix 1: Enrolment Procedure for Four-Year-Old Groups

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2. The number of 4-year-old places is 60 in total: 30 in each groups. The Committee may decide how many places to offer in any one year, up to the maximum of 60.
3. Children must have their 4th birthday by 30th April of the year they wish to attend.
4. Parents/guardians wishing to enrol their children should obtain a form from the Enrolment Officer or the kinder or from Monash City Council, Oakleigh Service Centre, Drummond Street, Oakleigh.
5. Once this form is completed it should be lodged at the Council either in person or by post. A small administration fee is payable.
6. The form is processed at the Council by the PreSchool Support Officer who notes the date on which it is received. This date is used to determine the date of application. A letter of acknowledgement is sent. This is not an offer of a place.
7. First preference of place is given to those children who have participated in the EAK 3 year old program. Second preference is then given to children who have siblings enrolling in the same calendar year or previously enrolled at the kinder. Thereafter, enrolments will be ordered according to the least number of days between 'date of application on enrolment form' and 'date at which child turned 18 months old'.
8. On a date determined by Monash Council Central Enrolments, letters of offer will be sent out by the kinder Enrolment Officer to the first 60 (or any number agreed by the Committee) applicants. It should be noted that this is an offer of a PLACE at the kindergarten and does not guarantee the preferred group.
9. Applicants will be asked to return a slip to the Enrolment Officer confirming their place by a specified date and identifying which group they wish their child to attend. Parent(s) will be asked to pay a non-refundable deposit (the deposit) to secure their place at this time. Places are only guaranteed once the deposit is received. Parents/guardians will also be given the option of deferring their enrolment or withdrawing their enrolment at this time.
10. The deposit is deducted from the first term fees. Refer to the Fees Policy.
11. Allocation of timetabled groups is done on a first come, first served basis in the first instance. However, the teachers may determine the final groups in the interests of educational balance.
12. When first term invoices are sent out, parents/guardians will be given an indication of which group their child has been placed in. If their child is not allocated into their preferred group, parents/guardians are encouraged to call the enrolments officer to discuss whether they wish to withdraw or continue in their allocated group and be placed on a waiting list for their preferred group.
13. If vacancies exist after the first round offers, a second round of offers will be sent out on a date determined by Monash Council Central Enrolments to parents/guardians on the waiting list. Further rounds of offers may be made until the vacancies are filled (see point 6 above).
14. Parents/guardians must pay the first term's fees before or on the evening of the Annual General Meeting, as specified on the invoice. (Refer to Fees Policy). Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) (the date and time of which will be set by the Committee) At the AGM/ ENROLMENT SESSION parents/guardians will sign the Fee Payment

Agreement Form, receive the “Starting Kinder” booklet and other information relevant for their child’s induction into the kinder. The Fees Schedule and Fees Summary will be sent to parents/guardians with the Term 1 invoice. There will also be hard copies available at the AGM for reference purposes prior to signing the fees payment agreement form.

15. The Enrolment Officer may offer places to other applicants on the waiting list if a deposit is not received by the date specified.
16. If places are available, enrolments may be taken during the kinder year at the discretion of the Committee.
17. Children who may benefit from a second year of 4-Year-Old Kinder:
 - i. Teachers may inform parents/guardians at least one week prior to the Monash Council Central Enrolments deadline if they think it is possible a child may benefit from another year of 4-Year-Old Kinder. This may enable a place to be held through Monash Council Central Enrolments.
 - ii. Parent(s) will be encouraged to put in another application through the Central Enrolments procedure to secure a place for their child for a second year, should they accept the advice of the teacher.
 - iii. If consent is forthcoming, an application will be made by the Kindergarten for a second year of funding from DEECD. The kinder will do everything possible within the Enrolments Policy to ensure that a place is made available for any child needing a second year of kindergarten who has received funding.
 - iv. If children do not receive a second year of funding they will be required to enrol through the normal procedure. The Kindergarten reserves the right to charge the full fees (ie the full Kindergarten fees plus the amount provided by DEECD). Refer to the Fees Policy.

When children may benefit from moving from their 4-year-old session to a 3-year-old session:

- i. In the event that a child is attending a four-year-old group at the centre, the teacher may recommend that the child be placed into a three-year-old group. The teacher will allow at least a week for parents/guardians to make their decision prior to the DEECD funding deadline.
- ii. If parents/guardians accept the advice, the child will be placed in a three-year-old session when the next available vacancy occurs, bypassing any existing waiting list.

Appendix 2: Enrolment Procedure for Three-Year-Old Groups

1. The maximum number of 3-year-old places is 39 in total: 13 in each group, 26 in each session. The Committee may determine the number of places they wish to offer up to the maximum number.
2. Children must have their 3rd birthday by 30th April of the year they wish to attend. Children who are not yet 3 on the first day of term are unable to attend alone until their 3rd birthday. Children may attend in the company of their parent/guardian for two weeks prior to turning three.
3. Children who are enrolled for 3 year old kinder but will have turned 4 years old by 30th April of the year they wish to attend may be asked to come for an interview with the kindergarten teacher to determine the appropriate group for that child.
4. Parents/guardians wishing to enrol their children should obtain a form from the Enrolment Officer or the kinder or from Monash Council.
5. Once this form is completed it should be lodged at Monash Council either in person or by post. A small administration fee is payable.
6. The form is processed at Monash Council by the PreSchool Support Officer who notes the date on which it is received. This date is used to determine the date of application. A letter of acknowledgement is sent. This is not an offer of a place.
7. First preference of place is given to those children who have turned 3 prior to the year attending kindergarten. Second preference is then given to children who have siblings enrolling in the same calendar year or previously enrolled at the kinder.
8. Third preference is given to those children who have also applied to enrol in the EAK 4 year old program. If places are still remaining, preference is then given to the least number of days between 'date of application on enrolment form' and 'date at 18 months old' (see point 6).
9. On a date determined by Central Enrolments, letters of offer will be sent out by the Enrolment Officer to the first 39 (or any number agreed by the Committee) applicants. It should be noted that this is an offer of a PLACE at the kindergarten and does not guarantee the preferred group.
10. Applicants will be asked to return a slip to the Enrolment Officer confirming their place by a specified date and identifying which group they wish their child to attend. Parent(s) will be asked to pay a non-refundable deposit (the deposit) to secure their place at this time. Places are only guaranteed once the deposit is received. Parents/guardians will also be given the option of deferring their enrolment or withdrawing their enrolment at this time.
11. The deposit is deducted from the first term fees. Refer to the Fees Policy.
12. Allocation of groups is done on a first come, first served basis in the first instance. However, the teachers may determine the final groups in the interests of educational balance.
13. When first term invoices are sent out, parents/guardians will be notified of which group their child has been placed in. If their child is not allocated into their preferred group, parents/guardians are encouraged to call the enrolments officer to discuss whether they wish to withdraw or continue in their allocated group and be placed on a waiting list for their preferred group.

14. If vacancies exist after the first round of offers, a second round of offers will be sent out on a date determined by Monash Council Central Enrolments to parents/guardians on the waiting list should places be available. Further rounds of offers may be made until the vacancies are filled.
15. Parents/guardians must pay the first term's fees before or on the evening of the Annual General Meeting, as specified on the invoice. (Refer to Fees Policy). Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) (the date and time of which will be set by the Committee) At the AGM/ ENROLMENT SESSION parents/guardians will sign the Fee Payment Agreement Form, receive the "Starting Kinder" booklet and other information relevant for their child's induction into the kinder. The Fees Schedule and Fees Summary will be sent to parents/guardians with the Term 1 invoice. There will also be hard copies available at the AGM for reference purposes prior to signing the fees payment agreement form.
16. The Enrolment Officer may offer places to other applicants on the waiting list if a deposit is not received by the date specified.
17. If places are available, enrolments may be taken during the kinder year at the discretion of the Committee.
18. When children may benefit from a second year of 3 Year Old Kinder:
 - i. Teachers may inform parents/guardians at least one week prior to the Monash Council Central Enrolments deadline if they think it is possible a child may benefit from another year of 3-Year-Old Kinder.
 - ii. Parent(s) will be encouraged to put in another application through the Central Enrolments procedure to apply for a place for their child for a second year, should they accept the advice of the teacher. These children will be given preference for an offer of place.

When children may benefit from moving from their 4-year-old session to a 3-year-old session:

- iii. In the event that a child is attending a four-year-old group at the centre, the teacher may recommend that the child be placed into a three-year-old group. The teacher will allow at least a week for parents/guardians to make their decision prior to the DEECD funding deadline.
- iv. If parents/guardians accept the advice, the child will be placed in a three-year-old session when the next available vacancy occurs, bypassing any existing waiting list.