

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at St. Paul's Anglican Kindergarten
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at St. Paul's Anglican Kindergarten
- the criteria by which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into St. Paul's Anglican Kindergarten
- 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

St. Paul's Anglican Kindergarten is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- complying with the Boroondara Kindergarten Central Enrolment Scheme (BKCES)
- 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 and Control, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, Persons in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at St. Paul's Anglican Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

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

It is intended that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to one year of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, Approved Provider's must adhere to their eligibility and priority of access criteria (refer to *Definitions* and *Attachment 1*) policy in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*), the 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. Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved child care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for families childcare package) Act 2017* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (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*
- *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, 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*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

Acceptable immunisation documentation: documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* 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 childcare: 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/

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.

BKCES: Is the Boroondara Kindergarten Central Enrolment Scheme. St. Paul's Anglican Kindergarten is a member of the Scheme and operates under the BKCES Enrolment policy as published by BKCES. This policy is available at:

<https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten>

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 education and care services* or a child in a kindergarten program who meets the requirements of both *The Kindergarten Guide* and the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services*.

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

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 education and care services*. This information is kept confidential by the service.

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

Nominated Supervisor: Responsible for the day to day management of the Service.

Online Enrolment form: An online system owned by the Service that collects contact details, personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information on this form is part of the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

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 Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*), or if in receipt of the CCS, comply with the Commonwealth Government's policy for allocating places.

Regulatory Authority: Department of Education and Training.

Scheme: Boroondara Kindergarten Central Enrolment Scheme

Service: St. Paul's Anglican Kindergarten

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Boroondara Kindergarten Central Enrolment Scheme Enrolment Policy 2019
<https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten/how-kindergarten-places-are-allocated>
- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:
www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000: www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2006B01541
- *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 allocating places in child care services*: <http://education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>
- *The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training)*:
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services 2015*:
www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit
- Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au/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*

PROCESS

Parents may review the BKCES Information Kit (<https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten>) and are welcome to tour the kindergarten by appointment. Applications are submitted by the family direct to BKCES along with an administration fee and places are offered to families by BKCES in accordance with their policies, including eligibility and selection criteria.

- Enrolment Applications are to be completed online via the Boroondara website at www.boroondara.vic.gov.au
- Hard copy Enrolment Application forms may be downloaded from the City of Boroondara website at www.boroondara.vic.gov.au or collected from Boroondara Council Customer Service centres.
- A separate Enrolment Application must be completed for each child for each year of entry.

Once offers have been accepted by the family, BKCES will forward contact details to the Service to finalise enrolment. The Service will then make contact with the family and send information including a

link to the online enrolment system and information relating to fees that will be required to confirm their child's place at the Service.

Failure by the family to pay fees and submit satisfactory enrolment information (including immunisation documentation) by the required timeframe, will lead to BKCES being notified and the place being offered to the next child on the waiting list.

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Complying with the general enrolment process outlined in the Boroondara Kindergarten Central Enrolment Scheme Enrolment Policy 2019, including the eligibility and selection criteria of BKCES
 - **ATTACHMENT 1 - Eligibility and Selection Criteria 4-year-old kindergarten**
 - **ATTACHMENT 2 - Eligibility and Selection Criteria 3-year-old kindergarten**
 - **ATTACHMENT 3 - Eligibility and Selection Criteria St. Paul's Pre-Prep from 2020 onwards**
- developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of and are able to access, an early childhood program, and considering any barriers to access that may exist
- complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy
- providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to book a tour during operational hours 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
(ATTACHMENT 4)
- 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 cannot continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- if no acceptable immunisation documentation is provided to the service, the child will be unable to attend. The service will advise BKCES and the vacated spot will be offered to another family in line with the BKCES enrolment scheme policy.
- 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 person (Enrolment Officer Committee member) responsible for the enrolment process is accountable for the following:

- Communicating with Boroondara Council in relation to BKCES
- Acting as a conduit of information between BKCES and the service and as a point of contact for BKCES staff
- Attending quarterly BKCES Advisory Group meetings. This includes sharing, with notice, the agenda for the meetings to the Vice President(s), Treasurer and Nominated Supervisor of the Service and raising items on behalf of the service and committee at the subsequent BKCES meeting and; providing a verbal report of the BKCES Advisory Group meetings at the next Committee meeting and/or sharing resources and time critical information as necessary prior to the Committee meeting and; circulating minutes of the BKCES Advisory Meetings to Committee and Providing timely reports to the approved provider regarding the status of enrolments
- Ensuring key roles within the Service, Committee (Treasurer, Secretary) and the Service's book keeper are provided with up to date enrolments lists and that they only contain as much private information as is absolutely necessary for their roles
- Complying with the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy of the service
- Communicating to kindergarten families at St. Paul's of BKCES deadlines for enrolment and changes in preferences.

The Nominated Supervisor and early childhood teachers 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 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 online enrolment application form prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child's immunisation status and paying all fees required to confirm enrolment in a timely manner in line with the Fees Policy

- 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
- clearly identifying any additional or specific needs of the child, to enable the educators to best meet the needs of the child and facilitate the inclusion of the child into the education program. This will also enable to kinder to apply for DET Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages (if applicable) to provide support to the child
- 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:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of St. Paul's Anglican Kindergarten on 6 October 2019.

REVIEW DATE: 6 OCTOBER 2020

ATTACHMENT 1

BKCES Eligibility Criteria for 4-year-old kindergarten

As per the DET Kindergarten Guide, the following children are eligible for attendance in a 4-year-old kindergarten program:

- Children who turn 4 years of age by 30 April in the year they attend kindergarten.
- High priority children (Refer to BKCES enrolment policy for further details) <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten>
- Children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders. (Refer to BKCES enrolment policy for further details) <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten>
- Children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding who are known to Child Protection or referred to Child and Family Services Information, Referral and Support Teams (Child FIRST). (Refer to BKCES enrolment policy for further details) <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten>
- Children who have received funding for a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten.
- Children turning six years of age in their year at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school entry by the DET regional office. (Refer to the DET Kindergarten Guide)
- Children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted a written request to the DET regional office for their child to attend school the following year. A copy of the written request for early entry to school must be attached with the application. Parents/guardians are advised that very few requests are approved by the DET for early entry. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed onto school the following year, the child will be unable to access another funded year of four-year-old kindergarten unless they meet the criteria for a second year of funded kindergarten. (Refer to the DET Kindergarten Guide)
- Children also eligible to attend a BKCES Member kindergarten are children who were eligible to attend the 4-year-old funded kindergarten program in the previous year but deferred from the 4-year-old funded kindergarten program on or before the last day of Term 1 with the intention of attending the following year.

BKCES Selection Criteria for 4-year-old kindergarten

Commencing with applicants first preference kindergarten, places are allocated according to the following criteria:

1. **High Priority children** - Children at risk of abuse or neglect including children in Out-of-Home Care, children who are identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, children with additional needs who require additional assistance to participate in kindergarten, require a combination of services which are individually planned and/or have an identified specific disability or developmental delay, asylum seeker and refugee children and children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.
2. **Repeats** – Children currently enrolled at the kindergarten who have received funding for a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten **are placed at the same kindergarten.**
3. **Deferrals** – Children who were eligible to attend a 4-year-old program at the Member Kindergarten in the previous year but deferred or withdrew from the program in writing to the BKCES officers on or before the last day of Term 1 are placed at the same kindergarten.
4. **3-year olds** – Children who have attended and completed the 3-year-old program at the Member Kindergarten in the previous year and have applied for the 4-year-old program at the same kindergarten.
5. **Siblings** – Children who have had a sibling attend and complete the 3-year-old or 4-year-old program at the same Member Kindergarten within a 5-year timeframe.
6. **City of Boroondara residents** who apply to their closest City of Boroondara kindergarten
7. **All other residents** of the City of Boroondara
8. (a) **Non-City of Boroondara** residents who have been verified as high priority children.
(b) All other non-residents

In the event that all criteria are equal, positions shall be determined by computer generated ballot.

ATTACHMENT 2

BKCES Eligibility Criteria for 3-Year-Old Kindergarten

The following children are eligible for attendance in a 3-year-old kindergarten program with a BKCES Member Kindergarten:

- Children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they attend kindergarten. Children **must** be three years of age before commencing the program at any kindergarten.
- Children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders. (Refer to BKCES Enrolment policy for further details)
<https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten>
- Children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding who are known to Child Protection or referred to Child and Family Services Information, Referral and Support Teams (Child FIRST). (Refer to BKCES enrolment policy for further details) <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/kindergarten>

BKCES Selection Criteria for 3-Year-Old Kindergarten

Commencing with applicants' first preference kindergarten, places are allocated according to the following criteria:

- 1. High Priority children** - Children at risk of abuse or neglect including children in Out-of-Home Care, children who are identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, children with additional needs who require additional assistance to participate in kindergarten, require a combination of services which are individually planned and/or have an identified specific disability or developmental delay, asylum seeker and refugee children and children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.
- 2. Deferrals**– Children who were eligible to attend a 3-year-old program at the Member Kindergarten in the previous year but deferred or withdrew from the program in writing to the BKCES officers on or before 30 April are placed at the same kindergarten.
- 3. Siblings** – Children who have had a sibling attend and complete the 3-year-old or 4-year-old program at the same kindergarten, within a 5-year timeframe.
- 4. City of Boroondara residents** who apply to their closest City of Boroondara Member Kindergarten.
- 5. All other residents** of the City of Boroondara.
- 6. (a) Non-City of Boroondara** residents who have been verified as high priority children.
(b) All other non-residents

In the event that all criteria are equal, positions shall be determined by computer generated ballot.

ATTACHMENT 3

St Paul's Pre-Prep Selection Criteria - 2020 onwards:

Commencing with applicants first preference kindergarten, places are allocated according to the following criteria:

1. **High Priority children** - Children at risk of abuse or neglect including children in Out-of-Home Care, children who are identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, children with additional needs who require additional assistance to participate in kindergarten, require a combination of services which are individually planned and/or have an identified specific disability or developmental delay, asylum seeker and refugee children and children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.
2. **Repeats** – Children currently enrolled at the kindergarten who have received funding for a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten are placed at the same kindergarten.
3. **Deferrals** - Children who were eligible to attend a 4-year-old program at the St Paul's Kindergarten in the previous year but deferred or withdrew from the program in writing to the Kindergarten Central Enrolment Officer on or before the last day of Term 1 are placed at the same kindergarten
4. Children who have St Paul's Kindergarten as their closest kindergarten and have received funding for a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten
5. City of Boroondara residents who have received funding for a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten.
6. **3-year olds** - Children who have attended and completed the 3-year-old program at St Paul's Kindergarten in the previous year, and have applied for the 4 year old program at St Paul's Kindergarten.
7. **Siblings** – Children who have had a sibling attend and complete the 3-year-old or 4-year-old program at the St Paul's Kindergarten within a 5-year timeframe.
8. **City of Boroondara** residents who have St Paul's Kindergarten as their closest kindergarten
9. **All other residents** of the City of Boroondara.
10. (a) **Non-City of Boroondara** residents who have been verified as high priority children.
(b) All other non-residents

The 4yo Pre-Prep program is a good option for children having a funded second year of 4-year-old kindergarten or for the older child.

Children who attended and completed a 4yo program in the year prior who are not authorised by DET to receive a second year of funding will be required to pay the full fees plus the cost of the per capita grant. Such children will be considered for a place after all eligible enrolments for the Pre-prep program have been placed. Priority will be given to children who completed the 4yo program at St Paul's Kindergarten in the year prior, then other City of Boroondara residents.

ATTACHMENT 4

Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

[Service Name]

[Address]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at [Service Name] for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at [Service Name] 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
- [insert details of local government immunisation service]
- 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 [Service Name]'s Enrolment and Orientation policy.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

St Paul's Kindergarten