



FOUR YEAR OLD ENROLMENT POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- the process for enrolment into four year old kindergarten at Elonera Pre-School
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Elonera Pre-School, and the basis on which places within the two kindergarten groups will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Elonera Pre-School.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Elonera Pre-School is committed to:

- equal access for all children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- complying with DET funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in government-funded kindergarten places
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided on enrolment forms
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Elonera 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)).

Elonera Pre-School participates in the Kingston City Council Central Enrolment Scheme and as such is 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

- *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)*

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.

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, and officially withdraws from a service prior to the beginning of the first day of the beginning of Term 1 of the year. 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 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 service.

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 Officer: Liaise with Council and the Director with respect to current and future enrolments to the program. In conjunction with the Director, facilitates the integration of new families to the preschool throughout the year. Allocates children to groups as per the Policy, prepares enrolment information to be issued to families, and handles enquiries about enrolments as required.

Confidential Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. This is completed after a place has been offered by the service and accepted by the applicant. This form is filed and kept confidential by the service.

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

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services 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/
- *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*: www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/
- *Central Enrolment Scheme for Funded Kindergarten*: <http://www.kingston.vic.gov.au/Services-and-Support/Parents-and-Children/Kindergarten-Preschool>

Service policies

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

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy
- providing access to a copy of Kingston City Council *Central Enrolment Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Policy*
- providing access to the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- 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
- ensuring that confidential enrolment forms (refer to *Definitions*) comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162
- reviewing the enrolment forms to determine their effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment forms (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).

- ensuring that the responsible person collects, receipts and banks enrolment fees

The Enrolment Officer is accountable for the following:

- provide Kingston City Council with the number of places to be offered at the centre
- informing Kingston City Council of
 - ❖ details of acceptance of offers
 - ❖ all families who have declined an offer; and
 - ❖ the number of vacancies remaining at the kindergarten (if any)
- collating enrolments
- providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- providing a monthly report to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered
- storing completed confidential enrolment forms in a lockable file (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*) as soon as is practicable
- complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service
- providing parents/guardians with a copy of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy Attachment 1 - General enrolment procedures*

The Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor and 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
- 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 in which they are considering enrolling their child
- ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service
- 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)
- 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
- 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
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members

- 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
- 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 all enrolment documentation by the dates specified
- ensuring that all required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.
- participating in kinder duty where possible
- paying all deposits and fees by the due date

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 upon making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: General enrolment procedures

AUTHORISATION

This policy was reviewed by the Approved Provider of Elonera Pre-School 20/4/17.

This policy was reviewed by the Approved Provider of Elonera Pre-School 19/4/18.

This policy was reviewed by the Approved Provider of Elonera Pre-School 7/03/19.

This policy was reviewed by the Approved Provider of Elonera Pre-School 16/04/20.

REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2021

ATTACHMENT 1

General enrolment procedures for 4-year-old kindergarten Application for a place

- Applications are made through Kingston City Council under the Central Enrolment Scheme (CES)
- Applications are accepted by the council from May 1 the year prior to the child being eligible for funded kindergarten.
- Applications must be received by June 30 the year prior to the child being eligible for kindergarten to be eligible for a first round offer.
- Enrolment application forms and *Central Enrolment Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Parent Handbooks* are available from the kindergarten, council, Maternal Child Health Centres or may be downloaded online at www.kingston.vic.gov.au
- A copy of the *Central Enrolment Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Policy 2015* is available at the kindergarten or may be downloaded from the council website.

Offer and Acceptance of places

- Places are allocated to applicants by the council in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of the CES (refer to *Central Enrolment Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Policy 2015*)
- Successful applications will receive a letter of offer from the council including a slip returnable to the kindergarten
- Parents/guardians must submit the return slip to Elonera by the date specified in the letter of offer
- 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, in writing or via the return slip as soon as possible
- Enrolment packs will be provided by the kindergarten after the place is accepted
- Forms and documentation must be completed and returned to the attention of the Enrolment Officer with a deposit of 25% of fees (if required) within 10 working days to secure a place for the following year
- Non-receipt of forms, documentation and deposit by this date will result in the place being made available for reallocation.
- A copy of the child's immunisation record must be submitted to Elonera
- A completed copy of the fee agreement must be submitted to Elonera
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment information should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).
- Access to completed enrolment documentation will be restricted to the Enrolment Officer, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service
- Upon provision of completed enrolment documentation, an invoice for Term 1 fees will be issued payable by October 31 of the year prior to attendance (refer to *Fees Policy*)
- If fees are not received by this time, the kinder reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place.
- A copy of current Health Care or Pension Card is required
- Any child wishing to transfer to Elonera from another service and enrolling in a second funded year of Kindergarten must supply all the completed DET required paperwork, failure to do so will be considered an incomplete application and the position will be forfeited.
- If a place opens during the year in a group, the allocated space will be referred back to the council to be filled from the wait list. If not able to be filled, then offers for current families to move groups may be considered.

Note:

Places will not be secured 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*).

Group Structure

- Two four year old groups are offered for 4 year old kindergarten
- The Pre-School currently enrolls 22 children per group, with the capacity to enrol 28 dependent on DET funding and community needs.
- Group structure is reviewed regularly to ensure individual needs are met, best practise is maintained and relevant legislation is followed.

Group Allocation

- Group session times are available online at elonerapreschool.com.au and are provided on enrolment
 - Each application will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria in sequence
 1. Those children having a second funded year of Kindergarten
 2. Upon receiving a confirmed place from Kingston Council Parent/guardian, will be notified and asked to submit a preference of groups (Koala, Possums or no group preference) *
 3. Preference will be given to those that have returned all required paperwork within the timeframe given
 4. If one group is oversubscribed, an email will be sent seeking an expression of interest for families to move into the undersubscribed group
 5. If one group is still oversubscribed, then a ballot will take place, which will be drawn by a Nominated Supervisor and overseen by members of the Committee, not directly involved in the ballot.
- * Children with a diagnosed medical/early intervention/additional needs will be given special consideration for group preference.*
- Parents/Guardians will be advised of group allocation in writing by September in the year prior to attendance.
 - If a child does not receive a position in their preferred group, or the parents/guardians wish to change groups, they may contact the Enrolment Officer and request to be put on a waiting list
 - The Enrolment officer will maintain the waiting list and offer positions as available in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Teachers.
 - A child may start the year in their allocated group whilst on the waiting list for their preferred group
 - The Enrolment Officer will offer the parents/guardians a change into their preferred group if available.
 - **Requested session preference can not be guaranteed**