

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY



*Play, laugh...
...learn, grow!*

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following GRPSA policies:

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- The criteria for enrolment at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc Services
- The process to be followed when enrolling a child at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc Services, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated.
- Procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc Services.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc is committed to:

- Equal access for all children
- Meeting the needs of the local community
- Complying with DE funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in government-funded kindergarten places
- Complying with all relevant legislation
- Providing fair and equitable access to all funded programs, including Early Start Kindergarten, Access Early Learning, including those that face barriers to participation.
- Being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- 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 Supervisors, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc.

3. PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Adhering to the DE criteria for priority of access to programs at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc, based on funding requirements.
- 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 No Job No Play Legislation.
- 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 Supervisors and educators) for interested families to attend the services during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program
- Ensuring that enrolment forms comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162.
- Reviewing the enrolment form to determine its effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and management requirements of the service.
- Ensuring that enrolment records 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 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 Supervisors or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

The person responsible for the enrolment process is accountable for the following:

- Collating enrolments and recording the date of receipt of each application.
- Ensuring that all applications for funded kindergarten enrolment are eligible by checking date of birth for each child in the funded kindergarten programs.
 - children must turn 3 by 30th April in the year of attendance to be eligible for funded Three-Year Old Kindergarten
 - children must turn 4 by 30th April in the year of attendance to be eligible for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten
- Ensuring that families are aware that all children are eligible to receive 2 years of funded kinder. The first year of funding will be 3-year-old kinder and the second year will be in 4-year-old kinder. Children born between 1 January and 30 April are eligible to attend 3-year-old kindergarten in either the year they turn three or the year they turn four. Children may not be able to attend until they turn 3 in the programs where the service is unable to meet the educator to child ratio for children who are two years of age. GRPSA will advise families if their child is unable to start kinder before they turn 3.

- Confirming with the family in writing using the Department of Education One Funded Place form that children enrolling in a GRPSA funded kindergarten program are not receiving funding by the state government at another funded kindergarten service.
- Maintaining a waiting list.
- Offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority of access and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy.
- Providing a regular report to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered.
- Complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.
- Ensure *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* is available on request.
- Ensure a copy of the *Administration of Medication Policy* and the *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy* is provided to the parent/guardian at the time of enrolment where a child has an identified medical condition, or as soon as the medical condition is diagnosed whilst the child is in attendance.
- Ensure a copy of any other relevant medical condition policy (such as *Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes, Epilepsy*) is provided to the parent/guardian at the time of enrolment where a child has an identified medical condition, or as soon as the medical condition is diagnosed while the child is in attendance.
- Ensure a copy of the *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy* is provided to the parent/guardian at the time of enrolment where a child has an identified developmental delay.
- Ensure a copy of the *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy* is provided to the parent/guardian at the time of enrolment where a child has a court order or parenting order in place.

All Early Childhood Staff are responsible for:

- Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the GRPSA website and explaining the enrolment process, as required.
- Reviewing enrolment form 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.
- Providing information to families regarding Early Start Programs and potential for their child to participate in Funded Kindergarten programs.
- Ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service.
- Checking all details on enrolment forms to ensure that copies of relevant supporting documents are onsite prior to the child attending their first session.
- Ensuring evidence of immunisation – AIR statement, (or support period documentation if applicable) is stored with the child's enrolment details and that this is updated as required.
- Storing completed enrolment forms and supporting enrolment documentation in a lockable file and ensuring digital enrolment details are secured. (refer to *Privacy and confidentiality Policy*).

- 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 into the service.
- Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.
- Complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*.
- Ensuring your child is eligible for Free Kinder, please visit this website: [When to start kindergarten | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/when-to-start-kindergarten)
- Completing an application to enrol via our GRPSA website.
- Completing enrolment forms (electronically) prior to their child's commencement at the service.
- Ensuring that all required information is provided upon enrolment prior to their child's commencement at the service.
- Ensuring that the child enrolling in a GRPSA kindergarten program is not receiving 3-year-old or 4-year-old kindergarten funding by the state government at another kindergarten service, prior to commencement by signing the declaration on the Department of Education One Funded Place form.
- Returning the Department of Education One Funded Place form where their child is enrolled in a funded kindergarten program.
- Providing a copy of the child's Immunisation History Statement (AIR statement – accessible through Medicare) to confirm enrolment, prior to the child's commencement at the service.
 - Only a copy of the AIR is accepted as proof of immunisation

- Children may be eligible for a ‘support period’ under the No Jab No Play Legislation. Criteria for eligibility for the support period can be found on the Department of Health Website, “Before enrolment, No Jab No Play Requirements”.
- If a child is eligible for the support period, it allows 16 weeks for the family to undertake vaccination and/or obtain an acceptable immunisation status certificate.
- parents/guardians who do not or cannot provide an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement and whose child is not eligible for the support period are unable to commence at the service until acceptable documentation is provided
- Completing an Exemption from School Due to Attendance in a Kinder Program form and sending to the Regional Department of Education by the 1st November in the year prior to attendance in a funded kinder program where your child will be turning 6 years of age.
- Notifying the service of any specific health care needs of the child, including medical conditions, allergies or developmental delay; and any relevant plans where applicable (refer to the *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).
- Providing the service with a full copy of any court order in place for their child, and any subsequent amendments to court orders.
- Providing the service with a full copy of any parenting order in place for their child, and any subsequent amendments to parenting orders.
- 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.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: General enrolment procedures & Criteria for Priority Access– for funded kindergarten programs
- Attachment 2: General enrolment procedures & Criteria for Priority Access – for Long Day Care, Holiday, Before and After care programs

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc on 8th October 2012

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Review date: FEBRUARY 2027

ATTACHMENT 1 General enrolment procedures – Funded Kindergarten Programs

- Enrolments open in the year prior to attendance. Notifications will be sent to existing families first with a link to complete a re-enrolment form for each calendar year.
- A link to the application for Enrolment is on the GRPSA website:
<https://www.grpsa.com.au/enrolments>
- Kindergarten enrolments: two years of funded kindergarten consists of:
 - Year 1 (Three-Year-Old) Kindergarten (Two years before school)
 - Year 2 (Four-Year-Old Kindergarten) (Year before school)
- Funded kindergarten enrolments are only offered to those families who are not accessing a funded kindergarten place at another service, confirmed in writing using the Department of Education One Funded Place form.
- The closing dates for enrolments for the next year is the 31st of May.
- Enrolments 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 Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment forms should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*). After the 31st of May (for applications for the next year) and applications for the current year are received, the person responsible for enrolments will check if a position is available and send out the acceptance of enrolment and request that they complete the enrolment form.
- Each family must complete and submit a One funded place declaration form prior to their child starting a Kinder Program. These will be sent to families via email by GRPSA.
- Completed enrolment forms and corresponding documentation are to be forwarded to the person responsible for the enrolment process at the service.
- Access to completed enrolment forms will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisors and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
- Programs may be capped dependant on licenced spaces and staffing ratios.

Offer of places

- Applicants who are successful will be sent an acceptance of enrolment and will be required to email admin to accept the offer.
- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place, or intend to withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify GRPSA.
- Parents/guardians who have accepted the enrolment offer will be sent the electronic enrolment form link by November of the year prior to enrolment.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any debt owed to any GRPSA service by the family is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the service (refer to *Fees Policy*).

Criteria for priority access (PoA) – for funded kindergarten programs

The Victorian Government has priority of access criteria that apply only to funded kindergarten places. In instances where more eligible children apply for a place in a funded kindergarten program at a service than there are places available, services must:

- prioritise children based on the Department of Education (DE) criteria listed in the table below:
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional DE office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.
- Children residing in the LGA and children residing outside the LGA whose nearest service is located within the LGA will be prioritised a place over other children from outside the LGA.

Tier 1	Criteria and processes for verifying need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in out-of-home care	• The child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning, and/or • The family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to or having had contact with Child Protection or in Out-of-Home Care and/or • The parent or carer or child is experiencing family violence and/or has had contact with The Orange Door and/or • The child or family has previously accessed Flexible Support Packages and/or • The child or family is referred by one of the following: • Child Protection • Child and family services • Maternal and Child Health nurse (MCH) • Out of Home Care provider.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	• As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families ‘Do you identify your child as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?’ and record this information in Arrival.
Asylum seeker and refugee children	• The child, a parent, a carer or a legal guardian holds, has previously held, or is applying for, a refugee or asylum seeker visa (see list of visas in the Kindergarten Funding Guide), and/or • The child, a parent, a carer or a legal guardian holds a current or expired ImmiCard, and/or • Children, parents, carers or legal guardians who previously held a refugee or asylum seeker visa and now hold Australian Citizenship or permanent residency.
Children and/or families holding concession cards	A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veterans’ Affairs Card.
Children from families with multiple births	Multiple birth children (i.e. triplets or more).

Children and/or families with additional needs who require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program	Child and family with additional needs who meet one of the following. Child: • is eligible under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or undergoing a continuing assessment of a disability under the NDIS (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) • is eligible for Early Childhood Intervention Service Continuity of Support (ECIS COS) • is diagnosed with a disability or developmental delay or are undergoing diagnosis (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) • presents with developmental concerns that presents barriers to accessing a kindergarten program (supported by a letter or other evidence from a MCH nurse or similar practitioner such as an allied health practitioner) • has complex medical needs that presents barriers to accessing a kindergarten program (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) • holds a Disability Health Care Card • previously accessed the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program, Commonwealth Inclusion Support Program or another similar program • the child is referred by one of the following: • the National Disability Insurance Scheme • Early Childhood Intervention Service Continuity of Support (ECIS COS) • Preschool Field Officer program, or • MCH nurse or similar professional such as an allied health specialist, where developmental concerns have been identified. Parent or carer: • is eligible under the NDIS or undergoing a continuing assessment of a disability under the NDIS (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) • has complex medical needs that present barriers to accessing a kindergarten program (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) • holds a Disability Health Care Card.
Children accessing an additional year of Three- and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten	Children assessed with delays in two or more areas and are identified as eligible for an additional year of funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

Tier 2	Criteria and processes for verifying need(s)
Children currently attending the service	Children attending the service in the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program and seeking to access Four-Year-Old Kindergarten at the same service for continuity of learning. Priority should be given to these children to remain at the same service for their Four-Year-Old Kindergarten year.
Tier 3 – Locally agreed criteria after applying PoA	Criteria and processes for verifying need(s) in order priority
Goulburn Region Preschool Association will endeavour to allocate a position to all eligible children, with priority being given to eligible Victorian children.	1. A family who chose not to accept a funded kindergarten position or was waitlisted at a GRPSA service for a funded kindergarten position in the previous year. 2. Families who are residents of Victoria. 3. Families with a child currently enrolled in a GRPSA Long Day Care Program or Occasional Care Program. 4. Families who live/work/study in the town where the service is located. 5. Families who live/work/study in the local government area in which the service is located. 6. Families who will be enrolling their child in the school/s located in the town where the service is located. 7. Families who are residents of NSW. 8. Order of receipt before designated closing date.

Note: DE's PoA guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten are available to those children who stand to benefit the most from attending early education. In mixed age groups, PoA guideline will equally prioritise three-year-old and four-year-old children that are considered high priority. Where programs for three-year-old and four-year-old children are provided separately, the PoA criteria will be applied separately for each age cohort.

*** Early Start Kindergarten and Three-Year-Old Kindergarten**

During the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) will continue to provide 15 hours a week of funded kindergarten for all eligible children up until 2029, when three-year-old children across the state will have access to 15 hours

It is important to continue to enrol eligible children in ESK, even if a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is available at the service. This guarantees that ESK eligible children can continue to access 15-hour kindergarten programs and allows the correct calculation of the service's SRF entitlement.

The Kindergarten Funding Guide 2023 states for ESK funding, service providers should:

provide up to 15 hours in a kindergarten program free of charge and maximise access to 15 hours of kindergarten (children accessing ESK can be enrolled in a 3-year-old group, a four-year-old group, a mixed age group or a combination of groups in order to access the full 15 hours per week)

This guarantees that children experiencing vulnerability will continue to be enrolled in the full 15 hours of kindergarten in all service settings, including long day care. It also ensures that service providers can continue to receive all funding entitlements.

Service providers are expected to continue to provide the full 15 hours funded through Early Start Kindergarten, even in instances where three-year-old groups are being offered fewer than 15 hours.

ESK is available to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment and who:
are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
have had contact with Child Protection
have a refugee or asylum seeker background*

*Children/families without a current refugee visa or ImmiCard who have a recent refugee experience may be eligible by exception for Early Start Kindergarten, for more information contact your local Department of Education and office.

Refer to the Department of Education's website for up-to-date information: www.education.vic.gov.au

ATTACHMENT 2 General Enrolment procedures for Long Day Care, Occasional Care, Holiday, Before and After care programs

- Enrolments are accepted at any time where vacancies are available.
- Link to the Application for enrolment is available on the GRPSA website:
<https://www.grpsa.com.au/enrolments>
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment forms should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity policy*)
- As soon as a vacancy is available an acceptance email will be sent with a request to complete the full enrolment form.
- A re-enrolment form will have to be completed each year even if the child has attended the prior year.
- Completed enrolment forms and corresponding documentation are to be forwarded to the person responsible for the enrolment process at the service.
- Access to completed enrolment forms will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated supervisors and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.

Offer of places

- Places will be offered if vacancies are available, as soon as possible after enrolment.
- If places are not available, the enrolment will be placed on a waiting list and offered in accordance with the criteria of priority access.

Criteria for priority access – for Long Day Care programs (Commonwealth funded places)

1. Children who are identified as being at risk or neglect, or a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.
2. Children who are enrolled in a Funded Kindergarten program at the Service.
3. Families who are currently enrolled in the service.
4. Order of receipt.

Criteria for priority access – for Before and After Care programs

1. Children who are enrolled in a Funded Kindergarten program at the Service.
2. Children who have been previously enrolled in Before/After Care programs at the Service.
3. Siblings of children currently enrolled at the Service.
4. Order of receipt.