ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

FREE KINDERGARTEN

QUALITY AREA 6 | ELAA version 1.1



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for:

enrolling a child at Tunstall Square Kindergarten

the orientation of new families and children into Tunstall Square Kindergarten ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education [DE] Kindergarten Funding Guide.

ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment.

adhering to DE's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Tunstall Square Kindergarten is committed to:

families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs

being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing $\frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{n}} \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \int$

ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement

maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation

enrolling Early Start Kindergarten (*refer to Definitions*) eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Tunstall Square Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.



RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and sh	ould not	be delete	ed		
Ensuring that copies of the <i>Enrolment an Orientation Policy</i> and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families, and available for inspection	R	V			
Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, this is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, VIT registered teacher, and offering at least: • 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or	R				
600 hours per year					
Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering between 5 to 15 hours a week or 200 to 600 a year	R				
Providing communication to families explaining their access to one year of three-year-old and one of four-year-old funded kindergarten program	R	V			
Ensuring families sign DE's one funded kindergarten place form in writing in Term 1. Service providers must use the form provided on the department's template and must not adapt the content into service's own templates.	R	V			
Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and childfree days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	R				
Applying the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Tunstall Square Kindergarten, as described in Department of Education's [DE] <i>The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1)</i>	R	V	1		
Working with local council, other local kindergarten services, key stakeholders and the local ECIB to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place	1	V			
Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April (refer to Sources)	√	V	V		
Ensuring the following is displayed:	R	V			



 the current Kindergarten Program Certificate information promoting ESK operating times and name(s) of the qualified teachers delivering the program. 					
 waiting lists access and inclusion policies availability of ESK and KFS where applicable details of the annual kindergarten parent opinion survey to parents, carers or legal guardians that the service will prepare a Transition Statement for all children to help them transition to school. 	R	٧			
Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families): • Early Start Kindergarten (refer to Definitions) • Early Start Kindergarten extension grants (refer to Definitions) • Access to Early Learning (refer to Definitions) • Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten (refer to Definitions)	R	٧	٧		
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption (refer to Attachment 2)	V	V	V		
Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	√			
Receiving written confirmation from families confirming they are attending one funded kindergarten program per child, per year	R	V		1	
Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access a kindergarten program	R	V	V		
Working with the families to obtain an alternate form of identification if a birth certificate or other official documentation is not available Where a birth certificate cannot be produced, other acceptable evidence of a child's full name and date of birth includes: • Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) • Medicare card • Letter from the doctor or midwife who attended the birth • Doctor's note attesting to a child's age • Passport • Citizenship documents or Australia visa documents or Immicard	R	V			
Complying with the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>	R	R	√	√	√
Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity,	R	R			



requirements					
Ensuring families have access to:					
Parent handbook					
 Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety Fees Policy 	R	V	V		
Privacy Statement		,			
 Code of Conduct Policy Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Dealing with Medical Conditions Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness 					
Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (refer to Attachment 2 and 3)	R				
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	V	V	V		
Where applicable; considering access and inclusion for vulnerable children in the allocation of places at the service (refer to Attachment 1 and 2)	R	V			
Where applicable, providing families with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes (refer to Attachment 2)	R	V			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	V	V
Providing opportunities for interested families to attend the open days to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program	V	√	V		
Seeking information from parents about any specific health care need, allergy or medical condition, including whether a medical practitioner has been consulted in relation to a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition	R	V	V	V	
Ensuring that medical management plan has been provided and that the risk minimisation plan has been developed and both documents are kept in the child's enrolment records	R	V	V	V	
Providing any required authorisations, such as for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service and, if required, transportation by an ambulance service				V	
Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) and accessing immunisation services	R	V	V		
Ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place	R	V	√		



<i>Definitions)</i> has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the support period					
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (refer to Sources) for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week support period (refer to Definitions)	R	V	V		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements (refer to Definitions) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the support period (refer to Definitions) have confirmed places in the program	R	V	V		
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) and who are not eligible for the support period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (refer to Attachment 4)	R	V	V		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a support period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).	R	√	√		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing all associated enrolment documents and AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) of their child's immunisation status				V	
Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks support period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) to the service				V	
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)	R	V	V		
Ensuring all authorised nominees (refer to Definitions) have been completed on the enrolment record for each child (refer to Definitions) (Regulations 160 and 161) as well as authorisations from parents relating to medical treatment, regular outings, health information and transportation	R	V		√	
Ensuring that the enrolment record for each child (refer to Definitions) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	R	V	√		
Ensuring that enrolment record for each child (refer to Definitions) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances	R	V	V	V	V



Ensuring that enrolment records for each child (refer to Definitions) are kept confidential (Regulations 181, 182) 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 (1a) (2d))	R	V	V		
Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	V	V		
Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	√	V	√	
Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for (Regulation 157), 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, early childhood teachers or educators under the National Law: Section 167	R	R	٧	V	V
Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (refer to Attachment 5)	V	√	V		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to Definitions and the Inclusion and Equity Policy)	V	V	V		
 Encouraging parents/guardians to: stay with their child as long as required during the orientation period, keeping in mind the best interest of the child make contact with educators at the service, when required 	V	V	V	V	
Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	V	√	√	√	
Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	√	√	V	√	
Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	V	V	√	V	
 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 and feel culturally safe share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests 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 	V	V	V	V	



Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation</i> Policy	R	R	R	1	$\sqrt{}$
Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				V	
Notifying Tunstall Square Kindergarten in writing [if possible] if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				√	



PROCEDURES

GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

Offer families the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service

Provide reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation and once the child commences

Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child

Reassure the family:

they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time they may call and speak to their child's early childhood teacher or educator(s) at an agreed time

the early childhood teacher/educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in

they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.

Further considerations may include but are not limited to:

send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (refer to the information and Communication Technology Policy). Note: For children in out-of-home care, the educator may need to seek permission from Child Protection before taking and distributing photos of the child asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.

Refer to *Attachment 2* for the general kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures Refer to *Attachment 5* for cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance procedures.





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)*).

All eligible Victorian children (refer to Definitions) will have access to two years of Free kindergarten before commencing school. Where demand is higher than availability, approved providers must adhere to their eligibility and DE's Priority of Access criteria (refer to Definitions and Attachment 1) in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in DE's Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Sources), the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Services participating in a central registration and



enrolment scheme are required to comply with the registration and/or enrolment procedures of that scheme.

The Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), co-designed by DE provides access to families to register for and secure a place for their children in kindergarten. It is a collaborative model that brings together councils, service providers, MCH staff, support services and other stakeholders to support children and their families. Currently more than half of all local councils across Victoria operate a form of central enrolment or central registration scheme. These schemes provide a single point of entry for families, simplifying the kindergarten enrolment process and improving equity of access.

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 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)*.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

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, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

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

- Victorian Legislation Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. approved provider, nominated supervisor, notifiable complaints, serious incidents, duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Access to Early Learning (AEL): is a early intervention program for a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment. It aims to provide intensive support to eligible families with multiple and complex needs, assisting them to access universal kindergarten programs.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable).



Authorised nominee: (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torre Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy) (refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition).

Central Registration and Scheme (CRS): CRS provides an equitable and transparent application and allocation process, enabling families to access local kindergarten services within a local government area, helping them secure a place that meets their needs and enabling funded kindergartens to work collaboratively with other services to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

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 annual confirmation in April DE considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for a DE funded kindergarten place in the following year.

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free kindergarten each week led by a qualified early childhood registered with Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). ESK is available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:

from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or The family have had contact with child protection.

These children can also access free kindergarten the year-before-school through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

Early Start Kindergarten extension grants: provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified VIT registered teacher. The ESK extension grants are available to children attending kindergarten in the year-before-school and are:

not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or known to child protection.

A child is not required to access ESK in the previous year to access the ESK extension grant.

Eligible child: as defined by the Victorian DE Kindergarten Funding Guide:

a child who is at least four years old on 30 April in the year of attendance; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service

a child who is at least three years old on 30 April in the year of attendance and is enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for a minimum of 5 hours per week

any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualifies for the 16-weeks support period

Enrolment: An enrolment occurs when the provider has an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide education and care to a child.



Enrolment deposit: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. This should not act as a barrier to enrolling for any families. Services must ensure that families understand that the enrolment deposits will only be refunded if the child commences in the service (*Refer to Free Kindergarten Fees policy*)

Enrolment record: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (*Regulations 160, 161, 162*) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Free Kinder: A Victorian Government Best Start, Best Life initiative providing Free Kinder programs for four-year-old and three-year-old children in funded services, that have opted into the initiative.

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:

- providing a free 15-hour program to 4-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- providing a free 5 to 15-hour program to 3-year old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for 3 and 4-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service.

Kindergarten registration 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, if applicable. (Refer to Free Kindergarten Fees policy)

Kindergarten registration form: The process of families providing initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the CRES Provider (refer to Definition) or by the kindergarten service. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten (refer to Attachment 3)

Support period: allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*) or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. Services complete the support period eligibility form with families during enrolment and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week support period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the support period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*) and to encourage families to access immunisation services.

Local Government Area (LGA): a geographic area governed by a local council or shire.

Orientation: Process to support the child's transition to the service, whereby families spend time at the service with the child a few times before leaving the child on their own. The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family.

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 places using the criteria outlined in the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Attachment 1 and Sources*).

Registration: The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the service provider/EYM/CRES Provider. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.

School Readiness Funding: funding provided by DE for programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.

Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten: second year eligibility may be considered when a child shows delays in key outcomes of learning and development. An assessment is carried out for



each child by an early childhood teacher in Term 4 (the year before the child is to attend school) when a second year is being considered.



SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au
- Department of Health, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- Department of Education: <u>Stating age calculator</u>
- 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: <u>www.acecqa.gov.au</u>
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Victorian Department of Education): www.education.vic.gov.au
- Going to kindergarten if your child is 6 years old: www.vic.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
Code of Conduct
Compliments and Complaints
Dealing with Infectious Disease
Delivery and Collection of Children
Fees
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
Inclusion and Equity
Privacy and Confidentiality

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 notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172*).

ATTACHMENTS



Attachment 1: Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program

Attachment 2: General kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures

Attachment 3: Sample kindergarten registration form for non CRES services

Attachment 4: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

Attachment 5: Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance

Attachment 6: Sample Online Application Form



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AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Tunstall Square Kindergarten on 11th September 2024.

REVIEW DATE: May 2025



ATTACHMENT 1. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

FOR A FUNDED KINDERGARTEN THREE OR FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The approved provider must notify all families of the priority of access (PoA) policy that applies when they enrol their child.

In instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten 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.

These criteria must be used by the approved/service provider when prioritising enrolments. Guidance is available from the Department's local ECIB if required.

Service providers should build flexibility into their enrolment processes that consider the circumstances of families from priority groups.

If participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme, the CRES provider will allocate places in accordance with DE's PoA criteria, and other local criteria if applicable

Services must first apply the DE's PoA criteria, and following this may apply locally developed criteria, as per examples below.

All information relating to PoA criteria should be respectfully collected from families upon enrolment, recorded in each child's confidential enrolment record and entered into the Kindergarten Information Management (KIM) system, where applicable.

DE's Priority of Access criteria

High priority children	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 ESK or AEL, and/or family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to Child Protection or in out-of-home care, and/or referred by one of the following:
	 Child Protection Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) Maternal and Child Health nurse out-of-home care provider.
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' and record this information in KIMS
Asylum seeker and refugee children	Child or family holds a visa or supporting documentation and information, including an ImmiCard, identifying the child and/or parents, carers or legal guardians as a refugee or asylum seeker and/or Referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD outreach worker.
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or The child is identified on their birth certificate as one of a set of triplets, quadruplets or more.
Children with additional needs, defined as children who:	 The child: holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, and/or has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS)



- with an identified specific disability or developmental delay
- who require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program
- who require a combination of services which are individually planned

program, and/or

- has been referred by:
 - the National Disability Insurance Scheme
 - Early Childhood Intervention Services
 - Preschool Field Officer
 - Maternal and Child Health nurse, or
 - is assessed as having delays in 2 or more areas and is declared eligible for a second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Examples to consider for second priority

- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten; or
- children who turn three years of age* by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
- children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET
- children who have a sibling that has previously attended the same kindergarten as their first preference
- home address falls within the same suburb as the kindergarten
- family lives, works, studies or attends child care in [LGA]

Examples to consider for third priority

- service for transient families e.g. RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers
- date of application
- local community zoning
- full fee paying families

Note: DE's PoA guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten programs 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 and four-year-old children that are considered high priority. Where programs for three- 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) (*refer to Definitions*) 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 funded 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 4-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 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Application for a place

- Enrolment applications will be accepted any time after the child has turned 2 years of age.
- Enrolment application forms are available online via our website under, or by clicking
 https://forms.enrolnow.com.au/212506416041948
 We provide information to the parents/guardians about the
 requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services, obtaining an up to date AIR
 Immunisation History Statement and a copy of the Enrolment and Orientation Policy.
- Tunstall Square Kindergarten will determine the date(s) by which applications must be received for offer of places in the three-year-old and four-year-old funded kindergarten program.
- A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the service.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, the enrolment application form should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).
- Parents/guardians of children applying for a second year of funded kindergarten or currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application for the following year.
- A copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of address must be submitted with all applications.
- All enrolment application forms must be accompanied by an enrolment application fee in line with Tunstall Square *Fees Free Kindergarten Policy*. This fee is to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application and is nonrefundable.
- Completed enrolment application forms that are submitted online are to be forwarded to the person responsible for the enrolment process at the service, via the EnrolNow online platform.
- 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 service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
- Applications will be automatically entered on the waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria.
- Applications received after the above dates set by Tunstall Square Kindergarten will be considered if there are available
 places, and after all other applicants have been offered a place, in line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of
 Tunstall Square Kindergarten.

Offer of places

- Tentative places will be offered in writing to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of
 the service making clear that confirmation of places is not final until an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement
 has been received, assessed and found acceptable.
- Tunstall Square Kindergarten requires parents/guardians who have been offered a tentative place to provide an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement for assessment two months prior to the child first attending the service in order that a confirmed place can be offered.
- The documentation is assessed as outlined in the Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services by the person responsible for the enrolment process on behalf of the Approved Provider. The "Key dates work form for immunisation and enrolment" in the Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services is used to determine the date at which immunisations must be up to date. The toolkit also provides guidance on assessing immunisation documentation to determine if a child is up to date or qualifies for an exemption. The following documents and resources can be accessed from https://www2.health.vic.gov.au:
 - The Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services (search 'Immunisation enrolment toolkit')



- The Key dates work form for Immunisation and enrolment (search 'Key Dates work form')
- Hard copies of the immunisation resources (search 'immunisation resources order form')
- The acceptable outcomes of the assessment for offering a confirmed place are:
 - That the next due vaccine for the child on the AIR Immunisation History Statement is within the acceptable timeframe for an enrolment, or;
 - That the child has been assessed by Tunstall Square Kindergarten as being eligible for a 16-week support period
- The person responsible for the enrolment process advises the parent/guardian in writing whether a confirmed place is offered, and the enrolment can proceed.
- Parents/guardians who do not have an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement and whose child is not eligible for
 the support period cannot be offered a place and are referred to Australian Childhood Immunisation Register or to an
 immunisation provider (refer to Appendix 3— Letter for parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation
 documentation).
- Offer of places in the funded three-year-old and the four-year-old kindergarten programs will be made at the same time.
- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a tentative or confirmed 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 service, in writing as soon as possible.
- An enrolment record and other relevant information will be provided by Tunstall Square Kindergarten to the parent/guardian after a confirmed place has been accepted and the deposit fee has been paid.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any outstanding fees 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 Free Kindergarten Policy).

Enrolment

Once a kindergarten place has been accepted, the enrolment process can begin.

To enrol a child, families will need to provide copies of (if not already done so):

- Proof of identity: child's birth certificate, birth notice or passport
- Proof of residence: a utilities bill, rental agreement or rates notice with your family name and address (this must be the main residence of your child).
- Concession cards and immigration visas (where applicable).
- Documents from Family Support Services or a Maternal and Child Health nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).
- Immunisation History Statement (unless experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, at which point they can take advantage of a 16-week 'support period'. More information is available at https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit
- Documents detailing any medical conditions or requirements the child has.
- * Where a birth certificate cannot be produced, other acceptable evidence of a child's full name and date of birth includes:
- statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)
- Medicare card
- letter from the doctor or midwife who attended the birth
- doctor's note attesting to a child's age
- passport
- citizenship documents or Australia visa documents or Immicard.

Kindergartens may also require additional documentation. The kindergarten should ensure that information regarding any additional documentation is easily accessible for families, carers and support services.

Enrolment Records

Enrolment records (*refer to Definitions*) form part of the enrolment procedure and are completed by families after they have been allocated a place, and before commencing attendance. An example enrolment form can be found on the DE website: www.education.vic.gov.au



Cancellations

Families to notify Tunstall Square Kindergarten in writing of their intention to leave the service.

Second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

- All children in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will be expected to transition to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in the following year. A funded second year of kindergarten will only be available for children in the Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program who meet the criteria.
- Families of children who have been determined as eligible for a second year must complete and submit a kindergarten registration form for a second year, signed and dated by the early childhood teacher.
- It will be weighted with the relevant points and allocated accordingly.
- A Declaration of Eligibility Form for a second year of kindergarten must be completed and submitted to the relevant funding authority.

Early entry to Four-Year-Old kindergarten

- Early entry to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten may be appropriate for some gifted children where families are seeking an early entry to school for their child i.e. the child will not be 5 years of age before 30 April in the year of school commencement.
- Early entry to school is approved only when exceptional circumstances apply and is subject to an application process and rigorous eligibility criteria. It is important to note that most children who enrol early in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten are not approved for early entry into school because they did not meet the eligibility criteria.
- The decision regarding early entry should be discussed with parents/guardians and consider the following:
 - Children are not guaranteed early school entry as a result of being enrolled to attend kindergarten early.
 - To start school early, the child must possess suitable academic ability as evidenced by a formal cognitive
 assessment, and be considered at risk of long-term educational disadvantage if they don't early entry to
 school.

School Exemption

- Children who will turn six during the kindergarten year must apply for an exemption from school from the relevant their local ECIB that their child is seeking an exemption from school by submitting an Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program form to the appropriate departmental regional office by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning 6.
- The kindergarten service must sight the approved exemption form from relevant education authority and note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record. Data on the number of children attending Kindergarten who are six years plus, and confirmation that the exemption was sighted for each child, must be provided as part of funding data collection process.
- Children who will turn 6 while attending their second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten can be exempted from school
 if a Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten has been completed by the child's kindergarten
 teacher.

Adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide, 2023



ATTACHMENT 3. SAMPLE OF KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR NON-CRES SERVICES

This registration form is the first step toward getting your child into kindergarten in 2025. The information collected with this form will be used to allocate your child a place in Tunstall Square Kindergarten.

Timelines for the kindergarten registration

Date	Activity
1 March	Registrations open
30 April	Registrations close*
Beginning of May	First round offers
Beginning of June	Acceptance of first round offers due
Beginning of July	Second round offers
End of July	Acceptance of second round offers due
Weekly or when vacancies become available	Subsequent offers

^{*}Note that registrations will still be accepted past 30 April but only will be considered after initial on-time registrations are processed.

Eligibility

Age

Only complete below form if you are planning on sending your child to kindergarten in 2025. Your child will be eligible for kindergarten only if they meet the following age criteria:

- To be eligible for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, your child must turn 3 by April 30 2022
- To be eligible for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, your child must turn 4 by April 30 2021

Starting age calculator: Use the <u>starting age calculator</u> to enter your child's birth date to find out what year they can start Three- and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Immunisations

According to the No Jab, No Play law in Victoria, your child must be fully vaccinated to start kindergarten. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is not required for this registration form, but you should ensure that your child's immunisations are up to date and you have a copy of this statement before commencing the enrolment process that will likely happen in October.

A support period applies for families who may find it difficult to provide an up-to-date statement by October.

Further information on immunisation requirements for enrolment in early childhood services is available through the DE website: www.education.vic.gov.au

Priority of access

Tunstall Square Kindergarten follows the Department of Education's Priority of Access criteria (refer to Attachment 1), that prioritises allocation of kindergarten places for children who:

- Are at risk of abuse or neglect, including out of home care
- Are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Are, or have parents or carers who are, asylum seekers or refugees
- Have additional developmental needs
- Hold or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card

Children that fit one or more of those criteria will be allocated to a place in kindergarten as a high priority. This form will collect all the information required to determine if a child is eligible for Priority of Access.

If you believe you or your child are in exceptional circumstances which require prioritisation and are not covered by any of the above criteria, please contact Tunstall Square Kindergarten to discuss.



Fees

Refer to the Frees-Free Kindergarten Policy for more information about fees.

ATTACHMENT 4. LETTER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WITHOUT ACCEPTABLE IMMUNISATION DOCUMENTATION

Tunstall Square Kindergarten

[Address]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Tunstall Square Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Tunstall Square Kindergarten 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 AIR Immunisation History Statement.

AIR Immunisation History Statement includes evidence of immunisations and is used to assess whether you child is fully vaccinated for their age.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, and your child is not eligible for the 16 week support period, 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 Immunisation Register: <u>www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register</u>
- Better Health Channel website: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/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 an AIR Immunisation History Statement. The new application would be considered in line with Tunstall Square Kindergarten's *Enrolment and Orientation policy*.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

Tunstall Square Kindergarten



Example of an immunisation history statement





Immunisation history statement

 As at:
 07 February 2023

 For:
 JILL CITIZEN

 Date of birth:
 01 January 2021

 NIP immunisation status:
 up to date

Schedule	Date given	Immunisation	Brand name given
2 months	12 Feb 2021	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Poliomyelitis	Infanrix Hexa
		Pneumococcal	Prevenar 13
		Rotavirus	Rotarix
4 months	04 May 2021	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Poliomyelitis	Infanrix Hexa
		Pneumococcal	Prevenar 13
	1300	Rotavirus	Rotarix
6 months	05 Jul 2021	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hib Hepatitis B Poliomyelitis	Infanrix Hexa
12 months	17 Jan 2022	Measles Mumps Rubella	MMR II
		Meningococcal ACWY	Nimenrix
0.7	15.0%	Pneumococcal	Prevenar 13
18 months	12 Aug 2022	Hib	ActHib
	100	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis	Infanrix
- 1	2 20	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella	ProQuad
Other	05 Jul 2021	Influenza	Fluarix Tetra
	12 Aug 2022	Influenza	Vaxigrip Tetra
	21 Sep 2022	Meningococcal B	Bexsero
	23 Nov 2022	Meningococcal B	Bexsero

Next NIP immunisation/s due	Date due
Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis	01 Jan 2025
Poliomyelitis	01 Jan 2025
Notice/s	

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ATTACHMENT 5. CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT AND NON-ATTENDANCE

FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

Cancellation of Enrolment

Families MUST notify Tunstall Square Kindergarten and/or an Enrolment Officer in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment. Fees will continue to be generated for that place until the Tunstall Square Kindergarten is notified.

Note: This process does not apply to vulnerable children (*refer to Definitions*). Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; early childhood teacher or educator will need to inform their Case Officer.

Non-attendance

Term One

• Families that have accepted a placement and have not completed an enrolment form and not attended the service within the first 3 weeks of Term One will be contacted and informed their placement has been cancelled.

Families Traveling Overseas

• Families are required to notify Tunstall Square Kindergarten prior to extended periods of travel, and ensure any applicable fees are paid if they wish to return to the service.

Non-contactable Families

- After two/three weeks of a child not attending the service, early childhood teacher or educator to call the family. If there is no response, educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
- After second week of the child not attending and the family has made no attempts to contact the service, early childhood teacher or educator to contact the family via phone/text and/or email. If there is no response, Educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
- After third week of non-attendance, early childhood teacher or educator to inform nominated supervisor and cross check families contact details.
- Nominated supervisor or approved provider to email family, ensuring a response date is documented in the email.
- If the family have made no attempt to communicate with the service before the response date, post a final attempt letter, ensuring a response date is documented in the letter.
- If the family has not responded to the final attempt letter before the response date, their placement will be cancelled.



ATTACHMENT 6. SAMPLE ONLINE APPLICATION FORM



Kindergarten Application Form

TUNSTALL SQUARE KINDERGARTEN

If you would like to place your child on the waitlist at Tunstall Square Kindergarten please complete the following form. At the end you will be asked to pay a non refundable \$40 waitlist fee.

Age Requirements:

As per the Department of Education (DE) guidelines, eligibility for this kindergarten is as follows:

- 1. 3 year old kindergarten The child must attain the age of 3 years by 30th April in the year of attendance. They cannot commence before their 3rd birthday because of the different staff levels required for children under the age of 3 (as set down in the Children's Services Regulations).
- 4 year old kindergarten The child must attain the age of 4 years by 30th April in their year of attendance.

No enrolments will be accepted before the child's 2nd birthday.

You will be notified in the June/July prior to the year your child is to start of an enrolment offer (or indication of being on the waiting list if groups have been filled). For more information please refer to our <u>Enrolment Information</u>



If your child does have a birth date between January and April 30th and therefore will only be turning three during the first quarter of next year, now due to of Free Kindergarten the Department of Education (DE) no longer allows families to repeat a year of kindergarten. DE will only consider a child to receive a second year of funded four year old kindergarten when a child shows delays in key outcomes of learning and developing. In this case, the teacher will need to undertake an assessment and complete a Declaration of Eligibility Form through DE. You are in a position to choose if your child attends three year old kindergarten next year, or delay their commencement until the following year. We highly recommend reconsidering the commencement. Should you wish to discuss this further please contact us.

Child's Name *	
First Name Last Name	e
Gender *	
O Male O Female O Unspecified	
Child's Date of Birth *	
dd-mm-yyyy	
Please upload a copy of	vour child's hirth certificate *
Browse Files	
Browse Files	
Browse Files	
Browse Files Address *	
Address * Street Address	tate
Address * Street Address	



Parent / Guardian 1 *
First Name Last Name
Relationship to the child *
•
Address
O Same as child O Different address
Address *
Street Address
City State
Post Code
Phone Number *
Email *
Please Note: You will be notified of all correspondence via emai
Would you like to add a second parent / guardian? *
O Yes O No
Language/s spoken at home:



What year would you like your child to commence at Tunstall Square Kindergarten? *
•
What program type is this application relevant to? *
•
Do you have children that have previously attended Tunstall Square Kindergarten? *
O Yes O No
Do you work or live in the Manningham Council? *
O Yes O No
Enrolment & Immunisations
The Government's No Jab No Play laws require all children to be age-appropriately immunised before enrolment can be confirmed. Further information on immunisation requirements for enrolment in early childhood services is available on the State Government's Better Health Channel at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play
Are your child's immunisation up to date? *
O Yes O No
Kinder Fee Subsidy
DE provides a fee subsidy for eligible families. Please indicate if you are eligible for one of the following concessions, or meet one of the following criteria: O Health Care Card O Pensioner Concession Card O DVA Gold Card O Bridging Visas A – F



O Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 or 786 O Resolution of Status Visa (RoS) Visa Class CD, Subclass 851 O Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visas 200–217 O Triplets or Quadruplets O Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
Supporting documentation will need to be sighted on commencement at Tunstall Square Kindergarten by the Enrolments Officer.
Please note: The eligibility of concessions may vary from time-to-time.
Children with Special Needs
Does your child have any special needs * O Yes O No Is your child registered with a specific Support service / agency? * O Yes O No
I acknowledge where the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of places, that the Tunstall Square Kindergarten Selection Criteria will apply.
Application Fee A \$40.00 non-refundable Application Fee is payable for all applications
Payment Name * Application Fee Amount * 40

