

## City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Enrolment Policy

### 1. Authorisation

May 2012	Central Kindergarten Enrolment (CKE) policy adopted
May 2013	CKE policy review endorsed by the Access and Participation Working Group
April 2016	CKE policy review endorsed by the Access and Participation Working Group

### 2. Review Date

This policy shall be reviewed July 2017.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to Approved Providers (Kindergarten Cluster Managers (KCM) and Independent Kindergartens), KCM staff, kindergarten staff, council officers and parents/guardians who wish to have their children enrolled at kindergartens participating in the City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Enrolment (CKE) scheme.

### 4. Background

Some kindergarten services manage their own system of allocating kindergarten places. Others participate in the City of Ballarat CKE Scheme, which requires that they comply with the enrolment criteria of this scheme.

### 5. Legislation

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012*
- *The Equal Opportunity Act (Victoria) 1995*
- *The Sex Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) 1975*
- *The Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) 1992*
- *The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act (Commonwealth) 1986*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015*

## Definitions

*Application for Enrolment form:* A form to apply for a place at a kindergarten program.

*City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Enrolment (CKE) scheme:* A centralised system administered by The City of Ballarat to allocate kindergarten places on behalf of participating kindergarten services.

*Confirmation of Acceptance form:* A form to confirm acceptance of an offer of a place in a kindergarten program.

*DET:* Department of Education and Training

*Delayed kindergarten entry/deferrals:* Parents may decide to delay their child's entry to kindergarten to the following year – particularly if their child is born between January to April in the year they are eligible to attend kindergarten. When a child commences kindergarten it is generally expected that they will attend for a whole year. Occasionally there may be some circumstances in which families, in consultation with their child's teacher, and in line with funding eligibility, may decide that it is the best option for the child to defer enrolment in kindergarten to the following year.

*Early Start Kindergarten (ESK):* Free or low cost kindergarten that enables eligible three year old children to access a funded kindergarten program for up to 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year) delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, two years prior to commencing school.

*Funded kindergarten place:* In accordance with the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education and Care, DET provides funding for children to access a kindergarten program for up to 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year) delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year prior to school.

*Kindergarten Cluster Management (KCM):* An organisation with responsibility for the licensing and management of a group of kindergartens.

*Kindergarten Enrolment form:* A form, which collects details about the child. This is completed after a place has been offered by the kindergarten program and accepted by the applicant and is lodged at the kindergarten the child will attend

*Kindergarten fees:* A payment for a place within a funded (four year old) and three year old kindergarten program payable to the kindergarten. These may include a deposit to reserve a place, term fees etc.

*'No Jab No Play': The Public Health Amendment (No Jab No Play) Act 2015 means that early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided documentation that shows the child:*

- is fully vaccinated for their age, or;
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations; or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated

*'No Jab, No Play' grace period provision:* Under the No Jab No Play law, a vulnerable and disadvantaged family can enrol a child in a kindergarten program under a grace period of 16 weeks, without having provided proof of up to date immunisation. The grace period provisions allow a family to continue to access early childhood education and care services while receiving information and assistance to get their child's immunisations up to date and to obtain the required immunisation documentation that needs to be provided to the service.

*Second year of funded kindergarten:* Children enrolled in a funded kindergarten program may be eligible to access a second year of funded kindergarten if the early childhood teacher has assessed:

- The child has confirmed delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development; and
- that there is evidence the child will achieve better outcomes if he/she attends a second year of kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

*Selection criteria:* The criteria that determines acceptance of Application for Enrolment forms on the CKE Scheme; and the criteria for determining how places are allocated at individual kindergartens.

*Siblings:* Sisters and brothers.

*Three-year-old kindergarten program:* Some kindergartens offer three-year-old programs for children. Sessions are typically for 2 – 3 hours per week. These are charged at the full fee and are not eligible for the Kindergarten fee subsidy.

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

*Vacant Funded Place:* A government-funded place at the service from which a child has withdrawn.

# Policy Statement

## Values

The City of Ballarat CKE Scheme is committed to:

- Equal access for all children, based on the selection criteria set out in this policy.
- Compliance with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012*.
- Compliance with the DET funding requirements (as detailed in The Kindergarten Guide 2015) relating to the enrolment of children in government funded kindergarten places.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the details on enrolment forms.
- Meeting the needs of the local community.

## Purpose

This policy will outline;

- The criteria for enrolment at kindergartens participating in the City of Ballarat CKE Scheme.
- The process to be followed when enrolling a child and the basis on which places within the program are allocated.

# General Central Kindergarten Enrolment Procedures

## 1. Application for a kindergarten place

Application for Enrolment forms for children to attend a kindergarten service will be accepted from the beginning of the year prior to which a child will attend three year old kindergarten or two years prior to attending four year old kindergarten.

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
application for enrolment	3 year old kinder	4 year old kinder		
	application for enrolment	3 year old kinder	4 year old kinder	
		application for enrolment	3 year old kinder	4 year old kinder

Application for Enrolment forms are available from individual kindergartens, KCMs, Maternal Child Health Centres, The Phoenix Building (25 Armstrong St South), Parent Place (Cnr Sturt and Albert St) or via the City of Ballarat Website.

A separate Application for Enrolment form must be completed for each child.

Receipt of enrolment will be acknowledged by the CKE Scheme.

Completed Application for Enrolment forms are to be forwarded to the Enrolment Officer at:

Central Kindergarten Enrolment  
Family & Children's Services  
City of Ballarat  
PO Box 655, Ballarat 3353  
Fax: 5320 5833 Email: kindergarten@ballarat.vic.gov.au

## 2. Allocation of places

Kindergarten places will be allocated to eligible children on the enrolment list in accordance with preferences indicated on the Application for Enrolment form and the selection criteria of this policy. Lower preferences will only be considered where vacancies exist. That is, after all first preference applicants have been placed at that kindergarten.

### 3. Offer of kindergarten placement

Kindergarten place offers will be allocated to eligible children who are on the enrolment list in accordance with the eligibility and selection criteria of this policy.

Applicants will receive written notification of a kindergarten **place offer** from the CKE Officer, City of Ballarat.

On receipt of an offer of a kindergarten place parents/guardians are requested to complete the Kindergarten Placement Offer form to accept / not accept the place offered and return this form to the CKE Officer, City of Ballarat.

If the Kindergarten Placement Offer form is not returned to the City of Ballarat by the due date, the place is relinquished. Late correspondence will not be accepted, and the position may be offered to another child.

Applicants who have not received a kindergarten placement in the first round will be notified in writing and included on a waiting list.

*Timelines:*

First round letter of offer	Beginning of August
Acceptance of offer due	Mid-August (two weeks after offer)
Second round letter of offer	Beginning of September
Acceptance of offer due	Mid-September (two weeks after offer)
Subsequent offers	As vacancies become available

NOTE: Children in priority categories (as per the selection criteria in this policy) will receive written confirmation of a kindergarten place according to their preference. In such instances parents/guardians are not required to complete and return a Kindergarten Placement Offer form.

### 4. Procedure for a late Application for Enrolments forms

Application for Enrolment forms received after offers have been made will be allocated places, if available, in accordance with the date of receipt of the application (earliest date first).

## 5. The final step to enrolling in kindergarten

While completing a Kindergarten Placement Offer form confirms the allocation of a kindergarten place made via the City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Enrolment (CKE) Scheme, this does not mean a child has been enrolled in a specific kindergarten program.

A final step in the process is for parents/guardians to complete the necessary enrolment paperwork provided by the service where a child will attend kindergarten.

Under the new 'No Jab, No Play' legislation (effective January 2016), as part of this process, the kindergarten/early childhood service must obtain evidence, in the form of an Immunisation Statement, that the child is:

- Fully immunised for their age OR
- On a vaccination catch-up program OR
- Unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons

If a child's immunisation record is not up to date, enrolment cannot be confirmed and the child cannot attend kindergarten.

An immunisation history statement can be obtained from ACIR by calling 1800 653 809, emailing [acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au) or by accessing on line [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online)

NOTE: For vulnerable and disadvantaged families, where a child's immunisation is not up-to-date or the appropriate documentation has not been provided, the child may be able to be enrolled under the 'No Jab, No Play' grace period provisions.

## **Enrolment in four-year-old kindergarten programs**

The following children are eligible for attendance in a four-year-old kindergarten program:

- Children who have turned four years of age by 30 April in the year they would attend kindergarten.
- Children who have received funding for a second year of four-year-old kindergarten.
- Children who were eligible to attend kindergarten in the previous year but delayed commencement before the end of Term 1.
- Children eligible for ESK.

### **Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria to be used, if there are more applications than places available, is detailed below.

First priority is given to:

- Children in Out of Home Care.
- Children known to Child Protection or Child First.
- Children eligible for ESK.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.
- Children who have received funding for a second year of four-year-old kindergarten.

After first priority places have been allocated all other applications will be allocated offers based on the date of receipt of Application for Enrolment form.

## **Enrolment in three-year-old kindergarten programs**

The following children are eligible for attendance in a three-year-old kindergarten program:

- Children who will have turned three years of age by 30 April in the year they would attend kindergarten.
- Children who were eligible to attend three-year-old kindergarten in the previous year but delayed commencement.
- Service providers reserve the right to enrol children who turn three after April 30, if it is agreed by the educators and is in the best interest of the child, or program.
- Children eligible for ESK whose parents have chosen to attend three year old sessions in preference to four year old kindergarten. This is only possible if the three year old session is taught by a qualified early childhood teacher.

NOTE: Children must be three years of age before commencing the program at any kindergarten.



## **Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria to be used, if there are more applications than places available, are:

1. First priority is given to:
  - Children eligible for ESK
  - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.
2. Second priority is given to children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred.
3. Third priority is given to date of receipt of Application for Enrolment form.

## **Delaying / deferring from a funded kindergarten program**

Families need to make an informed choice about which year they would like their child to commence school and therefore which year their child will attend a funded kindergarten program.

Services should advise families with children born between 1 January and 30 April to choose carefully, as children are expected to complete a full year of kindergarten in the year they enrol and begin attending kindergarten as they are only funded for one year of four-year-old kindergarten.

However, there may be some circumstances where a child has commenced kindergarten and, following consultation between the child's family and teacher, and in line with funding eligibility, the decision is made to defer enrolment to the following year.

NOTE: This must occur during the early stages of Term 1 to be eligible for DET funding in the following year.

## **Completing a second year of Funded Kindergarten**

The DET Kindergarten Guide 2015 identifies the following eligibility criteria for receiving a second year of Funded Kindergarten.

The early childhood teacher can declare that a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded kindergarten if:

- The child is observed as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*; and
- There is evidence to suggest that the child will achieve better outcomes if he/she attends a second year of kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

## Key Responsibilities and Authorities

The City of Ballarat is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy.
- Approving any changes to this policy.
- Dealing with any questions/concerns that arise in relation to any aspect of the policy.
- Working collaboratively with the Approved Providers of licensed kindergarten services participating in the CKE Scheme, and providing regular reports to the Approved Providers regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered.
- The Enrolment Officer (or the delegated person) is responsible for the day to day implementation of this policy, which includes:
  - Providing Application for Enrolment forms.
  - Securing storage of the completed Application for Enrolment forms.
  - Maintaining the confidential status of Application for Enrolment forms and the information contained within the forms.
  - Collating enrolments.
  - Notifying applicants of receipt of enrolment.
  - Offering places in accordance with this policy.
  - Sending letters to applicants who have not received a first round offer notifying them of their placement on the waiting list.
  - Providing a monthly report to the Manager Family & Children's Services regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered.
  - Providing regular reports of current enrolments to service providers.
  - Collecting relevant information to pass on to service providers.

## Timeline of Communication

June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Media campaign to encourage parents/guardians who have not yet completed an Application for Enrolment form to send this in to the City of Ballarat. (Multiple forms of communication including My Ballarat, social media campaign, advertising)</li> <li>○ Maternal Child Health nurses and Family and Children's Service providers encouraged to work with vulnerable and disadvantaged parents/guardians to ensure all eligible children are both up-to-date with immunisation scheduling and are allocated a kindergarten place.</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ First-round offer process</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Second-round offer process</li> </ul>
October - November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Media campaign aimed at encouraging eligible families that have not yet completed an Application for Enrolment form to make contact with CKE Officer.</li> </ul>

## Evaluation

In order to assess the policy has achieved the agreed values and purposes determined in this document, the Manager Family & Children's Services will:

- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues relating to enrolment procedures.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy, or incorporate relevant questions in the general parent/guardian survey.
- Take into account feedback on the policy from the CKE Officer, designated person and/or staff.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the enrolment of children.
- Seek regular feedback from Approved Providers regarding the effectiveness of the policy.
- 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 a policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.