



ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- the criteria for enrolment at Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc.
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting families to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

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

It is intended that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to one year of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, a priority system for access must be determined by the Approved Provider in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places will vary from service to service, but is generally based on a service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2012*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Criteria for access and inclusion are outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*). Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*



have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions*).

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 177, 183
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
 - Standard 6.1: Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained
 - Element 6.1.1: There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

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

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

2. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Acceptable immunisation documentation: documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* as acceptable evidence that a child is fully vaccinated for their age, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind their vaccinations; or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated; or has been assessed as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

Approved care: Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers. Details are available at:
www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

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.



The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need to consider a risk assessment on an individual basis to determine if a person under the age of 15 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

Child Care Benefit (CCB): A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Benefit. Details are available at: www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

Deferral: When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place, or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the April data collection. DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DET funding in the following year.

Eligible child: A child attending an early childhood education and care service as described in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* or a child in a kindergarten program who meets the requirements of both *The Kindergarten Guide* and the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services*.

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

Enrolment application form: A form to apply for a place at the service.

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Enrolment record: The collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including the enrolment form; details of any court orders; and immunisation documentation as specified in the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services*. This information is kept confidential by the service.

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

3. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000: www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2006B01541
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: www.acecqa.gov.au/



- Priority for allocating places in child care services: <http://education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>
- The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training):
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services 2015:
www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit
- Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

Bayside City Council manages all registrations for both the 3 and 4 year old kindergarten at Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc through a central registration service on behalf of the community/volunteer managed kindergartens in Bayside. The central registration service aims to provide children in the Bayside area with equal access to high quality preschool education. Eligibility and access criteria for kindergarten programs in Bayside are developed by Council in accordance with The Kindergarten Guide (available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/).

Places for the kindergarten program within the city of Bayside are allocated based on priorities, which are regularly reviewed. If there are more applicants than places then a computerised weighted priority system will apply. If the number of equally weighted registrations exceeds the number of available places, a computer ballot will decide the allocation of places.

Registrations are accepted for children between 1 May and 30 June in the year prior to commencement. Families wishing to re-register for a repeat (unfunded) year should note that kindergartens are under no obligation to accept that registration. An offer and acceptance of a three year old kindergarten place does not guarantee an offer in the 4 yo program. Registrations close on 30 June.

Eligible children are placed on the waiting list following lodgement of the application form with Council. No guarantee is given by the Council that a kindergarten/ preschool space will be available even after payment of the enrolment registration fee.

First round offers of placement are sent out via email during August/September at a date set by the Council. The placement is secured by payment of a non-refundable deposit (currently \$50) upon completion and return of the official enrolment form.

If there are any unsecured places remaining after the specified date for acceptance of the first round offers then a second round of offers is made, and so on until all places are taken.

Please contact Bayside Council for further information on kindergarten eligibility and enrolment procedures.



JACK AND JILL KINDERGARTEN GROUPS:

Senior Group - 4-year-old preschool

Preferred class size: 28 children

To be eligible for 4 year old kindergarten, your child must have turned four years old by 30 April in the year attending. Please refer to general enrolment section above for eligibility and enrolment procedures.

A place will only be reserved by full payment of term fees as they fall due. A copy of child's birth certificate must be submitted with all applications. Children must be immunised as per the No Jab No Play legislation. Completed enrolment forms must be returned to the enrolments officer by the required date to ensure enrolment.

Access to completed enrolment forms will be restricted to the Enrolments Officer, Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten educators and the President, unless otherwise specified by Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc.

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

Junior Group - 3-year-old kindergarten

Preferred class size: 22 children

Children are eligible for attendance in the three-year-old program provided they have turned three before 31 January in the year they intend to commence kindergarten. The child is unable to attend the kindergarten sessions until he/she has actually had their third birthday. It is strongly advised that the child be toilet trained prior to commencing. Please refer to general enrolment section above for eligibility and enrolment procedures.

A place will only be reserved by full payment of term fees as they fall due. A copy of child's birth certificate must be submitted with all applications. Completed enrolment forms must be returned to the enrolments officer by the required date to ensure enrolment.

Completed enrolment forms will be retained and access restricted to the enrolments officer, Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten educators and the President, unless otherwise specified by Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc.

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

Wombat Group - extended childcare session

Preferred class size: 20 children

To be eligible, the child must be enrolled and attending the Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten program.

Preference is given to 3 year old Junior group children. Any remaining spaces may be booked by 4 year old Senior group children.

Enrolment is secured on first come basis: application forms available and completed at the AGM (Annual General Meeting) accompanied by \$50 non-refundable deposit. Wombat deposit's are deducted from Term 2 fees.



Waiting list Wombats Group:

All children wishing to attend this session who have not obtained an initial place, may have their name added to a waiting list that will offer a place in order of application. However, preference is always given to Junior Group children. If a position becomes available, it will first be offered to any Junior children on the list. In the event there are no Junior children on the waiting list, the place will be offered to the next Senior child on the list.

If you have paid your deposit for this session but are not enrolled in the current spaces available, the \$50 deposit will be refunded

ORIENTATION

At the beginning of the year, the Junior group starts in smaller groups at reduced hours. This enables staff to assess and get to know each child on an individual basis. It also allows children to become familiar with the rules and routines of the program whilst beginning to establish friendship links with other children in the group. At your child's first orientation day, parents/guardians are asked to stay. This is an opportunity for parents to meet staff and become familiar with the kindergarten, complete enrolment and necessary forms and ease children into their new environment.

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Jack & Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy (refer also to Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria)
- considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program
- 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 (refer also to Attachment 2 – General enrolment procedures and Attachment 3 – Sample enrolment application form)
- providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the child's immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation **prior to enrolment** to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16 week grace period
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program



- advising parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (see Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)
- taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- ensuring that the enrolment form (refer to *Definitions*) complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records (refer to *Definitions*) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183)
- ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

The Nominated Supervisor and early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.

All educators are responsible for:

- responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into the service
 - become familiar with service policies and procedures



- share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
- share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs
- discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing the enrolment application form and the enrolment form prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child's immunisation status
- where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
- ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures

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

- providing enrolment application forms
- collating enrolments
- maintaining a waiting list
- collecting, receipting and banking enrolment fees
- offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- providing a monthly report to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered
- storing completed enrolment application forms in a secure site (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*) as soon as is practicable
- complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service
- providing a copy of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* with the enrolment application form.

The Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor and other educators are responsible for:

- responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service



- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157)
- developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into the service
 - become familiar with service policies and procedures
 - share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
 - share their understanding of their child’s strengths, interests, abilities and needs
 - discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child’s learning
- discussing the individual child’s needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child’s progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required
- complying with the service’s *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child’s enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing enrolment forms prior to their child’s commencement at the service
- ensuring that all required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required



- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Eligibility and priority of access criteria
- Attachment 2: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by Jack and Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc on 16th November 2016.

REVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 2018





ATTACHMENT 1

ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

1. Eligibility and priority of access criteria for the funded kindergarten program

The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded kindergarten program:

- children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with *The Kindergarten Guide* available at:
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year, but:
 - deferred
 - withdrew from the service prior to the April data collection
- children who turn four 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 (refer to *The Kindergarten Guide*, available at:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/default.aspx>)
- children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs
- three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at:
www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/learningdev/pages/earlystartkinder.aspx

When demand exceeds availability, the Approved Provider will refer to the service's values, philosophy and *Inclusion and Equity Policy* to determine the priority of access. This will include:

- children who have received funding for a second year of kindergarten
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred or withdrew from the service prior to the April data collection.
- priority of access criteria as outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* available at:
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx

Other considerations may include date of application, siblings already enrolled at the service, attendance in the three-year-old program and local community zoning.

If participating in a central enrolment scheme, the priority of access for that scheme will be implemented. Childcare services providing approved care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

2. Eligibility and access criteria for the three-year-old kindergarten program



Children are eligible for attendance in the three-year-old kindergarten program provided they have turned three prior to commencement.

Children will only be able to attend a second year of three-year-old kindergarten in exceptional circumstances (after consideration by the Approved Provider) or when all eligible children on the waiting list have been offered a place.

The Approved Provider must determine eligibility and access criteria applicable to the service. Considerations may include:

- children recommended by an educator for an additional year in the three-year-old program
- siblings attending the service
- local community zoning.



ATTACHMENT 2

Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Jack & Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Jack & Jill Beaumaris 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 acceptable immunisation documentation.

Acceptable immunisation documentation includes evidence that your child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated
- has been assessed by our service as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

- your doctor
- Bayside Council Immunisation Department
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register Tel 1800 653 809
- Better Health Channel website: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/no-jab-no-play>

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by acceptable immunisation documentation. The new application would be considered in line with Jack & Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten's Enrolment and Orientation policy.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

Jack & Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten