

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY (FOR 2022)

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at North Brighton Kindergarten
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at North Brighton Kindergarten, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into North Brighton Kindergarten
- 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

North Brighton Kindergarten 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.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at North Brighton Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

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

It is intended by 2022 that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to two years 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, Approved Providers must adhere to their eligibility and 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 *The 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 central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

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:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) 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, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017*
- *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 Regulations 2019* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

4. DEFINITIONS

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

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: is the only form of acceptable evidence of immunisation. The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. Parents/carers must provide a copy of their most recent AIR Immunisation History Statement, which shows that the child is up to date with their immunisations upon enrolment and when a child has received or been due to receive a vaccination while attending the service. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form, and supplies it to the AIR. In order to confirm enrolment, the Immunisation History Statement must show the child is up to date with the vaccines they can have, medical contraindication and indicate the due date for the next vaccinations the child is able to receive in the future if applicable.

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 18 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible families with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers (refer to *Definitions*). Further information can be found at: <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-0>

Children attending North Brighton kindergarten are NOT eligible for CCS.

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: as defined by the Kindergarten Funding Guide; a child that is at least four years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a 4-year-old program; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service. Or a child that is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment and is enrolled in a funded 3-year-old kindergarten program. 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 qualify for the 16-weeks grace period.

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 (see *Attachment 3: Sample Enrolment Application Form*)

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; details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

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

Grace 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 grace period eligibility form with families during enrolment, and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the grace 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.

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 spaces using the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (see *Attachment 1: Eligibility and priority of access criteria for a 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program*), or if in receipt of the CCS, comply with the Commonwealth Government's policy for allocating places (see *Source*).

Vulnerable Children/Families: 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 being vulnerable include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, known to Child Protection, Out of Home Care, substance abuse, or mental health; Aboriginal and/or Torres 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*)

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:
www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register

- Australian Government Department of Health, *National Immunisation Program Schedule*: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-throughout-life/national-immunisation-program-schedule>
- Department of Health and Human Services, *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- *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 of Access Guidelines for child care service: <https://www.dese.gov.au/uncategorised/resources/priority-access-guidelines-child-care-services>
- The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-legislation>
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training)*: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- 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

The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at North Brighton Kindergarten, as described in The Kindergarten Funding Guide and the service's philosophy (refer also to Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program)
- 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
- 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 the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) required for enrolment
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit 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 grace period (refer to *Definitions*)

- ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) has been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period (refer to *Definitions*) have a confirmed place in the program
- advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) and who are not eligible for the grace period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services
- 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 grace 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).
- taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)
- ensuring that the enrolment record (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 (1a) (2d))
- 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 whilst 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).
- taking reasonable steps to contact non attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (refer to Attachment 5)

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge 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 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 concerning their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.
- taking reasonable steps to contact non attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment

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 AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) 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
- making reasonable attempts to contact non attending families and consult with Nominated Supervisor of outcomes.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing the enrolment application form and the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) of their child's immunisation status
- where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks grace 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
- ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur
- notify North Brighton Kindergarten in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment.

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

EVALUATION

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

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: General enrolment procedures

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of North Brighton Kindergarten on 14th May, 2021

REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2022

ATTACHMENT 1

General enrolment procedures

• Enrolment application process

1.1 Bayside City Council Central Registration System

- North Brighton Kindergarten applications are initially coordinated through the Bayside City Council central registration system.
- The Bayside City Council central registration period commences April 1 and concludes April 30 in the year proceeding that which the child attends.
- Enrolment applications must be filled out online via Bayside City Council's website.
<https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/kindergarten>
- All applications must be accompanied by a registration fee specified by the Bayside City Council at the time of registering. This fee is to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application and is not refundable.
- Once the registration is processed, an acknowledgement of registration email from Bayside City Council will be received containing a unique link for that application. This unique link in the acknowledgement of registration email will allow viewing and modifying of preferences during the 1 month registration period.
- On the 1st of July (between 9am and 10am), an email will be received from Bayside City Council offering or waitlisting a place at North Brighton Kindergarten. All offers are to be accepted or declined via the links in that email within 7 days.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment applications should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

1.2 North Brighton Kindergarten enrolment process

- Bayside City Council central registration system is provided to North Brighton Kindergarten and they are wholly responsible for the offering of places at North Brighton kindergarten. Following the first round of offers those on the waitlist are then offered a place, at North Brighton Kindergarten, until all places are filled or there are no families left on the waitlist.
- North Brighton Kindergarten is obliged to respect this waitlist through the Service Agreement with the Council.
- Following the central registration process, interested parties can contact the kindergarten directly, however they are still required to register through the Council and pay all necessary fees including the registration fee and the kindergarten fee deposit, both of which are non-refundable. They will then be placed on the waitlist (if one exists) or may be offered a place immediately (following North Brighton kindergarten receiving required documentation prior to the child attending their first session)
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted within North Brighton Kindergarten to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Administration Officer and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
- Should a child offered/ and or accepted a place be required to change between year levels after the Bayside City Council central registration system list is provided to North Brighton Kindergarten, the kindergarten will place the child as a high priority on the receiving year level Waitlist based on:
 - The child having met the set criteria for being placed in the original year level
 - The parents having followed guidance available in making the decision to select the original year level

Note: The decision to change the child's year level is led by the responsible teacher.

- Enrolments are not confirmed until North Brighton Kindergarten have received a completed enrolment form, copy of a Birth Certificate (or passport), Immunisation History Statement and enrolment application fee.
- **Offer of places**
- The Bayside City Council will advise successful applicants of first round offers for both four year old funded kindergarten and three year old kindergarten.
- When a place is offered, the kindergarten will provide parents/ guardians with a Kindergarten Offer and Program Preference form. This must be completed to acknowledge the offer has been accepted.

• **Accepting and declining an offer**

Acceptance

- To accept an offer, the following documents must be submitted to North Brighton Kindergarten within 7 days of offer (offers go out on July 1):
 - acceptance of the offer
 - a selection of program preference
 - \$100 non refundable enrolment application fee, securing your child's spot (\$25 for concession card holders)
- Following the completion of the first round offers, offers are made to those on the waitlist if there are still places available.
- Confirmation of group allocation for 4yo (Red/Green) will be made in August. Please see section 6. Allocation within groups for further information. A confirmation and enrolment form email will be sent to families. To complete and confirm your child's enrolment requires :
 - completion of the enrolment form
 - A copy of the child's birth certificate (or passport)
 - Immunisation History Statement (From Medicare. No other form of immunisation evidence is accepted)
 - Payment of annual fees (due in December) 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). Families can also opt to pay per term in cases of financial hardship as agreed with the bookkeeper.

Declining

- If declining an offer, parents/guardians are to click on the *Decline the offer* button on the Kindergarten Offer and Program Preference Email.
- If a child does not present at kindergarten for one week after their designated start date and after all reasonable attempts to get in contact with them and no contact is made, their position can be declared vacant and can be offered to another child, at the discretion of the Committee of Management..
- If a child is withdrawn during the year, a notice of at least four weeks provided to the enrolment officer for the relevant year group is required. The guardians will be required to pay the full fees for the year unless the enrolment officer is able to find a replacement for the vacated position. Should a replacement be found after the 4 weeks' notice, the family will be reimbursed for the period replaced by the new child.
- The enrolment officer will follow the following steps to attempt to fill the position including:
 - Advise council of a vacancy
 - Refer to Waitlist
 - Advertise in newsletters of Elsternwick Primary School and St James Primary School
 - Advertise at Hunt Memorial Child Care Centre & Brighton Playroom
 - Use other social media platforms, distribution of flyers, use of advertising boards

- Update availabilities on the Website

• Eligibility

4.1 Eligibility for acceptance into four year old funded kindergarten

The following criteria are used to determine eligibility of children in the funded kindergarten program:

- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred
- 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 *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*, available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/)

4.2 Eligibility for funding for four year old funded kindergarten

- Children who have been accepted in their first year of funded kindergarten in accordance with the *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* (available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/)
- Children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with the *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* (available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/)
- 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/ecsmanagement/careankinder/earllystart/
- children who qualify for a health care card

4.2.1 Eligibility for a second year of funding for four year old Kindergarten

- All children are able to access a second year of funded kindergarten for 600 hours if an early childhood teacher has declared the child to be eligible, and the family and early childhood teacher agree the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than at school.
- 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 a least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the Victorian Years Learning and Development Framework, and
 - There is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes if they attend 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.
- The assessment for determining eligibility should factor in the teacher's ongoing observations over the time the teacher has spent with the child along with any more formal assessments that may have been undertaken and a declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten is completed using the KIM system, the child is eligible to attend a second year of funded kindergarten.

4.2.2 Deferrals of child from 4yo kinder with intention of re-enrolling the following year

- Families have the option to defer their child's enrolment for one year if it has been decided that they are not ready for the current year of kindergarten, yet don't demonstrate two areas of delay. This decision should follow a discussion between the families and the teacher. The Educational Leader may also be involved.
- Deferral can only occur prior to a funding allocation being accepted for that year of kindergarten, therefore the decision must be made prior to the end of Term 1
- If there is an available place in the 3yo group, the child has the option to join.
- Payment is required for the period that the child attended kindergarten.

- Priority is given to this child for the following years enrolment process via the Bayside City Council central enrolment process. The family must re-register the following year during the enrolment period of April 1-April 30th to receive this priority.
- The non-refundable enrolment application fee will be carried over from the previous years enrolment.

4.3 Eligibility for acceptance into three year old Funded Kindergarten Program

- The Bayside City Council central registration process specifies that children are eligible to apply for a place in the three-year-old program provided they have turned three by April 30th.
 - Children who turn 3 between Feb 1 and April 30 are not able to attend the kindergarten program until the date of their third birthday (unless for the purpose of orientation.) Nor are they allowed to attend kindergarten under the supervision of their parents/guardians until they turn three.
- Following the central registration process, interested parties can contact the kindergarten directly, however, if they do join our waitlist they are still required to register through the Council and pay all necessary fees including the registration fee and the kindergarten fee deposit, both of which are non-refundable.

4.3.1 Enrolment of children with a birth date between 1st January and 30th April

- Families of children with birth dates between 1 January and 30 April have a choice about whether their child will commence school in the year they turn five, or the following year, and therefore whether they commence three year old kindergarten in the year they turn three or the year they turn four. All children learn and develop in different ways.
- Families with children born between 1 January and 30 April 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 three year old or four year old kindergarten program.
- Prior to enrolment, services should advise families with children who are 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 and are only funded for one year of kindergarten before school (unless they are eligible for an Early Start Kindergarten grant or a second year of funded kindergarten).
- Families who have questions about the best time for their child to commence school, and hence kindergarten, should be encouraged to discuss this decision with an early childhood teacher, Maternal and Child Health nurse, Prep teacher or other professionals involved in supporting the development of their child.
- Acceptance of a child who turns three during the year of attendance will be at the discretion of the responsible teacher on the basis that the child is mature enough and ready for the kindergarten class.

4.4 Eligibility for funding for three year old kindergarten

- In 2022 North Brighton Kindergarten is able to offer 5 hours of funded kindergarten for children attending 3yo kindergarten. Funding is offered pro-rata.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program with upto 15 hours of funding available. 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 (refer to Fees Policy). Details are available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/earlystart/
- Children who have been accepted in their first year of funded kindergarten in accordance with the *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* (available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/) - Funding for 2022 is prorata for 5 hours
- Children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with the *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* (available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/)
- children who qualify for a health care card - can receive funding for the 6 hour program

4.4.1 There is NO eligibility for a second year of funding for three year old Kindergarten

- Currently, children in the Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program who have developmental delays in two or more key areas of development and would benefit from a second year of kindergarten will be eligible to access a second year of funded kindergarten following an assessment by an early childhood teacher.
- 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 program who meet the above criteria. Therefore children are not able to repeat 3yo kindergarten.

4.4.2 Deferrals of child from 3yo kinder with intention of re-enrolling the following year

- Families have the option to defer their child's enrolment for one year if it has been decided that they are not ready for the current year of kindergarten, yet don't demonstrate two areas of delay. This decision should follow a discussion between the families and the teacher. The Educational Leader may also be involved.
- Deferral can only occur prior to a funding allocation being accepted for that year of kindergarten, therefore the decision must be made prior to the end of Term 1
- If there is an available place in the 3yo group, the child has the option to join.
- Payment is required for the period that the child attended kindergarten.
- Priority is given to this child for the following years enrolment process via the Bayside City Council central enrolment process. The family must re-register the following year during the enrolment period of April 1-April 30th to receive this priority.
- The non-refundable enrolment application fee will be carried over from the previous years enrolment

5. Prioritisation of applications for kindergarten program

5.1 Bayside City Council central registration system priority of applications

- Where there are more applicants than places available, applicants will be selected based on clearly defined criteria in order to create equitable access for children applying for kindergarten in Bayside.
- The application classification criteria include *Continuity* and *Proximity*. Each of these criteria will be allocated a weighting. An applicant will not be excluded from applying or selection because they do not meet one or all of the classification criteria. Where enrolments exceed requests and criteria are equal, a ballot for places will take place.
- The registration form requires the applicant to agree that the information provided is true and correct and gives permission for Council to verify information supplied on the registration form if deemed necessary.
- *Continuity*: Council will allocate a 70% weighting to any current three year old children applying for a place in a four year old program at the same service. (Note- to receive this weighting, interested parties will still need to apply for four year old kindergarten through the central registration system). Or, a weighting of 40% is allocated to an incoming sibling of a current enrolment applying for a place in a three or four year old program at the same service. Or, a weighting of 20% is given to an incoming sibling of a former enrolment who attended in the previous three years applying for a place in a three or four year old program at the same service.
- *Proximity*: Application for a place in either the three or four year old program where the first preference kindergarten is the closest community delivered kindergarten to the child's primary place of care receives a 20% weighting.
- In addition, the process prioritises access for children who are vulnerable, at risk, or have a disability in accordance with current State and Commonwealth Funding legislation.
- Details are available at <https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/kindergarten>

5.2 North Brighton Kindergarten priority of applications

- While the Bayside City Council Waitlist will be respected, the kindergarten will prioritise subsequent applications based on the order of applications received, with priority given to high risk families. See section 7.
- Should applicants who accept a place at the kindergarten and choose to not access all hours offered, they will still be required to pay full fees.
- In the interests of fairness, preference of placements will be provided to children who are not enrolled at another kindergarten.

• **Allocation within groups**

- North Brighton Kindergarten offers two four year old funded kindergarten classes which have different session times.
- Preference for a particular group is offered in the Kindergarten Offer and Program Preference email received following acceptance of an offer from Bayside City Council central enrolments. Where possible, North Brighton Kindergarten will allocate children into their preferred session times for the four year old classes.
- Allocation of groups will be made on a first come, first serve basis. North Brighton Kindergarten reserves the right to override the allocations where:
 - a child has been advised to defer or repeat kindergarten. That child may be allocated into the most appropriate session time advised by the North Brighton Kindergarten teacher i.e. that child may stay with the same teacher in the following year.
 - the make-up of the class is considerably gender unbalanced. The Committee of Management in consultation with the Educational Leader reserves the right to allocate children appropriately.
 - apply the criteria as outlined in section 7. DET's priority access (listed below)
 - due to these considerations confirmation of allocation of groups will not be made until August

7. Eligibility and priority of access criteria for a funded kindergarten 3 and 4-year-old program (DET)

The Approved provider must notify all families of the priority of access 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 DET criteria listed below
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional Department office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

These criteria must be used by the Approved Provider when prioritising enrolments. Funding guidance is available from the Department's regional offices 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 enrolment scheme, the priority of access for that scheme will be implemented.

Services must first apply the DET's Priority of Access criteria, and following this may apply locally developed criteria, as per examples below.

DET's Priority of Access criteria	Process that could be used to verify need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in	The child is:

Out-of-Home Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attending a three-year-old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten* or Access to Early Learning, or is referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, or Out-of-Home Care provider
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 KIM.
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or Multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets). Asylum seekers and refugee children
Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program require a combination of services which are individually planned have an identified specific disability or developmental delay 	The child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten holds a Child Disability Health Care Card has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the National Disability Insurance Scheme Early Childhood Intervention Service Preschool Field Officer, or Maternal and Child Health nurse.
Examples to consider for second priority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	
Examples to consider for third priority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> service for transient families e.g. RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers date of application local community zoning 	

Note: DET's Priority of Access (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 vulnerable. 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) 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 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.