



# PANORAMA HEIGHTS PRESCHOOL

## 23 – ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

### POLICY STATEMENT

Panorama Heights Preschool is committed to fair, equitable and unbiased acceptance of all children in the community who are eligible to attend a 3 year old and 4 year old preschool program. This is in accordance with: the staffing ratios set out in the National Quality Framework (*supported by the Education and Care Services National Regulations*); the current staffing arrangement at the preschool.

The placement process for 3 and 4 year old kindergarten is managed by Banyule City Council. The Panorama Heights Preschool Committee of Management then manages the enrolment and group allocation process.

For the Preschool Plus program, Panorama Heights Preschool's Committee of Management manages all steps.

Confidentiality is maintained at all times in relation to details on the enrolment forms.

### 1. THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLD PROGRAMS

#### 1.1. ELIGIBILITY

Children are eligible to attend either 3 or 4 year old preschool:

- If they have turned 4 by 30th of April of the year they will attend the funded 4 year old kindergarten program and it is their 1st year of funded preschool.
- If they have turned 3 by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April in the year they will attend the funded 3 year old kindergarten program
- If they have been granted funding for a second year of preschool (4 year old program only. This does not apply to 3 year old program)
- If they started preschool the year before but withdrew before the first funding data collection (around April).
- If they have turned 6 during the kindergarten year and have an exemption from school entry age requirements by the regional office of DET
- If they are younger than 4 years of age by 30 April but have approved early age entry from the DET or non-government school that the child will attend

- Unsubsidised children (not funded by DET) may be offered a place after all eligible places have been offered (full fees including DET funding and Panorama Heights term fees required)

No child can commence attending preschool until they have turned 3, as supported by the *Staffing Arrangements* section in the National Quality Framework.

## 1.2. APPLICATION

Applications for 3 and 4 year old kindergarten can be made through the Banyule City Council website from 01 March in the year prior to attendance. Go to <http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au> and search for 'kindergarten'.

## 1.3. PRIORITY OF ACCESS TO PLACES AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES

Banyule City Council has defined that the selection criteria used if there are more applications than places available, are:

- Children currently enrolled in 4 year old kindergarten, who have received funding for a second year of kindergarten.
- Child protection/children at risk
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- Children with additional needs
- Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)
- Children who deferred from a Banyule kindergarten in the previous year.
- Residents living in Banyule
- Non-residents that have a connection in Banyule, for example work.

All other applications including non-residents

Offers of places will be made in accordance with the Banyule City Council enrolment policy. The Kindergarten Support Officer will process offers over three rounds for all applications. Children who have been approved for a Second Year of Funded Kindergarten are automatically allocated reserved positions; their details will be forwarded onto kindergartens after the third round of offers have been completed.

## 1.4. GROUP PLACEMENT

Panorama Heights Preschool aims to create balanced groups of children, with respect to gender, chronological age, maturity and individual needs whilst also taking into account the preferences of families.

There is typically a maximum of 22 places available for each session. Depending on the level of interest, needs of the community and flexibility of the timetable, the Committee of Management may choose to offer additional places (with an additional educator), a different number of stand-alone groups or a rotational model. As such, the total number of places may vary from year to year.

### **Procedures for Group Placement:**

Parents are asked to express their group preference and any flexibility when returning their offer acceptance form. It is strongly advised that any relevant information such as parental working days or car-pooling with another family is stated together with group preference. There is no guarantee of placement in the preferred group for any family.

The group allocation is conducted by the teachers and the Administrative Officer, with support from the Committee if required. All preferences are read and we undertake our best efforts to take family preference into account with reference to the following ranked criteria:

- children at risk, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, Asylum Seeker and Refugee (determined by visa category), and/or children with additional needs
- children receiving a second year of 4 year old preschool
- children with siblings in 3 year old preschool
- parents with work commitments
- balancing gender and age within the groups
- known social needs of children
- other specific requests from families.

Places will be allocated according to the above procedure. If groups cannot be balanced in number, the date of receipt of Enrolment documents will be then be used to inform prioritisation of allocations.

Please note that in 2022, the government is only partially funding the 3 year old program and this may have implications for group allocation of children at risk. In 2022, children at risk are supported by the DET Kindergarten Fee Subsidy to access 5 hours of 3 year old kindergarten free of any parent charges. As our proposed 3 year old program in 2022 is run as a total of 8 or 12 hours over two days, at risk children will receive at least one 6h day for free; parents would have the option of paying for additional hours/days above the minimum entitlement of 5h/week. However, depending on service budgets and the number of at risk children, the Committee of Management may be able to cover additional parent fees and provide two days of attendance to these children for free. The number of hours provided for free above the minimum 5h/week is at the Committee's discretion, and may affect the overall group allocation and number of places.

If deemed necessary, a Committee member or teacher may contact parents for further information or discussion in case of difficulty with placements.

Families will be informed of their group allocation either:

- at the AGM in the year prior to attendance, or

- before the AGM in the year prior to attendance at the discretion of the Committee of Management (eg. if there is a need to obtain feedback).

No changes will be made to group allocation after the AGM is held unless special circumstances arise. Any requests for changes by a family must be put in writing to the Committee of Management. Changes are approved at the discretion of the Committee.

## **1.5. ENROLMENT PROCEDURES**

To accept a place, a deposit of half Term 1 fees will be required. The balance will then be due upon commencement of Term 1 (unless exempt – refer to Fees Policy). All necessary documentation must be correctly completed and returned prior to confirmation of enrolment.

Children entering the 3 year old program who will still be 2 years of age at the start of the year, are not allowed to attend kindergarten until their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday (unless under the direct supervision of their parent or guardian). Their Term 1 and 2 fees will be a pro-rata calculation for attendance after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. If they are not attending at all in Term 1 and their Term 1 invoice is zero, the deposit due to accept a place will be half Term 2 fees.

## **1.6. WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT**

At each round of offers the Kindergarten Support Officer from Banyule Council will notify applicants who have not been allocated a place at any of their preferred kindergartens. Applicants may choose to add additional preferences to increase their chance of getting an offer in a subsequent processing round which will not affect their original Date of Registration.

If a place is accepted and then the child subsequently withdrawn, the family must notify Banyule City Council. The Council will then review the waiting list according to their allocation criteria and make an offer to another family if available.

The deposit paid by the withdrawing family will only be refunded after the place is filled from the waiting list.

## 2. PRESCHOOL PLUS

Panorama Heights Preschool is committed to fair, equitable and unbiased acceptance of all children in the community who are eligible to attend our Preschool Plus program. This is in accordance with: the staffing ratios set out in the National Quality Framework (*supported by the Education and Care Services National Regulations*); the Preschool's 3 and 4 year old enrolment age & eligibility cut off dates; and the current staffing arrangement at the preschool. Confidentiality is maintained at all times in relation to details on the enrolment forms.

### 2.1 ELIGIBILITY

Children are eligible to attend Preschool Plus if they will turn 3 years of age by April 30th in the year of their attendance.

No child can commence attending preschool until they have turned 3, as supported by the *Staffing Arrangements* section in the above document. For these younger students, families will be offered an orientation session prior to their child turning three. The parent must stay with their child during this session. To hold a place, families must pay the standard fees for each term from the commencement of the year (Please refer to the Fees Policy for more information on the payment of fees).

### 3.2 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

In Round 1, Expression of Interest forms are provided together with enrolment offers to families who have been identified through the Banyule City Council 4 year old kindergarten enrolment process. Any families wishing to apply for a Preschool Plus position should return the Expression of Interest form together with their other enrolment documentation.

If places remain available after this first round, families attending our 3 year old program will be provided Expression of Interest forms as part of Round 2.

Families from the broader community who wish to apply can obtain a Preschool Plus Expression of Interest form from by contacting the office, and their applications will be considered as part of Round 3 if places remain available. Applications will be date and time stamped and entered into the system in order of receipt.

### 3.3 PRIORITY OF ACCESS TO PLACES

The selection criterion used is:

- Children attending a second year of a 4 year old program at Panorama Heights Preschool
- Children attending a 4 year old program at Panorama Heights Preschool in the same year

- Children attending a 3 year old program at Panorama Heights Preschool in the same year
- Children with siblings attending a 3 or 4 year old program at Panorama Heights Preschool in the same year
- Children from the broader community.

Within each criterion group, priority will be given based on the earlier application date and time on their Expression of Interest form.

### **3.4 OFFERS OF PLACEMENT**

There is typically a maximum of 22 places available for this session. Depending on the level of interest, needs of the community and flexibility of the timetable, the Committee of Management may choose to offer additional places (with an additional educator). As such, the total number of places may vary from year to year.

Offers of placement will be made on the dates set by the Committee of Management. The Administrative Officer will send out offers according to the priority of access selection criteria. Offers must be accepted by the due date.

If positions are declined or no response is received by the due date, the vacant positions will be offered to the next families on the waiting list according to the access selection criteria.

The Administrative Officer will inform families of their positions on the waiting list if requested.

### **3.5 WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT**

After all positions are allocated and accepted, any applicants who have been unsuccessful will be informed via email and placed on a waiting list.

If a place is accepted and the child is subsequently withdrawn prior to commencement of Term 1, the deposit will only be refunded after the place is filled from the waiting list.

### **3.6 ENROLMENT PROCEDURE**

In order to accept a place, a deposit of half Term 1 fees will be required. The balance of Term 1 fees will then be due upon commencement of Term 1. All necessary documentation must be correctly completed and returned prior to confirmation of enrolment.

Children entering the Preschool Plus program who will still be 2 years of age at the start of the year, are not allowed to attend kindergarten until their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday (unless under the direct supervision of their parent or guardian). They are still required to pay the full standard rate for each term to hold a place, and correspondingly pay a deposit.

## **4. ORIENTATION**

Orientation is an essential part of helping families to feel welcome at our kindergarten and ensuring families are well informed about our programs. At Panorama Heights Preschool we have a comprehensive orientation program at both year levels.

### **Preschool Plus, Three and Four Year Old Group Orientation Program:**

- AGM held in November
- Personal Family/Teacher interview held in late January (start of Term 1)
- Transition days (varies by group) in first 1-2 weeks of Term 1
- Parent information night held in February

## **FEES**

Please refer to the Fees Policy

## **RESOURCES**

- Banyule City council Kindergarten Central Enrolment policy and Procedures
- Banyule council enrolment application form (website)
- Confidential Enrolment Details

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

PART 4.4—STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Division 3—Minimum number of educators required

PART 4.7—LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Division 1—Management of services

Subdivision 1—Attendance and enrolment records

Division 2—Policies and procedures

Division 3—Information and record-keeping requirements

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Panorama Heights Preschool on **AUGUST 2021**.

**PLANNED Review date: AUGUST 2022**