



23 – ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

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

- enrolling a child at Panorama Heights Preschool
- the orientation of new families and children into Panorama Heights Preschool
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education and Training [DET] Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment.
- adhering to the DET's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children

POLICY STATEMENT

Panorama Heights Preschool is committed to:

- families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten (refer to Definitions) eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Providing a funded kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, and offering at least: 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or 600 hours per year	R				
Providing a funded kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering a minimum of 5 hours per week	R				
Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	R				
Following the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Panorama Heights Preschool, as described in Department of Education and Training's [DET] <i>The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1)</i>	R	√	√		
Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April	√	√	√		
Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families): Kindergarten Fee Subsidy <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> Early Start Kindergarten <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> Early Start Kindergarten extension grants <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> Access to Early Learning <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten <i>(refer to Definitions)</i>	R	√	√		
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption <i>(refer to Attachment 2)</i>	√	√	√		
Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	√			
Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access a kindergarten program	R	√	√		
Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity, utilisation of services and to meet School Readiness Funding requirements	R	R			
Ensuring families have access to: Parent handbook	R	√	√		

<p><i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</i></p> <p><i>Fees Policy</i></p> <p><i>Privacy & Confidentiality Policy</i></p> <p><i>Code of Conduct Policy</i></p>					
Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (<i>refer to Attachment 2 and 3</i>)	R				
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	√	√	√		
[Where applicable] Considering access and inclusion for vulnerable children in the allocation of places at the service (<i>refer to Attachment 1 and 2</i>)	R	√			
Where applicable, providing families with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>)	R	√			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	√	√
Providing opportunities 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 except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the <i>National Law: Section 167</i> .	R	√	√		
Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and accessing immunisation services	R	√	√		
Ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period	R	√	√		
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (<i>refer to Sources</i>) 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 (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have confirmed places in the program	R	√	√		
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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 (<i>refer to Attachment 4</i>)	R	√	√		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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).	R	√	√		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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 (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to the service				√	

Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (<i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring all authorised nominees (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been completed on the enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) (<i>Regulations 160 and 161</i>)	R	√		√	
Ensuring that the enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of <i>Regulations 160, 161, 162</i> and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	R	√	√		
Ensuring that enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances (e.g. if a child acquires a Health Care Card the child becomes available for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy; if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection, the child becomes eligible for Early Start Kindergarten and Early Start Kindergarten Extension grant).	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that enrolment records (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) 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 (<i>Regulation 183 (1a) (2d)</i>)	R	√	√		
Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	√	√		
Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	√	√	√	
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 (<i>Regulation 157</i>), except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the <i>National Law: Section 167</i>	R	R	√	√	√
Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (<i>refer to Attachment 5</i>)	√	√	√		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (<i>refer to Definitions</i> and the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	√	√	√		
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 such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	√	√	√	√	
Developing strategies to assist new families to: feel welcomed into the service become familiar with service policies and procedures share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe	√	√	√	√	

share their understanding of their child’s strengths, interests, abilities and needs value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child’s learning providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating					
Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>	R	R	R	√	√
Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example obtaining or the cancellation of a Health Care Card; if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				√	
Notifying Panorama Heights Preschool and Banyule City Council in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				√	

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 plan to attend the funded 4-year-old kindergarten program and it is their 1st year of funded preschool.
- If they have turned 3 by the 30th of April in the year they plan to 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/are turning 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 covering any DET funding component is 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 <https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Community-services/Kindergarten-services> for more information and to register.

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:

- High priority children:
 - At risk of abuse or neglect
 - In out-of-home care
 - Identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
 - With additional needs
 - Asylum seeker and refugee children
 - Eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- Repeats
 - Children currently enrolled in 4-year-old kindergarten, who have received funding for a second year of kindergarten
- Deferrals
 - Children who deferred from a Banyule kindergarten in the previous year.
- Residents living in Banyule and date of registration
 - Extra consideration will be given to children who have attended a 3-year-old program at a nominated kindergarten and register to attend a 4-year-old program at the same kindergarten
- Non-residents with a link to Banyule, for example work and date of registration
- Non-residents
 - People living in neighbouring council areas, for instance Nillumbik or Darebin and date of registration

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.

In 2023, there is a maximum of 22 places available for each of the 3YO groups and for the 4YO Kangaroo/Wombat/Koala groups, and a maximum of 26 places in the 4YO Kookaburra group which is supported by an additional educator.

Procedures for Group Placement:

Parents are asked to express their group preference and any flexibility when submitting their enrolment 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
- known social needs of children
- other specific requests from families
- balancing gender and age within the groups

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.

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, all necessary documentation must be correctly completed and returned by the set date.

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 3rd birthday (unless under the direct supervision of their parent or guardian).

1.6. WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT

At each round of offers the Kindergarten Support Officer from Banyule City 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.

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.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Group Orientation Program:

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

FEES

At the time of publishing this policy (September 2022), the government has indicated that kinder will be fully funded and that families will not need to pay fees to attend kinder in 2023. If this advice is updated or changed, families will be informed as soon as possible.

RESOURCES

- Banyule City Council Kindergarten Central Enrolment policy and Procedures
- Banyule City 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 September 2022

PLANNED Review date: AUGUST 2023