



Exploring the Wonders of Learning

*Kallista Kindergarten
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Kallista Kindergarten Enrolment Policy Three-year-old and Funded Four-year-old Kindergarten

1. Policy Statement

Values

This kindergarten is committed to:

- Equal access for all children, based on the criteria set out in this policy
- Meeting the needs of the local community
- Compliance with the Children's Services Regulations 2011
- Compliance with the DEECD funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in government funded kindergarten places
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the details on enrolment forms.

Purpose

This policy will outline, for current and future users, staff and the committee/board:

- The criteria for enrolment at the kindergarten
- The process to be followed when enrolling a child, and the basis on which places within the programmes will be allocated.

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to the committee/board, staff, and parents/guardians who wish to have their children enrolled at the kindergarten, or have children already enrolled at the kindergarten.

1.2 Background and Legislation

The Children's Services Regulations 2011 (CSR) require licensed services to have available information about admission requirements and enrolment procedures (CSR r41). It is intended that all eligible children will have access to a year of kindergarten before school; however, a shortage of places in some areas can cause problems and limit choices for parents. Where there is a higher demand than places available, a priority of access must be determined by the committee in order to allocate the places.

The criteria used by kindergartens to determine the allocation of places varies from kindergarten to kindergarten. Kindergartens participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment criteria of the scheme, whereas kindergartens operating independently need to develop their own procedures for the enrolment of children to the kindergarten. The Shire of Yarra Ranges no longer operates a central enrolment scheme.

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- *Children's Services Act 2011 Version No. 20, No. 653 of 2011. Version as at 11 Dec 2011*
- *Children's Service's Regulations 2011 Version No. 001, S.R. No. 653/20011. Version as at 11 Dec 2011*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Victoria)*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)*

1.3 Definitions

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition needs specialist support, or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances.

Deferrals: A child who does not attend in the year when the child is eligible for a funded kindergarten place, or officially withdraws from a kindergarten prior to the end of Term 2. These children are considered by DEECD not to have accessed a year of funded kindergarten, and are therefore eligible for DEECD funding in the following year.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD): The state government department responsible for the funding, licensing and regulation of children's services in Victoria.

Eligible child: Refer to DEECD *Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria 2004-2006*

Application form: A form to apply for a place at the kindergarten

'Blue' confidential enrolment details form: A form, which collects details regarding individual children. This is completed after a place has been offered by the kindergarten and accepted by the applicant

Fees: A payment for a place within a programme at the kindergarten. These include enrolment application fees, deposit to reserve a place, term fees etc.

Guardian: Person/s who have been granted lawful authority by a court order for child/ren. The definition of 'guardian' under the Children's Services Act 2011 also means a person who has custody or control of the child but does not include a person providing children's services to a child.

Kindergarten: Kindergarten (formerly known as preschool) is a universal early childhood programme, funded by the state government, for children in the year prior to commencing primary school. It may also include an unfunded program for three-year-old children (two years before school).

(DEECD *Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria 2009*)

Lawful authority: A power, duty responsibility or authority conferred in relation to a child at common law or under an Act or by an order of a court.

Siblings: Sisters and brothers by whole or half blood, adoptions or by marriage, including de facto or to whom foster care is provided by a parent (including an adoptive parent) or guardian of the first mentioned child.

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

Vacant funded place: A government funded place at the kindergarten from which a child has withdrawn.

1. Sources and related kindergarten policies

Sources

- DEECD, Children's Services Guide
- DEECD, Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria

Centre policies

- Communication
- Complaints and grievances
- Fees
- Inclusion and equity
- Privacy

1.4 Procedures

The committee/board is responsible for:

- Approving any changes to this policy
- Responding to any questions/concerns that arise in relation to any aspect of the policy.
- Determining the criteria for priority of access to kindergarten programs based on funding requirements and the kindergarten's philosophy.
- Developing procedures that will ensure all eligible families are aware of and able to access a kindergarten program, including advertising, providing information in other languages and considering any barriers that may exist.
- Providing a locked secure file for the storage of completed enrolment forms. (Refer to *Privacy Policy*).
- Complying with the *Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs Policy*.
- Providing opportunities (in consultation with staff) for interested families to attend the kindergarten during operational hours to view the program.
- Consulting the current and future users of the kindergarten to determine the suitability of programmes and meal times offered at the kindergarten. Any changes to programmes or programme times will need to consider enrolment numbers and the financial viability of proposed changes.

The enrolment officer (or the delegated person) is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy, which includes:

- Providing enrolment application forms (Appendix 1), which comply with the Children's Services Regulations 2011
- Collating enrolments
- Offering places and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- Providing a monthly report to the committee/board regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered
- Storing completed enrolment application forms, as soon as is practicable, in a lockable file
- Complying with the *Privacy Policy* of the kindergarten
- Providing a copy of the Enrolment policy with the enrolment application form.

The staff is responsible for:

- Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs. (Refer to *Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs Policy* for procedures to follow).
- Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the enrolment officer as required.
- Providing opportunities for interested families to attend the kindergarten during operational hours to view the programme.
- Responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program in which they are considering enrolling their child
- Complying with the kindergarten's *Privacy policy* in relation to the collection and management of children's enrolment information
- Ensuring that enrolment forms are completed before the child commences attending the program.
- The Treasurer is responsible for collecting, receipting and banking enrolment fees

Parents are responsible for:

- Completing enrolment forms prior to their child's attendance at the kindergarten
- Ensuring that all required information is provided to the service
- Updating information by notifying the kindergarten of any changes.

2. General Enrolment Procedures

2.1 Application Process

- Applications for children to attend the kindergarten from parents/guardians will be accepted any time from birth for both the 3 year old programme and the 4 year old (funded) programme.
- Application forms are available from the kindergarten and online via the website.
- A separate application form must be completed for each child. Both 3 & 4 year old programmes may be applied for on the same form. Children applying for 3 yr old programmes are automatically put on the waiting list for 4 yr old programmes unless we are specifically instructed not to.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the education programme enrolment applications should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child.
- Completed enrolment application forms are to be forwarded to the enrolment officer, or designated person, at the kindergarten.
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted to the enrolment officers (or delegated person), staff, president and secretary, unless otherwise specified by the committee/board.
- The applications will be entered in the waiting list (from date of correctly received application form) using the eligibility and access criteria noted in the enrolment form.

Additional year of kindergarten:

- Parents/guardians of children applying for an additional year of three or four year old kindergarten where the first year **was not at Kallista**, must submit an enrolment application form for an additional year. This needs to be clearly marked 'additional year'.
- Parents/guardians of children applying for an additional year of funded four year old or three year old kindergarten where the first year **was at Kallista**, must inform the enrolment officer as soon as they suspect an additional year may be required, and confirm this as soon as their child has been assessed. Additional year places are guaranteed IF the teacher is in agreement that the child requires an additional year, and this request is lodged with the enrolment officer PRIOR to the end of Term 2. Requests for an additional year in Term 3 onwards that are approved by the teacher will be prioritised, but cannot be guaranteed. Requests for additional years that are not approved by the teacher will be accommodated only if there is capacity in the group, and the child is fully self-funded.

2. Closing dates for applications

The closing dates for enrolment applications are:

- May of the year prior to required attendance for children wishing to attend the four year old (funded) kindergarten.
- May of the year prior to required attendance for children wishing to attend the three year old program.

3. Procedure for a late application for enrolment

Applications received after the closing date will be considered, once all other applicants have been offered a place, in line with the priority of access criteria of Kallista Kindergarten.

2.2 Allocation Within Groups

Where the kindergarten provides more than one funded four year old kindergarten program or three-year-old program, places within the programs will be allocated prior to the end of Term 4 the preceding year. Parents are asked to indicate any preferences for particular session(s) on their offer

acceptance. The enrolment officer and director make the final decision on the allocation of preferences. **Requested sessions cannot be guaranteed.**

2.3 Offer of Places: Process, Fees and Deposits

Process:

- Places will be allocated to eligible children who are on the waiting list in accordance with the eligibility and access criteria of the kindergarten for the 3 year old programme and for the 4 year old programme.

...Offer of Places: Process, Fees and Deposits

Offer of places: process, fees and deposits cont...

- Timing of offers of places in the three-year-old programme and the 4 year old (funded) kindergarten programme are approximately:
 - June preceding year of programme: 1st round offers sent out.
 - July/August preceding year of programme: 2nd round offers sent out.
 - Sept-Nov preceding year: final groups allocated.
 - **By end Nov in the preceding year of programme (usually by AGM): parents to submit all enrolment paperwork including emergency contacts and immunisation status. Children will not be considered enrolled without this documentation, their offer will be retracted and their place offered to the next child on the waiting list.**
- Applicants who are successful will be notified, in writing, of a confirmed place.
- Parents/guardians, who do not wish to accept the offer of a place, or withdraw their enrolment, will be requested to notify the committee/board in writing as soon as possible. Families who have not replied to their offer of a position within 7 days of the cut off time for replies will be removed from the waiting list and notified in writing of the withdrawal of an offer for a place.
- Second and third round offers will be made if positions are available.
- A deposit of \$285 for 3 year old program and \$370 for 4 year old program must be paid to hold the place for the following year. Health Care Card Holders are able to pay a \$100 deposit for 4 year old Kinder.
- This deposit is in lieu of term 1 fees
- An enrolment form and other relevant information will be provided after the place is accepted and deposit paid.
- Applicants who are unsuccessful will be notified in writing and advised of their place on the waiting list.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any substantial debt owed by the family to the kindergarten is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the centre. (Refer to the Fees policy.

2.4 Eligibility and access criteria for funded (four year old) kindergarten programme

Fees & Deposit Policy

- A deposit equal to the amount of Term 1 fees must be paid by cash, cheque, money order or electronic transfer by the cut-off date for collecting deposits **and birth certificate** supplied to secure a child's place.
- Healthcare/concession card holders are able to make a \$100 deposit for 4 year old Kinder. Their deposit will be refunded at the start of term 1 if their card is valid for the duration of Term 1. If their card expires during Term 1 they will be refunded the amount of deposit proportional until their card expiry date, with the remaining deposit refunded upon presentation of their next card valid for the remainder of Term 1 eg: if their initial card is only valid until mid Term 1 they will receive \$50 back at the start of Term 1, with the remaining \$50 back when they present their next valid card for the 2nd half of Term 1.
- This deposit is NOT refundable under general circumstances and will be in lieu of the first term fees. Exceptional circumstances for refund will be considered by the committee.
- A 'blue' enrolment form and other relevant information will be provided after the place is accepted and deposit paid/birth certificate supplied.
- Late starters (3 yr olds who turn 3 between beginning of Term 1 and April 30th) will not be able to attend kindergarten until they turn 3. Payment of the entire amount of term 1 fees is required to secure a position as a late starter.
- Applicants who do not accept a place and do not pay a deposit by the cut-off date will be removed from the waiting list.

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

The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded (4 year old) kindergarten programme:

- Children who will have turned four years of age by 30 April in the year she/he will attend kindergarten.
- Children who have received funding for an additional year of kindergarten.
- Children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but:
 - Deferred
 - Withdrew from the centre on or before the last day of Term 2.

Children older than the eligible age: Children turning six years of age in their year (or additional year) at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school entry age requirements by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). Parents/guardians should fill in the DEECD *Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten programme* form and if relevant attach a copy of the completed *Declaration of Eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten* form. The declaration form will be provided to the parent/guardian by the early childhood service teacher. This exemption request is to be forwarded to the Regional Director of the relevant Departmental regional office for consideration, **by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning six**. For more information please see

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/preschool-schoolage.htm>

Children younger than the eligible age:

Children who are younger than the eligible age, whose parents/guardians have submitted a written request for their child to attend school the following year to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), or the non-government school their child will be attending, are eligible to apply. A copy of the written request must be attached with the application. On notification that the DEECD has approved this request to attend school early, the kindergarten will accept the child into their programme. The parents must therefore ensure that they make such an application to DEECD in good time so that the result is known by October 1st of the year preceding their child's requested year of entry to kindergarten, eg: if the parents wish their child to attend 2011 when their child would under normal circumstances attend 2012 they must have secured DEECD approval by October 1st 2010. Places will not be held for children pending unknown results after this time, if there is another age-eligible child requiring the place.

Parents/guardians are to be advised that very few such requests are approved by DEECD. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed onto school the following year, the child will be unable to access another year unless they are funded by DEECD for a second year.

Three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children whose families are in receipt of a concession card have an able to attend up to ten hours a week of a funded early childhood program planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher

2.5 Eligibility and access criteria for the three-year-old programme

Children are eligible for attendance in the three-year-old programme provided they have turned three years of age on or before 30 April in the year of attendance.

Late starters (3 yr olds who turn 3 between beginning of Term 1 and April 30th) will be accepted but will not be able to attend kindergarten until they turn 3. These children will be required to attend an interview with the teacher as a condition of their offer BEFORE being accepted for a place.

2.6 Criteria applied if there are more applicants than places available for either programme

The criteria to be used, if there are more applications than places available for the funded (four year old) programme:

1. Children who attended the 4 year old programme at Kallista Kindergarten the previous year and have received funding for an additional year of kindergarten
2. Children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred or withdrew from the kindergarten on or before the last day of Term 2
3. Children who attended the 3 year old programme at Kallista Kindergarten the previous year
4. Remaining places are prioritised according to 'sibling status' (ie: children whose siblings have previously attended the kindergarten prioritised); 'location rating' (local children prioritised), and date of application (earlier applicants prioritised)
5. At the discretion of the committee

The criteria to be used, if there are more applications than places available for the three year old programme

1. Children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred
2. Remaining places are prioritised according to 'sibling status' (ie: children whose siblings have previously attended the kindergarten; 'location rating' (local children prioritised), and date of application (earlier applicants prioritised)
3. At the discretion of the committee

***Please NOTE**

Sibling status: the applying parent/guardian is responsible for informing the current enrolment officer of any prior sibling attendances in writing, at the time of application. The kindergarten takes no responsibility if a child fails to gain a place because the parent or guardian has not made such a notification.

The location is the address of the child at the time of application. Address changes will be recorded on the waiting list, but will not affect the order of offers after 1st round offers have been sent out. Locations are ranked as follows:

- a. Kallista & Sherbrooke firstly, and then
- b. The Patch, Selby, Belgrave, Tecoma, Ferny Creek, Sassafras, Olinda
- c. Others

Date of application is the date your completed application form (with accompanying birth certificate) is received by the enrolment officer. Date of initial enquiry and/or postage is not relevant. The kindergarten takes no responsibility for applications lost in the post – it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the application form has been received.

Offer acceptance forms WILL NOT be considered as accepted without proof of birth date ie: a Birth Certificate or Passport. If a passport is used the Birth Certificate will need to be supplied with remaining paperwork by end November in the year prior to the programme.

Vacated positions: throughout the year, positions MAY become available. From the commencement of Term 2 onwards if a position is vacated, a trial day is required prior to the place being offered. Staff and Committee maintain the right to refuse the place to ensure stability and cohesion for the whole group.

Attendance at Kallista Kindergarten does not guarantee attendance at Kallista Primary School. Please contact the Principal at Kallista Primary School directly for information on their enrolment application procedures & policies on (03) 9755 2633, kallista.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au or <http://kallista.globalteacher.org.au/enrolments/>

2.7 Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Kallista Kindergarten Committee, following the committee meeting on 5th May, 2009 and revised on 14th June, 2010. Revised and Updated again 2nd May 2013 and approved by the committee.

2.8 Review date

This policy will be reviewed in 2016 and thereafter every three years, or varied earlier if necessary, and the committee/board will within 28 days of making any change, notify the parents/guardians of the children attending, of that change.

2.9 Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the committee/board will:

- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues relating to enrolment procedures.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy, or incorporate relevant questions in the general parents/guardians survey.
- Take into account feedback on the policy from the enrolment officer or designated person and staff.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the enrolment of children.
- Review the enrolment form to determine its effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and management requirements of the service.