

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- the criteria for enrolment at Bethany Kindergarten Services (BKS) kindergartens
- the process to be followed when registering and enrolling a child at BKS Kindergartens, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into the service

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

BKS is committed to:

- equal access to kindergarten for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- complying with DET funding requirements relating to the enrolment of eligible children in government-funded kindergarten places
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided on enrolment forms
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the BKS as the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person, educators, other staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at a BKS service.

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 that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to one year of kindergarten in the year before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, a priority system for access must be determined by the Approved Provider in order to allocate the available places in a fair and equitable manner. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all eligible children. Criteria for access and inclusion are outlined in the *Department of Education and Training Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*). GKA member kindergartens are required to comply with GKA enrolment policy and procedures.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), as amended 2011

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2011

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2012

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 177, 183

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

Standard 6.1: Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained

Element 6.1.1: There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

DEFINITIONS

Approved Provider: An individual or organisation that has been approved by the DET as fit and proper (in accordance with Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the National Law) to operate one or more education and care services. The Geelong Kindergarten Association is the Approved Provider for all GKA Services.

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

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

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

EYMO: Bethany Kindergarten Services (BKS)

DET: Department of Education and Training

Early Start Kindergarten: A funding program that enables three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection or referred to Child FIRST to attend an additional kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earllystart.aspx>

Eligible child: A child who meets the age and funding criteria outlined in the *Kindergarten Guide* and the requirements of the *No Jab No Play* legislation

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. This information is required under the National Regulations, and must include contact details, names of authorised nominees (refer to *Definitions*), names of persons authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication, names of persons authorised to take the child outside the service, details of any court orders, personal and health information including specific healthcare needs, medical management plans and dietary restrictions etc. (Regulations 160, 161, 162). This form is completed after a place has been offered by GKA and accepted by the family. The information on this form is kept at the kindergarten in accordance with the GKA Privacy Policy.

Fees: The contribution made by parents or guardians of the Kindergarten Children to the cost of the program provided to the Kindergarten Children.

Fees Policy: means Fees policy as amended from time to time.

Kindergarten Children: The children enrolled and attending at the Service.

Kindergarten PAG: The Parent Advisory group (PAG) established by parents of the kindergarten children at each Service.

Kindergarten Enrolment Fee: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the Service. This is deducted from term one Fees.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS): A state government subsidy paid directly to GKA to enable eligible families to attend a funded kindergarten program at minimal or no cost. Details are available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfeesubsidy.aspx>

Kindergarten registration form: A form to register your child to be included on the GKA database

Kindergarten Registration Fee: A payment contributing to administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

Late collection charge: A charge that may be imposed by GKA as the Approved Provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (refer to Attachment 1 – Fee information for families).

Nominated Supervisor: A person who is a Certified Supervisor and has been nominated by the Approved Provider of the Service under Part 3 of the Act to be the Nominated Supervisor of that service, and who has consented to that nomination. The Nominated Supervisor has day-to-day responsibility for the Service in accordance with the National Regulations. All Services must have a Nominated Supervisor.

Pre-Kindergarten: A program for children turning three prior to May 1st. (refer to the GKA Enrolment Handbook)

Registered Care: Care provided by nannies, grandparents, relatives or friends, educators working within kindergartens, occasional care services and outside school hours care services that are registered with the Family Assistance Office. Eligible families can receive some reimbursement of costs when using a registered care provider. Details are available at www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

Regulation: The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*

Responsible person: An educator who consents to being placed in day-to-day charge of the Service.

Service: An associate member kindergarten of BKS

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000, included in the *Legislative Extracts*:

www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/Operation/Pages/InstructionSheets.aspx

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:
www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/

Guide to the National Quality Standard:

www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/

Kindergarten Guide:

www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx

Service policies

Complaints and Grievances Policy

Fees Policy

Inclusion and Equity Policy

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

PROCEDURES

BKS as the Approved Provider is responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access at BKS kindergartens based on funding requirements and in consultation with the BKS community.

- developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program, and considering any barriers to access that may exist
- complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- appointing staff 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
- ensuring that enrolment forms (refer to *Definitions*) comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162
- reviewing the enrolment form to determine its effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and management requirements of the service
- 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 kindergarten can enter the kindergarten premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the BKS as the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

The BKS Central Operations staff are responsible for the enrolment process and are accountable for the following:

- providing a kindergarten enrolment handbook
- collating and entering kindergarten registrations on the BKS Central Enrolment Database
- maintaining the BKS Central Enrolment Database
- collecting, receipting and banking kindergarten `registration fees
- offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- providing a monthly report to the BKS Board as the Approved Provider. Providing regular updates to Department of Education and Training and the City of Greater Geelong regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered.
- storing completed kindergarten registration forms in a lockable file (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*) as soon as is practicable
- complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- ensuring easy access for all stakeholders to the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*.

The Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person and other educators are responsible for:

- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering for their child
- referring all other enrolment enquiries to the BKS Central Operations staff responsible for the enrolment process
- advising BKS of any children withdrawing from the program in a timely manner
- ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the kindergarten
- 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 kindergarten (Regulation 183)
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the kindergarten can enter the kindergarten premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the BKS as the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157)
- ensuring current details including children's immunisation status (from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register) has been provided and copies kept in accordance with the Education and Care Services Regulations 2011, when the child is enrolled.
- ensuring the orientation process is planned in consultation with families, to orient a child and family to

the kindergarten including developing strategies to assist new families to:

- feel welcomed into the kindergarten
- become familiar with kindergarten 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
- ensuring the adequate supervision of children is not compromised during orientation visits
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators and carers at the kindergarten, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the kindergarten
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required and completing referrals where appropriate
- the consideration of culture and language in undertaking enrolment and orientation processes
- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

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

Volunteers and students, while at the kindergarten, 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, BKS as the Approved Provider will:

- 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 GKA's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by BKS on 25 June 2015 and was last updated on 1 July 2017.

REVIEW DATE: 1 JULY 2019