



MINUTES

POLICY REVIEW PANEL

held on Wednesday 20 February 2019 2018 at 10.00am in Civic Room 2, Melton Civic Centre

Present: Cr B Turner, Mayor
 Cr K Hardy
 Cr K Majdlik
 Mr J Whitfield, Governance Coordinator

Chairperson: Cr B Turner, Mayor

1. Welcome

The meeting commenced at 10.05am.

2. Apologies

Cr L Carli

3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests

Nil

4. Confirmation of the previous minutes

Crs Majdlik/Turner

That the minutes of the Policy Review Panel meeting held on 12 December 2018 and adopted by Council at the Ordinary Meeting held on 4 February 2019 be noted.

5. Business Arising

Nil

Cr Hardy arrived at 10.20am.

6. General Business

6.1 Four Year old Kindergarten Enrolment Policy (Revised)

Presenters: – Leigh Ball, Early Childhood Coordinator and Marita Hynds, Occasional Care/Kindergarten - Children's Services Program Team Leader

The revised Four Year old Kindergarten Enrolment Policy was considered by the Panel.

The Panel recommended changes be made to the Policy to clearly outline how siblings and multiple family members, eg. twins, are assessed under the Policy.

Recommendation 1

Crs Majdlik/Hardy

That Council approve the revised *Four Year old Kindergarten Enrolment Policy* as attached to these minutes.



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7. Next Meeting

Wednesday 17 April 2019, 10 00am – 12.00pm, Civic Room 2, Melton Civic Centre.

8. Close of Business

The meeting closed at 10.35am.

	Four Year Old Kindergarten Central Enrolment Policy
Version No.	V5.0 5 December 2018
Endorsement	Executive - 7 February 2019 Policy Review Panel - 20 February 2019
Authorisation	Council - <insert date>
Review Date	30 November 2020
Responsible Officer	Manager Families and Children
Policy Owner	Early Childhood Coordinator

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the process and priorities used when applying for a four year old kindergarten place through Melton City Council’s Kindergarten Central Enrolment Service (KCES).

2. Scope

This policy applies to parents/guardians wishing to access a four year old kindergarten place, Kindergarten Providers, Council officers and agencies involved in the placement of children into four year old kindergarten as part of Council’s KCES.

Note: The Melton City Council KCES does not include funded kindergarten programs provided in Long Day Care centres.

3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Allocation Priorities	The priorities referred to when allocating places into a four year old Kindergarten program within the Council KCES Kindergartens.
Applicant	A child whose parent/guardian has lodged a completed application for four year old kindergarten.
Application Fee	A non-refundable fee payable when lodging an application for four year old kindergarten that contributes to the cost of Council administering the KCES.
Deferrals – Four Year Old	Children of City of Melton residents who attended kindergarten in Term 1, but withdrew their place and deferred to the following year with DET approval. Children, who have deferred from a four year old kindergarten place and are considered by DET not to have accessed a year of funded kindergarten, are therefore eligible for kindergarten funding in the following year.
DET	Department of Education and Training.
Eligible Child	A child who is eligible to apply for a place in a KCES Melton City Council kindergarten.
Early Start Kindergarten	Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low cost kindergarten to eligible three year old children who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or are known to Child Protection or Child FIRST.

Word/Term	Definition
Funded Kindergarten Place	The Government fee subsidy enables eligible children to attend a funded kindergarten program (sessional Kindergarten or Long Day Care) at a minimal cost the year prior to commencing school.
KCES	Kindergarten Central Enrolment Service.
The Kindergarten Guide	The Kindergarten Guide is developed by DET and is updated annually to provide guidance to Kindergarten Providers on operations including the eligibility criteria for funding.
Kindergarten Provider	The service who operates the Kindergarten program in a Council owned kindergarten facility.

4. Policy Statement

Melton City Council is committed to:

- equal access for all children based on the priorities set out in this policy
- compliance with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- compliance with DET funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in State Government Funded Kindergarten Services
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to the details on the application for four year old Kindergarten application forms.

5. Eligibility Criteria

In accordance with the Victorian Government Kindergarten Guide, the following children are eligible for one year of funded Kindergarten:

- Children who are four years of age or older by 30 April in the year they are to attend Kindergarten.
- Children turning six years of age in their year of Kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school entry age requirements by their regional office of DET.
- Children who are younger than the eligible age, and are not eligible for Early Start Kindergarten, but whose parents/guardians have submitted a written request to their regional DET office, and have been approved for their child to attend Kindergarten.

Note: DET approval for early eligibility for Kindergarten does not guarantee access to Primary School the following year.

- Children who attended Term 1 of four year old Kindergarten in the previous year, but deferred from the program with DET approval.
- Children who are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten.

Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low cost kindergarten to eligible three year old children where programs are offered by a qualified Kindergarten teacher. Eligible children are those identified as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander descent or have had contact with Child Protection or been referred to Child FIRST. Refer to the Kindergarten Guide for more information on eligibility criteria.

6. Allocation Priorities

In line with the Victorian Government Kindergarten Guide and the Melton City Council Kindergarten Central Enrolment Policy, children of City of Melton residents are eligible for priority of access if they meet the following:

- vulnerability

- children at risk
- child and or parent with a life threatening or debilitating illness or disease
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- eligibility for Early Start Kindergarten
- eligibility for a second year of funded Kindergarten
- a parent or child with a diagnosed mental illness
- Court Orders that limit choices for Kindergarten.

6.1. Melton City Council Priority of Access:

Priority of Access Criterion	Requirements for Eligibility
Previous year Deferrals: Children of City of Melton residents who attended Kindergarten in Term 1 but withdrew.	Teacher/educator required to submit a referral outlining the child would benefit from deferring to the following year. Children who do not attend the kindergarten program will not be entitled to a Deferral.
Children of City of Melton residents who are eligible for a second year of funded Kindergarten.	Children of City of Melton residents who DET have approved for a second year of funded Kindergarten.
Children of City of Melton residents who are at risk of abuse or neglect or children in out-of-home care.	Referral by any service working with the family that assess the child as vulnerable, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection/Child First • Maternal & Child Health Nurse • Out of Home Care Provider • Family Services.
Children of City of Melton residents who are of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander descent.	Family identifies the child as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander.
Children of City of Melton residents eligible for Aboriginal Early Start Kindergarten.	A child who meets all of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the child is three years old by 30 April in the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program • the child has been identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Advice of eligibility may be either verbal (from a parent or carer) or written from a professional such as a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO).
Children of City of Melton residents eligible for Early Start Kindergarten known to Child Protection or Child FIRST.	A child who meets all of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the child is three years old by 30 April in the year in which they are enrolled to attend the funded kindergarten program, and • the child is known to Child Protection. A child known to Child Protection means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child who has a current, or a history of, involvement with Child Protection, including those in out-of-home care, or • a child who has been referred by Child Protection to Child FIRST.

Priority of Access Criterion	Requirements for Eligibility
	A child's eligibility can be advised by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a parent or carer who self-identify their child is currently supported by Child Protection or Child FIRST services or has been supported in the past, or • a Child Protection or Child FIRST professional. Advice about eligibility may be either verbal (from a parent or carer) or written from a Child Protection or Child FIRST professional.
Children of City of Melton residents with additional needs, defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children who have an identified specific disability or developmental delay • children who require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the Kindergarten program • children of City of Melton residents currently waiting on an assessment or a diagnosis (not yet been diagnosed with a specific disability or developmental delay). 	Referred by services, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Intervention Service • Pre-School Field Officer • Maternal and Child Health Nurse • General Practitioner Or evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Disability Health Care Card
Children of City of Melton residents who have Asylum Seeker and/or Refugee Status.	Appropriate visa that identifies the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker or referral letter from case worker.
Children of City of Melton residents where the parent or child has a life threatening or debilitating illness or disease.	Copy of a signed letter from a General Practitioner.
Children of City of Melton residents where a parent has a disability.	One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of a signed letter from a General Practitioner. • Copy of a signed letter from a disability support agency.
Children of City of Melton residents where a parent or child has a diagnosed mental illness.	One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from a mental health or other relevant agency or mental health practitioner stating that the child or parent has a mental illness. • Copy of a signed letter from a General Practitioner, stating that the child or parent has a mental illness.
Children of City of Melton residents where Court Orders limit choices for Kindergarten.	Copy of related Court Order.
Children of City of Melton residents where a parent has a drug and/or alcohol dependency.	Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from a drug and alcohol or family support agency,

Priority of Access Criterion	Requirements for Eligibility
	stating that the child's family has a drug and/or alcohol dependency.
Children of City of Melton residents where there is a risk of family violence	Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from a family support agency stating that the child is at risk due to family violence.
Children of City of Melton residents where there is a risk of homelessness	Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from a family support agency stating that the child is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
Children of City of Melton residents experiencing a situation resulting in vulnerability.	Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from a family support agency or other.
Kindergarten Fee Subsidy applies to families who meet the following criteria: The child of City of Melton resident who individually holds, or has a parent or guardian who holds one of the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Health Care Card • Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card • Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card • Refugee Visa (subclass 200) • In-Country Special Humanitarian Visa (subclass 201) • Global Special Humanitarian Visa (subclass 202) • Temporary Humanitarian Concern Visa (subclass 786) • Protection Visa (subclass 866) • Emergency Rescue Visa (subclass 203) • Woman at Risk Visa (subclass 204) • Bridging Visas A-E or ImmiCard
In relation to siblings, residents of the City of Melton who have previously had a child attend the Kindergarten of preference, in a 4 year old program, in the year of enrolling the current child or the previous year.	<p>A child's eligibility can be advised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the details required on the Application Form. • The application will be verified by reviewing the status through past records.
Residents of the City of Melton.	<p>Places will be allocated through a computer generated allocation system.</p> <p>Children of a multiple birth will be allocated a place at the same Kindergarten unless otherwise requested by the family.</p>
Families who reside outside of the City of Melton municipality	Refer to 6.2 Families who reside outside the municipality

Note: Children will be prioritised under Priority Number 1, according to the number of criteria met. In a situation where the same number of criteria is met, places will be allocated in order of the date the enrolment was received.

6.2. Families who reside outside the municipality

- Kindergarten applications from families who reside outside the municipality are required to be assessed by the Community Services General Manager.
- Applications from residents residing outside the municipality will not be assessed until November of the year of application and will be determined on the Kindergarten vacancies at that time.

- Families are considered to live outside of the municipal boundaries if they move out of the municipality prior to the commencement of the Kindergarten year.

6.3. Second Year of Kindergarten

As per The Kindergarten Guide a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded Kindergarten if:

- the child is observed by the Early Childhood teacher as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- there is evidence to suggest that the child will achieve better outcomes if they attend a second year of funded Kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year

6.4. Deferrals

- In accordance with The Kindergarten Guide and its successor agreements, an enrolment may be deferred within Term 1, provided the registration has not been recorded by the Kindergarten teacher on the DET Kindergarten Information Management System.
- Families wishing to defer their enrolment should speak with Kindergarten staff as soon as possible to discuss their child's readiness for Kindergarten.
- Families, in consultation with the Kindergarten teacher, are required to complete a Deferral form whereby their enrolment will be re-offered the following year.

Note: Children wishing to defer who do not attend the Kindergarten program will not be entitled to a Deferral. The child will need to be re-enrolled following the standard enrolment process.

7. Applications

7.1. Application Forms

- Application forms must be completed and accompanied by the application administration fee (non-refundable) with supporting documentation as outlined in the Kindergarten information booklet.
- A fee waiver due to financial hardship may be applied. To discuss this, please contact the Early Childhood Coordinator.

7.2. Closing Dates

- The closing date for the first round allocation of places will be listed on the application form.
- Application forms may be submitted for the remainder of the year, but will not be included in the first round of allocations.

7.3. Changing Preferences

A change of preference must be lodged with the Kindergarten Enrolment Officer. Once received, this change of preference will be treated as a new application and processed in the next allocation round. Fees are applicable.

7.4. Allocation of Places

Places will be allocated to eligible children, including those who are on the preference list, in accordance with the preference listed on the application form and in line with the KCES Allocation Priorities of this policy.

7.5. Reserving Places

Two places per Kindergarten will be reserved for high priority children. DET defines High Priority children to be:

- Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, or Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- Children with additional needs, defined as children who:
 - 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

These places will be reserved until 30 October. Any remaining reserved places not filled by 30 October will be made available to preference list families and subsequent allocation rounds.

7.6. Managing Preference Lists

Children on preference lists will be allocated places once vacancies arise at individual Kindergartens. Places are allocated in order of the computer generated preference list and in line with the KCES Allocation Priorities of this policy.

7.7. Offers

- Families will be notified of a Kindergarten place after the close of first round allocations.
- If vacancies are not available at a preferred Kindergarten, Applicants will be placed on a preference list in accordance with KCES Allocation Priorities.
- Second round offers will be administered approximately four weeks after the first round of offers.
- Offers after this time will be administered weekly.

7.8. Acceptance of place

- Following the offer of a place by Council, the parent/guardian must notify their acceptance to Council by the date listed on the letter. Families who do not notify by the date advised will forfeit their place.
- Parents/guardians who do not receive an offer to a Kindergarten of their choice will be notified that they are awaiting allocation via a preference list.
- Parents/ guardians who choose to wait for the Kindergarten of preference and not take up a second or third preference offer will be placed on a preference list.

8. Kindergartens located on school sites

Enrolling your child into a Melton City Council Kindergarten on a school site does not confirm your child's entry into the school the following year.

For further information in relation to school zoning boundaries and school enrolment processes, contact your local primary school.

9. Privacy

Access to completed application forms will be restricted to the Kindergarten Enrolment Officer, and other relevant Council Officers, in accordance with Council's Information Privacy Policy.

10. Responsibility and Accountability

10.1 Kindergarten Enrolment Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the administrative tasks associated with the allocation of Kindergarten placements in line with the KSEC allocation priority criteria.
10.2 Kindergarten Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for providing families with session times, orientation sessions and fee information in relation to the day to day operation of the Kindergarten program. Responsible for employing Kindergarten staff.
10.3 Parents & Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for providing all required documentation for the Kindergarten application form by the date indicated in the Kindergarten information booklet

11. References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents

Name	Location
<i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
<i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)</i>	www.comlaw.gov.au
<i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
<i>Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)</i>	www.comlaw.gov.au
<i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)</i>	www.comlaw.gov.au
<i>Sex and Age Discrimination Amendment Act 2011</i>	www.comlaw.gov.au
<i>Information Privacy Act 2000</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
<i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
<i>Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria.	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx