



Kindergarten Central Registration Procedure

Linked policy document:	This procedure details actions and processes pursuant to the Kindergarten Central Registration Policy.
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Responsible officer	Manager Families and Children
Procedure owner	Early Childhood Coordinator

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the process to be followed when enrolling a child into either three year old or 4 year old funded Kindergarten via the Kindergarten Central Registration Service and the basis on which places within the program will be allocated.

2. Scope

This procedure:

- informs Council staff involved in the placement of children into Kindergarten as part of Council's Kindergarten Central Registration Service.
- provides consistent data recording and process to promote the equitable allocation of Kindergarten places in line with DET's Priority of Access guidelines.

3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Allocation Priorities	The priorities referred to when allocating places into a Kindergarten program within the Council KCRS.
Applicant	A child whose parent/guardian has lodged a completed registration for a Kindergarten place.
Registration Fee	A non-refundable fee payable when lodging an registration for a Kindergarten place that contributes to the cost of Council administering the KCRS.

Centralised Registration Scheme	The system used to manage the registration process, which includes a conditional offer for a Kindergarten placement. This system does not include funded Kindergarten provided in long day care centres.
Deferrals (only applicable for four year old Kindergarten registrations)	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 KCRS Melton City Council Kindergarten.
Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)	Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low cost Kindergarten to eligible three year old children who identify as: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, a refugee or asylum seeker, or are known to Child Protection or Child FIRST
EYM	Early Years Management
Families who reside outside the municipality	Families are considered to live outside the municipal boundaries if they move out of the municipality prior to the commencement of the Kindergarten year.
Funded Kindergarten Place /Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	The Government fee subsidy enables eligible children to attend a funded 4 year old Kindergarten program for 15 hours, free of charge and commencing in 2022, three year old Kindergarten programs for 5 hours (sessional Kindergarten or Long Day Care included)
KCRS	Kindergarten Central Registration Service
Kindergarten Priority of Access Criterion	Priority of Access Criterion has been developed by DET to provide priority of Kindergarten access to children at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
Early Years Manager	The service who operates the Kindergarten program in a Council owned Kindergarten facility.
The Kindergarten Guide	The Kindergarten Guide is developed by DET and is updated annually to provide guidance to Early Years Managers on operations including the eligibility criteria for funding.

4. Procedure

The Melton City Council Kindergarten Registration Scheme must accept registrations for both three and four year olds. Staff must follow this procedure when processing registrations and allocating Kindergarten places.

Melton City Council is committed to allocating places based on the following:

- meeting the needs of the local community
- equal access for all children based on the priorities set out in the *Kindergarten Central Registration 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 registration of children in State Government Funded Kindergarten Services
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided on Kindergarten Registration forms.

5. Registration Forms

To enable streamlined processing of Kindergarten registrations, families are encouraged to complete online forms available via the City of Melton website at:

melton.vic.gov.au/Kindergartens

- Families wishing to enrol their child into a Kindergarten program, are required to complete one registration form, per child.
- Each registration form must be completed and accompanied by an registration fee (non-refundable) with required supporting documentation as outlined in the Kindergarten information booklet.

The following documents must be provided to support the child's registration:

- Evidence of living in the municipality or of being a ratepayer of Melton City Council.
- Evidence of the child's date of birth.
- Selected priority one evidence (where applicable)
- Completed Registration forms including all required supporting documents and registration fee can be submitted :
 - online at: melton.vic.gov.au/Kindergartens

Although families are encouraged to utilise the online process, families unable to complete an online registration, can access paper forms from any of the following Council venues: Melton Civic Centre, Melton Library and Learning Hub and Caroline Springs Civic Centre/Library.

- Registration forms submitted without the required supporting documentation will be considered incomplete.
- In the event the registration fee is not received with the registration form, the registration form will be considered incomplete and will not be processed until payment is received.
- Incomplete registration forms will be returned to the family via post and will only be processed once the central registration team has received the complete document. This process may delay the registration process and the child's commencement into the Kindergarten program.
- When a complete first round registration form is received and entered into the Council's system, the Central Registration Team will send out a confirmation of receipt within a four week period.
- Registration forms from families who reside outside the municipality, are required to be assessed by the General Manager, Community Services prior to any approval.

- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, registrations should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (*refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy*).
- Registration forms are confidential and are kept in a secure place on the premises.

6. Fee Waiver

- Families in financial hardship may apply for a waiver to the registration fee by providing a letter explaining their circumstances. This letter will be assessed by the Families and Children Service's Manager and an outcome advised.
- A fee waiver will automatically apply to families eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and Early Start Kinder.

7. First and Second Round Offer Timelines

- The Kindergarten Registration Timeline on the Kindergarten Registration form outlines the opening and closing dates for offers throughout the year :
 - First Round Registrations Open: March
 - First Round Registrations Close: June
 - First Round Offers sent to families: Late June
 - Second Round Registrations Open: June/July
 - Second Round Registrations Close: 2 weeks from opening date
 - Second Round Offer sent to families: July
- From September in the year prior to starting Kindergarten, families will receive information from their accepted Early Years Manager regarding commencement, procedures, including session times, days and fee information. This information is provided directly by the Early Years Manager to the families, **not** the Central Registration Team at Council.
- Registration forms can be submitted for the remainder of the year and will continue to be accepted and allocated when/where vacancies are available. Families should expect to be contacted by their Early Years Manager within two weeks from submitting registration forms

8. Changing Preference or Personal Details

- Any change to a Kindergarten preference after a family has accepted their offer, will incur a fee which must be paid prior to any changes being made.
- All preference changes after a family has accepted an offer must be forwarded to the central registration team in writing.
This can be done by:
 - Completing the 'change of information form' (available from the Melton Civic Centre, Caroline Springs Civic Centre/ Library, Melton Library & Learning Hub or Melton City Council's website)

All preference changes prior to accepting an offer can be completed as follows:

- Writing a letter to Council addressed to the central registration team,
- Sending an email to kindergartens@melton.vic.gov.au
- Accessing the parent portal and making these changes

- Families are advised to include all Kindergarten preferences that they will accept, as not everyone will receive their first preference.
- Any changes to an registration (other than updating contact details) will be treated as a new registration form and will be processed in line with the date the change was received by the central registration team and not the original date that the registration was submitted.

9. Preference List

- The Centralised Registration Scheme allocates families through a computer generated system in accordance to the Kindergarten Priority of Access criteria.
- Families cannot accept a place at a Kindergarten and also be on a preference list for another Kindergarten.
- Families can choose to not accept the place offered and to remain on the preference list at their preferred Kindergarten.
- If families are still on the preference list in January in the year the child is to attend Kindergarten, the central registration team will contact the family to offer a place to the child at a Kindergarten with vacancies.

10. Deferring Registration

- In accordance with the DET Kindergarten Guide and its successor agreements, a registration 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 registration should speak with their Kindergarten provider as soon as possible to discuss their child’s readiness for Kindergarten. This process is only available to families when their child has commenced Kindergarten in Term 1.
- Families, in consultation with their Kindergarten provider are required to complete a EYM Deferral form whereby their registration will be re-offered the following year. The EYM Deferral form must be completed by the Kindergarten teacher and signed by both the Kindergarten teacher and parent/guardian.
- Families cannot defer their Kindergarten place if their child does not attend a Kindergarten program. The child will need to be re-enrolled following the standard registration process.

12. Allocation of Places

12.1 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.	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.

Priority of Access Criterion	Requirements for Eligibility
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 been 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 descent.
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 both 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. 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 eligible for Early Start Kindergarten as Refugee or Asylum Seeker	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 a refugee or asylum seeker

Priority of Access Criterion	Requirements for Eligibility
	Advice about eligibility is via an appropriate visa that identifies the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker or referral letter from case worker.
<p>Children of City of Melton residents with additional needs, defined as:</p> <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 that require a combination of services which are individually planned 	<p>Referred by services, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Intervention Service • Pre-School Field Officer • Maternal and Child Health Nurse • General Practitioner <p>Or evidenced by:</p> <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.	<p>One of the following:</p> <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.	<p>One of the following:</p> <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, 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.

Priority of Access Criterion	Requirements for Eligibility
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 20three) • Woman at Risk Visa (subclass 204) • Bridging Visas A-E or ImmiCard <p>OR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child is identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. • The child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child.
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 Registration Form. • The registration 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	To be assessed by the Community Services General Manager.

Note: Once allocations have been finalised, children will be prioritised 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 registration was received.

- In mixed-age groups, the Priority of Access guidelines will equally prioritise three and four-year-old children considered vulnerable under the policy.
- Where programs for three and four-year-olds are provided separately, the Priority of Access criteria should be applied separately for each age cohort.

- Priority of Access is applied to each registration based on information provided on the registration. When there are numerous registrations on the same priority, there is a random selection based on the available Kindergarten places.
- Places will be allocated to eligible children, including those who are on the preference list, in accordance with the preference listed on the registration form and in line with the *KCRS Kindergarten Central Registration Policy*.
- After all returns have been processed, the remaining vacancies will be filled by the next eligible registrations.

13 Second Year of 4 year old Funded Kindergarten

- DET provides funding to support children to access a Kindergarten program in the year before they start school.
- Where a child is observed to display delays in key outcome areas of learning and development, the possibility of a second year of funded Kindergarten maybe considered. However, a second year should only be considered if Kindergarten will be the most appropriate environment to address the child's delays in development.
- From the time of registration, regular communication between the parent and the early childhood teacher in relation to a child's learning and development is important. If a parent and/or early childhood teacher observes that a child's learning and development is not progressing at a rate similar to their peers, strategies can be planned and implemented to support the child's learning and development in those specific areas.
- When considering whether a second year of funded Kindergarten will benefit a child, the early childhood teacher and parent must ensure that the child meets the eligibility criteria for a second year.

13.1 Determining Eligibility for a Second Year of Funded Kindergarten

- An assessment of the child is undertaken and a Declaration of Eligibility for a second year of funded Kindergarten is completed and sent to the appropriate Department regional office. DET is responsible for approving second year requests
- It is important that teachers ensure the plans and forms are completed accurately as they will be subject to annual audit processes undertaken by the Department.

13.2 Eligibility Criteria

- The early childhood educator can deem a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded Kindergarten if:
 - The child is observed as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the Victorian Early Years and Development Framework and

- There is evidence to suggest that the child will achieve better outcomes if he/she attends a second year of Kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year.
- Children who have been granted early entry to Kindergarten (i.e. children who are less than four years of age by 30 April in the year they attend a funded Kindergarten program) are not eligible to apply for a second year of funded Kindergarten.

14. Early Start Kindergarten

- Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) was introduced in response to research showing that two years of quality education and care prepares children for success at school and leads to positive impacts later in life. Early Start Kindergarten will continue to provide 15 hours a week of subsidised Kindergarten until such time as three-year-old children across the state will have access to 15 hours of subsidised Kindergarten.
- ESK provides free or low cost Kindergarten for:
 - All three year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
 - Three year old children known to Child Protection or referred from Child Protection to Child First.
 - All three year old refugee and asylum seeker children
- Children must be aged at least three years by 30 April in the year they enrol to be eligible for a place. Children can only begin ESK after they have turned three years of age or a parent must attend the sessions with them until they do. Families should check with the Kindergarten about working with children check requirements

15. Reserving Places

- Two places per Kindergarten will be reserved by the Central Registration Team, for high priority children, as per the *Priority of Access Guidelines* from DET.

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.

17. Managing Preference Lists

- Families who are unsuccessful in gaining a place are added to a preference list and advised if a vacancy arises.
- Preference lists are maintained in accordance with the *Priority of Access Guidelines* from DET.

18. Kindergarten Placement Offers

- A letter of offer for a Kindergarten place will be e-mailed to families or sent via mail in the event Council do not have an e-mail address for the family, within 2 weeks after the close of first round allocations.
- If an applicant's first preference for a Kindergarten is not available they will be offered their nominated second or third preference Kindergarten.
- If vacancies are not available at a preferred Kindergarten, applicants will be placed on a preference list in accordance with KCRS Allocation Priorities.
- Second round offers will be made approximately four weeks after the first round of offers.
- Offers after this time are made on a weekly basis. Where offers can be made for first preferences, these will be processed automatically.

19. Acceptance of Place

- An offer of a Kindergarten place will be made via a letter or email sent from the Central Registration Team to the family. The letter/email will need to be completed, stating whether the offer is accepted or declined and returned to the Central Registration team by the nominated date on the letter, in order for it to be valid.
- Families who do not return the acceptance letter by the date listed will forfeit their place.
- Once a family has confirmed the acceptance of a place, they are unable to remain on a preference list for another Kindergarten.
- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place, or withdraw their registration are requested to notify the Central Registration Team in writing.
- Parents/guardians who do not receive an offer to a Kindergarten of their choice will be notified in writing that they are on 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.
- Families will be contacted by the allocated Early Years Manager to organise a time to attend orientation at the Kindergarten.

20. Online Parent Portal

- Families will have access to the online parent portal once the letter of receipt is received within 4 weeks of submitting their registration form. This letter will provide an individual ID number that will be required to access the Parent portal.

The portal will enable families to:

- make changes to Kindergarten preferences (prior to first round offers)
- have access to current preferences
- accept or decline an offer (after offer letters have been sent out)
- request to cancel a placement

21. Kindergartens located on School Sites

- Families are advised that enrolling children into a Melton City Council Kindergarten on a school site does not guarantee entry into the school in the following year.
- Families are advised that Kindergartens do not have the same boundary requirements as schools and parents should discuss this directly with the school.

22. Privacy

- Access to completed Registration forms are restricted to the Central Registration Team, and other relevant Council Officers, in accordance with Council's *Information Privacy Policy*. Information may be shared with family consent or if required by law.

23. Collection and Disposal of Information

- Council will dispose of personal information when it is no longer required to fulfil the purpose for which it was collected, or required by law.
- For further information about the collection and disposal of personal information families can be directed to visit the Melton City Council website: www.melton.vic.gov.au

24. Engagement with Families

The Melton KCRS is an accessible, inclusive and equitable service. Staff within the Kindergarten Central Registration Service must consider factors that may pose a barrier to engagement and/or communication around Kindergarten registration and make attempts to reduce any barriers to accessing Kindergarten. Free interpreters are provided by the service where required and assistance can also be sought from other Families and Children services programs when active engagement is required to support Kindergarten registrations. This will be carried out in partnership with Councils Kindergarten Engagement Officer and may include collaboration with the families Maternal Child Health Nurse, Supported Playgroup Facilitator, Preschool Field Officer or Family Services Case Manager where applicable. The Out of Home Care Local Government contact at council may also be able to support the Kindergarten registrations of children in Out of Home Care.

Staff should seek support from their supervisor if they are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child and be familiar with the Child Safe Policy.

24. Responsibility /Accountability

7.1	<p>Central Registration Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the administrative tasks associated with the receipt of registrations and allocation of Kindergarten placements in line with the KCRS allocation priority criteria.
7.2	<p>Early Years Managers</p> <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.
7.three	<p>Parents & Guardians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for providing all required documentation for the Kindergarten Registration form by the date indicated in the Kindergarten information booklet.

25. References and 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>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