

# Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten - Allocation Procedure

## 1 Document Control

The electronic version of this document is the controlled version. Printed copies are considered uncontrolled. Before using a printed copy, verify that it is the current version.

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| RESPONSIBLE GENERAL MANAGER | General Manager Community Sustainability                                |
| DOCUMENT OWNER              | Manager Family Youth and Children's Services                            |
| APPROVED BY                 | Manager Family Youth and Children's Services on 11 May 2022             |
| SIGNATURE                   |   |
| APPROVAL DATE               | 11 May 2022<br>Effective from <a href="#">11/05/2022</a>                |
| REVIEW DATE                 | January 2024  |
| CM REF AND VERSION          | 20/149677[v2]   |
| VERSION HISTORY             | Version 1 approved 4 March 2021   |
| RELEVANT POLICY             | Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Policy 12/29454[v3] |

## 2 Purpose

The Kingston City Council Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten (CRS) administers the allocation of funded sessional kindergarten places on behalf of participating sessional kindergarten services. This includes funded three and four-year-old sessional kindergarten places.

The purpose of the CRS Procedure is to provide guidance regarding how funded kindergarten places are allocated to kindergarten groups.

## 3 Scope

This Procedure applies to all sessional kindergarten service providers who participate in the CRS, including services operated by:

- Kingston City Council;
- Committees of Management; and
- Early Years Managers.

Participating kindergartens should be aware of their legal obligations and responsibilities to comply with the CRS policy.

This Procedure also applies to all parents/guardians who wish to register their child/ren for allocation to a funded sessional group at a kindergarten service participating in the CRS.

## **4. Procedure**

### **4.1 Eligibility and Age Restrictions**

4.1.1 In accordance with the Victorian Kindergarten Funding Guide, children are eligible for **two** years of funded kindergarten before they start school.

4.1.2 All children must be three years of age by 30 April in the year they commence kindergarten.

4.1.2.1 Eligible children are entitled to two years of funded Kindergarten, unless the child qualifies for an additional year of funded four-year-old kindergarten.

4.1.2.2 Children are unable to access a second year of funded three-year-old kindergarten and must proceed directly to four-year-old kindergarten in the following year. Some children may be eligible for a second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten.

### **4.2 Priority Allocation and Registration Classification**

4.2.1 All registrations will be subject to a registration classification process. Classifications are based on selection criteria categorised between levels 0 - 6.

4.2.2 Resident children who meet one or more of the following criteria will be prioritised and offered a place at their first preference kindergarten group in line with State Government Policy (Level 0).

4.2.2.1 Resident children with additional needs, those known to Child Protection, identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding, are at risk of abuse or neglect, are in out of home care, are seeking asylum or are a refugee or are eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy;

4.2.2.2 Resident children who have deferred commencing at kindergarten; or

4.2.2.3 Resident and non-resident children who are eligible for an additional year of funded four-year-old kindergarten;

4.2.3 Non-resident children who meet one or more of the following criteria will be offered an available place after the first allocation round in line with the allocation process.

4.2.3.1 Non-resident children with additional needs, those known to Child Protection, identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten funding, are at risk of abuse or neglect, are in out of home care, are seeking asylum or are a refugee or are eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy; or

4.2.3.2 Non-resident children who have deferred commencing kindergarten.

4.2.4 Supporting documentation must be provided upon request.

4.2.5 An Allocation Criteria will apply to all other registrations. Allocation Criteria is as follows:

- Level 1.** Residents of the City of Kingston who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first preference **and** have a prior connection to the service.
- Level 2.** Residents of the City of Kingston who live within a 2km radius of the service **or** have a prior connection to the service.
- Level 3.** Residents of the City of Kingston.
- Level 4.** Non-residents of the City of Kingston who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first preference and have a prior connection to the service or to the City of Kingston.
- Level 5.** Non-residents of the City of Kingston who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first preference **or** have a prior connection to the service or to the City of Kingston.
- Level 6.** Non-residents of the City of Kingston.

#### 4.2.6 Multiple Births and Siblings

- 4.2.6.1 Children who indicate on their Registration Form that they have a sibling who will be attending funded sessional kindergarten in the same year, and want to attend the same service, will be considered jointly unless otherwise specified by the parent/guardian.
- 4.2.6.2 A separate Registration Form must be submitted for each individual child.
- 4.2.6.3 All efforts will be made to ensure siblings are placed at the same service.

### 4.3 Registration Procedure

#### 4.3.1 Registration process

- 4.3.1.1 To register for a place in a group at a participating kindergarten, children must be eligible for kindergarten funding and the Registration Form must be completed and received by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer either online or in person at a Kingston City Council Customer Service Centre.
- 4.3.1.2 Registration Forms for participating funded kindergartens will be accepted from 1 May the year prior to the child being eligible for funded kindergarten. For example, children eligible for funded kindergarten in 2023 will be able to register from 1 May 2022.
- 4.3.1.3 To be included in the first allocation round Registration Forms must be received by 30 June in the year prior to commencing funded kindergarten.
- 4.3.1.4 Registration Forms will only be processed when all required documentation has been provided.
- 4.3.1.5 The Registration form will only collect information required for the allocation of children to kindergarten places.
- 4.3.1.6 It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep the Kingston City Council informed of any changes to their child's Registration Form. For example, change of address, contact details or group preference.
- 4.3.1.7 Children are able to access funding at one service. Their parent/guardian must declare if their child is/has accessing a funded kindergarten program at another service. This includes but is not limited to funded programs offered in Long Day Care services.

## 4.3.2 Registration Submission

- 4.3.2.1 Registration Forms are available online at [www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration](http://www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration) or by requesting a print copy from the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer.
- 4.3.2.3 Registration information is available from the Kingston City Council Customer Service Centre, Kindergartens and Maternal and Child Health Centres. This information can be mailed or emailed to families by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer on request, or viewed and downloaded online at [www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration](http://www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration)
- 4.3.2.4 Support from the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer is available to help people complete the Registration Form if required.
- 4.3.2.5 Parents and guardians must provide the following documentation when submitting a Registration Form to demonstrate:
  - Proof of the child's date of birth (E.g. copy of birth certificate, birth extract, or Immunisation Statement (MyGov), a copy of passport or a Statutory Declaration verifying your child's date of birth to be true and correct).

And where required or requested provide the following documentation:

- Current proof of child's residential address (E.g. copy of parent/guardian's license, rates notice or amenities bill [issued within the last three months] that includes the parent/guardian's name and address);
  - Proof of registered child or sibling's prior connection to the service (E.g. acceptance or confirmation letter from the kindergarten, receipt for fees paid or a graduation certificate, statutory declaration);
  - Copy of a valid concession card (E.g. Health Care Card or Pension) or visa.
- 4.3.2.6 In the instance where incorrect information is supplied by the parent/guardians on the Registration Form, registrations may be re-classified against the criteria and or offers may be retracted prior to child commencing kindergarten.
  - 4.3.2.7 Parent/guardians are required to nominate three group preferences on the Registration Form.
  - 4.3.2.8 Parent/guardians are required to complete a declaration on the Registration Form to confirm all information provided is true and correct.
  - 4.3.2.9 Parent/guardians will receive confirmation of the registration and registration details by email.
  - 4.3.2.10 One Registration Form is required to be submitted for both years of funded kindergarten for each individual child. There is no requirement to submit a Registration Form for each funded kindergarten year.
  - 4.3.2.11 The Kindergarten Central Registration Officer will contact the parent/guardians of all registered three-year-old children, who are on the waiting list for four old kindergarten in the following year, to confirm if they wish to participate in the allocation process and their group preference.

### 4.3.3 Procedure for Registrations received after each allocation round

- 4.3.3.1 Registrations that are received after the administrative cut off for each allocation round will be entered into the data system before subsequent round offers are made.
- 4.3.3.2 Registrations that are received after the allocation process has commenced will not be placed at a disadvantage to existing registrations regardless of submission date.

### 4.3.4 Registration Fee

- 4.3.4.1 All registrations, except for those who are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, require payment of a non-refundable registration fee that must accompany the Registration Form when submitted.
- 4.3.4.2 Refunds for over payments will be considered by contacting the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer by email at [kindergartenenrolment@kingston.vic.gov.au](mailto:kindergartenenrolment@kingston.vic.gov.au) and providing evidence of the over payment.
- 4.3.4.3 Payment is made to Kingston City Council.
- 4.3.4.4 Registration fees will be reviewed annually through the Kingston City Council's budget process.

## 4.4 Allocation and Offer of Kindergarten Places

- 4.4.1 Allocations to kindergarten groups commence in late July of each year. Council will send out letters of offer to the families via email. To accept an offer, parent/guardians must respond by the date stated in their letter of offer to secure a place.
- 4.4.2 In the instance a family hasn't responded to their letter of offer within the date stated, a minimum of two reminders will be sent to them via email and/or SMS. Failure to respond to these reminders will result in the offered place being deemed as available for reallocation to another child.
- 4.4.3 In the instance a family, who has a child who qualifies as a Priority of Access, hasn't responded to their letter of offer within the date stated, a direct phone call will be made to them in addition to the reminder emails and/or SMS. Failure to respond to these reminders will result in the offered place being deemed as available for reallocation to another child.
- 4.4.4 Allocations for three and four-year-old kindergarten will be conducted in separate processes. Every effort will be made to place children at the same service for three and four-year-old kindergarten. Unfortunately, we are unable to guarantee this due to the National regulatory space and staff to child ratio requirements for kindergartens.
- 4.4.5 Kindergarten services are able to access waiting lists, offers and acceptances by accessing EnrolNow (registration and allocation software) as required.
- 4.4.6 Kindergarten allocation dates for three and four-year-old funded kindergarten groups will be provided to services in March. All services will be sent a reminder of these dates in June.
- 4.4.7 Round 1: Offers will be made to Kingston residents only (except non-resident children who are eligible for a second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten); that is registrations that are classified Level 0 – 3 inclusive and will include all three group preferences. Council will generate a list of offers based on allocation criteria and send a letter of offer to successful families via email.

- 4.4.8 Round 2: Offers will be made to both Kingston residents and non-residents and will include all three group preferences. Round two allocations will commence within 5 business days after the response date of the first allocation round. All registrations received since the previous allocation round will be processed before the second allocation round.
- 4.4.9 Round 3: Offers will be made to both Kingston residents and non-residents and will include all three group preferences. Council will generate a third list of offers for each kindergarten that has vacancies. Round 3 allocations will commence 5 business days after the response date of the second allocation round.
- 4.4.10 Applicants who do not receive a kindergarten offer after the third allocation round will be contacted directly by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer to discuss the options and seek advice from the family about how they wish to proceed.
- 4.4.11 Where a child does not gain access to one of their preferred kindergarten groups, alternative options will be discussed.
- 4.4.12 Families who receive an offer will have the option to decline, accept, delay commencement of kindergarten or accept and remain on the waiting list for their first preference group. The parent/guardian must respond by the date stated in their letter of offer.
- 4.4.13 To delay commencement of funded three-year-old kindergarten the parent/guardian must respond to the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer within due date allocated in the letter of offer.
- 4.4.13.1 In the instance there is a delay in the commencement of three-year-old kindergarten, the place will be transferred to the following year's allocations and be ranked as a Level 0 for three- year-old kindergarten
- 4.4.13.2 Children who don't attend three-year-old kindergarten and defer their funded four-year-old kindergarten year, will also have their place transferred to the following year's allocations and be ranked as a Level 0
- 4.4.14 To allow the processing of allocations, administrative cut off dates will apply for each allocation round.
- 4.4.15 All correspondence to families will be sent through email, SMS or Australia Post if required.
- 4.4.16 Only children who are eligible for kindergarten funding will be offered a kindergarten place.
- 4.4.17 Within pre-arranged dates kindergartens will provide the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer with information that includes, but is not limited to the following:
- 4.4.17.1 Timetable details including days, start and finish times, and number of places being offered for each three- and four-year-old group;
- 4.4.17.2 The names of children who are eligible for another year of funded four-year-old kindergarten; and
- 4.4.17.3 Confirmation of children on the waiting list with a prior connection to the kindergarten or service.

## **4.5 Ballot System**

4.5.1 Where the total number of registrations for a nominated kindergarten group is greater than the number of places available, registrations will be selected through an automated random numerical selection referred to as the Ballot System.

4.5.1.1 Each ballot round must include all unplaced registrations of equal classification, regardless of submission date.

## **4.6 Waiting List**

4.6.1 At the completion of the three allocation rounds, children who have not secured a place in a kindergarten group, will be placed on the Central Registration Waiting List.

4.6.2 The Central Registration Waiting List:

4.6.2.1 Council will maintain a Central Registration Waiting List each year for any family unable to secure a place in a kindergarten group.

4.6.2.2 Registrations on the Central Registration Waiting List will be contacted by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer to inform them of their status and seek advice on how the family would like to proceed.

4.6.2.3 Registrations shall remain on the Central Waiting List until a place is available in the preferred kindergarten group in line with the allocation procedure.

4.6.2.4 If a vacancy occurs at a kindergarten during the course of the year, the kindergarten will notify the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer who will make an offer to the next eligible registration in line with the allocation procedure.

4.6.2.5 Allocations from the Central Waiting List will be made utilising this allocation procedure.

4.6.3 Alternate Waiting List

4.6.3.1 Where a family accepts an offer for a kindergarten group not listed as their first preference, parents/guardians are able to select an option to remain on an Alternate Waiting List until/if a place becomes available in their preferred kindergarten group.

4.6.3.2 Children on the Alternative Waiting List will not be disadvantaged, and places will be allocated in line with the allocation criteria and process.

## **4.7 Alteration of Registration Information**

4.7.1 An Alteration of Registration Form will be available on request and on Council's website [www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration](http://www.kingston.vic.gov.au/centralregistration) for parents/guardians who wish to alter their information in relation to:

4.7.1.1 Change of address or contact details;

4.7.1.2 Change of kindergarten group preference;

4.7.1.3 Deferring kindergarten year; and

4.7.1.4 Cancellation of registration.

## 4.8 Communication and Promotion

- 4.8.1 Kingston City Council will provide kindergartens with key dates for allocation rounds and due dates for information collection in February of each year.
- 4.8.2 Kingston City Council provides regular networking and development opportunities for participating committees of management and early years managers to come together and share information.
- 4.8.3 Kindergartens can access waitlist, offer and accepted data via EnrolNow at any time.
- 4.8.2 Kingston City Council will advertise the opening date for Registrations in April of each year and information regarding the registration and allocation process will be available on its website.
- 4.8.3 Kingston City Council provides an online community directory to assist community groups, including kindergartens, to advertise their service and events at [www.mycommunitylife.com.au](http://www.mycommunitylife.com.au)

## 4.9 Grievance and dispute resolution

- 4.9.1 In the first instance parents/guardians and participating kindergartens can discuss any concerns regarding the CRS with the Kindergarten Central Registration officer who will work to facilitate a satisfactory outcome.
- 4.9.2 If a satisfactory outcome is not achieved, the matter will be referred to the Team Leader Children's Services Partnerships to facilitate a satisfactory resolution.
- 4.9.3 If the matter remains unresolved the complainant may wish to refer the complaint to an appropriate external agency such as the Office of the Ombudsman or the Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

## 5 Responsibility

The areas or positions responsible for defined tasks in implementing, maintaining and approving these procedures:

| Position/Team                    | Responsibility   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Children's Services Partnerships | Administration of the Kindergarten Central Registration Scheme |

## 6 Related Documents and Resources

**The National Legislative Framework, which is established through an applied laws system and consists of:**

- National Quality Framework;
- Education and Care Services National Law;
- Education and Care Services National Regulations;
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care;
- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia; and
- National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education.



### **Commonwealth legislation and related documents:**

- Age Discrimination Act 2004;
- Disability and Discrimination Act 1992;
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975; and
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **State legislation and related documents**

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010;
- Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014;
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006;
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005;
- Local Government Act 2020;
- The Victorian Kindergarten Funding Guide 2016;
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework;
- Early Childhood Reform Plan 2017
- Department of Education and Training – Municipal Association of Victoria Partnership Agreement 2018-2023; and
- COAG Partnership Agreement.

### **City of Kingston documents**

- Family and Children’s Services Strategy incorporating Municipal Early Years Plan (2020-2024); and
- Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Policy.

## **7 Definitions**

| <b>Word/Term</b>           | <b>Definition</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>ACECQA</b>              | Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority.  |
| <b>Allocation Criteria</b> | The criteria for the allocation of places to participating funded kindergartens within the Central Registration Scheme.  |
| <b>Allocation Priority</b> | Allocation criteria assigned to applicants for whom protective concerns have been identified and substantiated e.g. children and/or families who are experiencing vulnerabilities and/or additional needs. |
| <b>Allocation Process</b>  | The process for the allocation of places to participating funded kindergarten groups within the Central Registration Scheme.   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Alteration</b>                                | The adjustment of information provided to the Central Registration Scheme in the original Registration Form.   |
| <b>Ballot</b>                                    | A system in which applicants of equal ranking are selected using a random numerical selection process.   |
| <b>Children with Additional Needs</b>            | Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the kindergarten setting</li> <li>• As defined by medical assessment</li> <li>• As defined by DET assessment (as per Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) (Additional Needs Policy)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>City of Kingston</b>                          | Defined geographical area.   |
| <b>Committee of Management</b>                   | A volunteer committee of parents/guardians responsible for the day-to-day management of a kindergarten service.  |
| <b>Connection to the Service</b>                 | An allocation criteria that allows consideration for a child who has previously attended the service, and/or a sibling attended the service within the previous three years.   |
| <b>CRS</b>                                       | The Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten.   |
| <b>Deferral</b>                                  | Is where a parent/guardian chooses to delay an eligible child's start to funded kindergarten. Once the child commences the kindergarten year, this is considered their funded year of kindergarten.  |
| <b>DET</b>                                       | Department of Education and Training. The Victorian regulatory authority primarily responsible for the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services in Victoria.   |
| <b>Early Start Kindergarten</b>                  | A DET program that provides free or low-cost kindergarten to eligible three-year-old children to access 15 hours of funded kindergarten where programs are delivered by a qualified teacher.   |
| <b>Early Years Manager</b>                       | Early years management brings individual kindergarten services together under a single employer. The major responsibility of early years managers are management and employment of staff, being the Approved Provider and ensuring compliance with licensing requirements, responsibility for the quality of the program through the management and support of the kindergarten staff and financial management for services. |
| <b>Eligible Child</b>                            | A child who is eligible for State Government kindergarten funding and can apply for a place in a participating kindergarten.   |
| <b>EYLF</b>                                      | The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia; Belonging, Being & Becoming – a framework to assist educators to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning   |
| <b>Funded Kindergarten</b>                       | Also known as three and four year old kindergarten.  |
| <b>Health Care Card</b>                          | A concession card that entitles the person to cheaper medicines and concessions.   |
| <b>Kingston City Council</b>                     | Organisation responsible for delivering a range of vital services for people and businesses in a defined area.   |
| <b>Kindergarten (also known as Preschool)</b>    | The term kindergarten refers to both kindergarten and preschool. Kindergarten is a universal early childhood program funded by the Victorian Government for children in the two years prior to commencing primary school.  |
| <b>Kindergarten Central Registration Officer</b> | The Kingston City Council employee responsible for administering the CRS.  |

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Kindergarten Group</b>            | The defined days and times that children attend kindergarten each week to access the minimum funded hours.  |
| <b>National Quality Framework</b>    | Derived from the National Legislative Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, the National Quality Framework lists the National Standards and sets the national benchmark for the assessment of quality in education and care services.   |
| <b>Protective Services</b>           | A government agency that responds to reports of child abuse or neglect.   |
| <b>Proximity to the kindergarten</b> | Based on residential address this criterion refers to children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whose residential address is within a two kilometre radius of the kindergarten service; or</li> <li>• Whose residential address is outside the borders of the City of Kingston municipality, yet the address falls within a two kilometre radius of the kindergarten service.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Registration fee</b>              | Payment to contribute to the administration of the kindergarten registration and allocation process.  |
| <b>Registration form</b>             | The registration form for parents/guardians who wish to register their child/ren in a funded kindergarten participating in CRS.   |
| <b>Resident</b>                      | A child who lives in the City of Kingston   |
| <b>Non-resident</b>                  | A child who does not live in the City of Kingston   |
| <b>Second Year</b>                   | A child is eligible for a second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten if the family and teacher assess the child as having delay in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the VEYLDF and he or she will benefit from a second year of kindergarten.   |
| <b>Service</b>                       | Includes the participating kindergarten or collocated care and education program eg: Primary School or Child Care Centre  |
| <b>Sessional Kindergarten</b>        | A funded kindergarten program provides short days of education and care that are typically 5-7.5 hours in length.   |
| <b>2 Kilometre Radius</b>            | Residential priority area for allocation purposes. This does not act as a zone.   |
| <b>VEYLDF</b>                        | Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Curriculum framework to guide the development of the educational program for children.   |