

## Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Policy

<b>VERSION NO.</b>	4
<b>APPROVAL</b>	Council
<b>TRIM REFERENCE</b>	12/29454
<b>REVIEW</b>	March 2029
<b>RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE</b>	General Manager Community Strengthening
<b>POLICY TYPE</b>	Council
<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	Manager Family Youth and Children's Services

REVISION RECORD	Version	Revision Description
April 2012	1	Adopted by Council
March 2015	2	Adopted by Council
September 2020	3	Adopted by Council
March 2025	4	General revisions and updates.
		Section 4.2 – New allocation criteria for three-year-old children who are seeking to attend four-year-old kindergarten at the same service.
		Section 9 Definitions - New definitions include Administrative cut off, Approved Provider, Extended Care, Kingston City Council, Kindergarten group and Wrap around care.

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten (CRS) is to administer the registration and allocation of funded sessional kindergarten places on behalf of participating sessional kindergarten service providers. This includes funded three and four-year-old sessional kindergarten places.

### 2. Scope

This Policy applies to any sessional kindergarten service providers who participate in the CRS.

This Policy also applies to all parents/guardians who wish to register their child/ren for allocation to a place at a funded sessional kindergarten program that is delivered by a service provider who participates in the CRS.

### **3. Governance Principles and Council Plan alignment**

#### **3.1 Governance Principles**

Principle (b) - priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.

Principle (e) - innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

Principle (h) - regional, state, and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making.

Principle (i) - the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

This policy aligns with the Council Plan and the Family and Children's Strategy and has considered the overarching governance principles.

#### **3.2 Council Plan Alignment**

Strategic Direction: We are progressive, inclusive and prioritise the wellbeing of all members of our community.

Strategy: Support community education, lifelong learning and creativity

The CRS Policy supports equitable and transparent access to funded sessional kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children for a positive start to their early education.

### **4. Policy Details**

The Kingston City Council recognises that supporting the healthy development and early education of children has significant long-term benefits for building strong resilient communities. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the CRS is transparent and is delivered in a fair and equitable manner, for all eligible children and their families.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure the maximum number of children who live in the City of Kingston, receive an offer at one of their nominated sessional kindergarten services.
- To provide a transparent and equitable process for the allocation of sessional kindergarten places.
- To support participating kindergarten committees of management and Early Years Managers, to offer funded sessional kindergarten places within the City of Kingston.
- To support participating sessional kindergarten to access regular and current registration information and data in an accurate and timely manner.
- To ensure registration and allocation data is collated and monitored to support effective future planning of kindergarten services.

This policy principle is to:

- Adhere to the relevant Legislation, Regulations, Guidelines and Policy.
- Promote fair and equitable access to funded sessional kindergarten programs.
- Support all eligible children to access a kindergarten program, including those who face barriers to participation.

## 4.1 Priority of access

In accordance with Victorian Government Kindergarten Funding guidelines, priority of access criteria must be used by CRS providers prior to applying locally agreed criteria when prioritizing registrations.

Children are eligible for priority of access if they:

- Are at risk of abuse or neglect including children in out of home care.
- Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- Are an asylum seeker or refugee.
- Are eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.
- Have an additional need.
- Are eligible for a second year of kindergarten.

The following local criteria is also included in as priority of access:

- Children who have deferred commencement of their three-year-old kindergarten year.

## 4.2 Allocation criteria

After children who are eligible for priority of access are offered a place, all other children who are eligible for funded kindergarten are included in the allocation process.

There are eight levels of criteria for the allocation of the remaining funded sessional kindergarten places that apply to all other eligible children:

Level 1 Residents of the City of Kingston who are currently attending three-year-old kindergarten and are seeking to attend four-year-old kindergarten at the same service.

Level 2 Residents of the City of Kingston, who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first option and have a prior connection to the service of their first option.

Level 3 Residents of the City of Kingston, who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first option or have a prior connection to the service of their first option.

Level 4 Residents of the City of Kingston.

Level 5 Non-residents of the City of Kingston who are currently attending three-year-old kindergarten and are seeking to attend four-year-old kindergarten at the same service.

Level 6 Non-residents of the City of Kingston, who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first option and have a prior connection to the service of their first option.

Level 7 Non-residents of the City of Kingston, who live within a 2km radius of the service of their first option or have a prior connection to the service of their first option.

Level 8 Non-residents of the City of Kingston

## 4.3 Supporting sessional kindergarten services

In addition to the administration of the CRS, Council also plays a key role in supporting sessional kindergarten services that are delivered by

volunteer committees and early years managers more broadly through:

- Facility planning, provision and maintenance.
- Advocacy and community capacity building.
- Developing and supporting partnerships and networks.
- Information and referral.

## **5. Key Stakeholders**

Consultation was conducted with external sessional kindergarten service providers who participate in the CRS and families who registered a three- or four-year-old child with the CRS in 2024.

## **6. Internal and External Assessments**

### **6.1 Risk Assessment**

This policy has been assessed by the relevant department.

### **6.2 Delegation and Authorisation (Compliance Framework)**

Manager Family Youth and Children's Services

### **6.3 Gender Impact Assessment**

A Gender Impact Assessment was completed. Please go to TRIM 24/467539.

### **6.4 Privacy Impact Assessment**

A Privacy Impact Assessment was completed and considered the personal information collected from families in the online Registration Form for the purpose of registering and allocating children to three- and four-year-old kindergarten places and how long the information is retained and stored. This included supporting documentation attached to the Registration Form and email correspondence with families and service providers.

Please go to TRIM 24/183942.

### **6.5 Human Rights Charter**

This policy has been reviewed against and complies with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Council	Authorises new Council policies and material updates to existing Council policies where Council is legally required to have a policy position, or on other issues that need a strategic position as a guide or direction to management and the community.
CEO and Executive Leadership Team	Reviews the CRS Policy prior to adoption by Council.
General Manager Community Strengthening	Ensure the CSP Policy is reviewed prior to the overdue date.
Manager Family Youth and Children Services	Ensure the CSP Policy is compliant with the Policy Framework and Department of Education CRS Guidelines.
Team Leader Children's Services Partnerships	Implementation of the CSP Policy.

## 8. Related documents

### 8.1 Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations 2011
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Act 2006
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 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

### 8.2 Documents and resources

- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care
- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education
- National Quality Framework
- Victorian Kindergarten Funding Guidelines 2023
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Victorian Best Start Best Life Reform
- Victorian Central Registration and Enrolment Guide

- Department of Education Training – Municipal Association of Victoria Partnership Agreement 2018-2023; and
- Family and Children's Services Strategy incorporating Municipal Early Years Plan (2020-2024)
- Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten Procedure
- Kindergarten Management Expression of Interest Procedure
- Leasing Policy

## 9. Definitions

Term	Definition
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.
Administrative cut off	Is a date nominated prior to each formal allocation round that registrations need to be received to be included in that round.
Allocation Criteria	The criteria for the allocation of places to participating funded kindergartens within the Central Registration Scheme.
Allocation Process	The process for the allocation of places to participating funded kindergarten groups within the Central Registration Scheme.
Alteration	The adjustment of information provided to the Central Registration Scheme in the original Registration Form.
Approved Provider	Early childhood education and care providers must be approved by the Department of Education to operate a service.
Ballot	A system in which applicants of equal ranking are selected using a random numerical selection process.
Children with Additional Needs	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 DE's</li> </ul>
Committee of Management	A volunteer committee of parents/guardians responsible for the day-to-day management of a kindergarten service.
CRS	The Central Registration Scheme for Funded Kindergarten.
Deferral	Is where a parent/guardian chooses to delay an eligible three year old child/ren's start to funded kindergarten. Once the child commences kindergarten, this is considered their funded year of kindergarten.
DE	Department of Education. The Victorian regulatory authority primarily responsible for the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services in Victoria.
Early Start Kindergarten	A DE program that where eligible three-year-old children are able to access 15 hours of funded kindergarten where programs are delivered by a qualified teacher.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Early Years Manager	Early years management brings individual kindergarten services together under a single employer and are Approved Providers.
Eligible Child	A child who is eligible for State Government kindergarten funding and can apply for a place in a participating kindergarten.
EYLF	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.
Extended care	Is when a service provider offers additional group sessions to allocated children that are over and above the minimum number of hours funded by DE
Funded Kindergarten	Also known as three- and four-year-old kindergarten is funded by the Victorian Government's Department of Education.
Health Care Card	A concession card that entitles the person to cheaper medicines and concessions.
Kingston City Council	Organisation responsible for delivering a range of vital services for people and businesses in a defined area.
Kindergarten (also known as Preschool)	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.
Kindergarten Central Registration Officer	The City of Kingston employee responsible for administering the CRS.
Kindergarten Group	The defined days and times that children attend kindergarten each week to access the minimum funded hours.
National Quality Framework	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.
Priority of access	Allocation criteria assigned to applicants who meet Department of Education's Priority of Access definition as outlined in the Kindergarten Funding Guide
Prior connection to the service	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.
Protective Services Proximity to the kindergarten	A government agency that responds to reports of child abuse or neglect. Based on residential address this criterion refers to children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whose residential address is within a two-kilometer radius of the kindergarten service; or</li> </ul>

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whose residential address is outside the borders of the City of Kingston municipality, yet the address falls in within a two-kilometre radius of the kindergarten service.</li> </ul>
Registration form	The online registration form for parents/guardians who wish to register their child/ren in a funded kindergarten participating in CRS.
Resident	A child who lives in the City of Kingston.
Non-resident	A child who does not live in the City of Kingston.
Second Year	A child is eligible for a second year of funded 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 the child will benefit from a second year of kindergarten.
Service	Includes the participating kindergarten or collocated care and or education program eg. Primary school or childcare centre.
2 Kilometre Radius VEYLDF	Residential priority area for allocation purposes. Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Curriculum framework to guide the development of the educational program for children.
Wrap around care	Unfunded care that is provided before or after group sessions for allocated.