

# ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

## FREE KINDER

QUALITY AREA 6 | ELAA VERSION 1.1



### PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for:

- enrolling a child at Tarralla Kindergarten
- the orientation of new families and children into Tarralla Kindergarten
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education [DE] Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment.
- adhering to DE's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children



### POLICY STATEMENT

#### VALUES

Tarralla Kindergarten is committed to:

- families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten (*refer to Definitions*) eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Tarralla Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, and offering at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or</li> <li>• 600 hours per year</li> </ul>	R				
Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering between 5 to 15 hours a week or 200 to 600 a year	R				
Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	R				
Applying the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Tarralla Kindergarten, as described in the Department of Education's [DE] <i>The Kindergarten Funding Guide</i> (refer to <i>Attachment 1</i> )	R	√	√		
Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April	√	√	√		√
Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Start Kindergarten (refer to <i>Definitions</i>)</li> <li>• Early Start Kindergarten extension grants (refer to <i>Definitions</i>)</li> <li>• Access to Early Learning (refer to <i>Definitions</i>)</li> <li>• Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten (refer to <i>Definitions</i>)</li> </ul>	R	√	√		
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption (refer to <i>Attachment 2</i> )	√	√	√		
Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	√			

Receiving written confirmation from families confirming they are attending one funded kindergarten program per child, per year	R	√		√	
Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access a kindergarten program	R	√	√		
Working with the families to obtain an alternate form of identification if a birth certificate or other official documentation is not available	R	√			
Complying with the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>	R	R	√	√	√
Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity, utilisation of services and to meet School Readiness Funding requirements	R	R			
Ensuring families have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Parent information handbook</i></li> <li>• <i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</i></li> <li>• <i>Fees Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>Privacy Statement</i></li> <li>• <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations</i></li> <li>• <i>Dealing With Medical Conditions</i></li> <li>• <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness</i></li> </ul>	R	√	√		
Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy ( <i>refer to Attachment 2 and 3</i> )	R				
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	√	√	√		
Where applicable; considering access and inclusion for children experiencing vulnerability/disadvantage in the allocation of places at the service ( <i>refer to Attachment 1 and 2</i> )	R	√			
Where applicable, providing families with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes ( <i>refer to Attachment 2</i> )	R	√			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	√	√
Providing opportunities for interested families to attend the open days to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program	√	√	√		
Seeking information from parents about any specific health care need, allergy or medical condition, including whether a medical practitioner has been consulted in relation to a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition	R	√	√	√	
Ensuring that medical management plan has been provided and that the risk minimisation plan has been developed and both documents are kept in the child's enrolment records	R	√	√	√	

Providing any required authorisations, such as for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service and, if required, transportation by an ambulance service				√	
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit ( <i>refer to Sources</i> ) for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week grace period ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> )	R	√	√		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) have confirmed places in the program	R	√	√		
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) and who are not eligible for the grace period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services ( <i>refer to Attachment 4</i> )	R	√	√		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending ( <b>Note:</b> the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).	R	√	√		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing all associated enrolment documents and AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) of their child's immunisation status				√	
Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks grace period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) to the service				√	
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval ( <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E</i> )	R	√	√		
Ensuring all authorised nominees ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) have been completed on the enrolment record ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) ( <i>Regulations 160 and 161</i> ) as well as authorisations from parents relating to medical treatment, regular outings, health information and transportation	R	√		√	
Ensuring that the enrolment record ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of <i>Regulations 160, 161, 162</i> and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	R	√	√		
Ensuring that enrolment record ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made	R	√	√	√	√

aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances					
Ensuring that enrolment records ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) are kept confidential ( <i>Regulations 181, 182</i> ) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service ( <i>Regulation 183 (1a) (2d)</i> )	R	√	√		
Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	√	√		
Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	√	√	√	
Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for ( <i>Regulation 157</i> ), except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the <i>National Law: Section 167</i>	R	R	√	√	√
Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment ( <i>refer to Attachment 5</i> )	√	√	√		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> and the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i> )	√	√	√		
Encouraging parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stay with their child as long as required during the orientation period</li> <li>make contact with educators at the service, when required</li> </ul>	√	√	√	√	
Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	√	√	√	√	
Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	√	√	√	√	
Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	√	√	√	√	
Developing strategies to assist new families to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>feel welcomed into the service become familiar with service policies and procedures</li> <li>share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe</li> <li>share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs</li> <li>value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs</li> <li>discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning</li> </ul>	√	√	√	√	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating</li> </ul>					
Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>	R	R	R	√	√
Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				√	
Notifying Tarralla Kindergarten in writing [if possible] if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				√	



## PROCEDURES

### GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- Offer families the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service
- Provide reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation period
- Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- Reassure the family:
  - they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time
  - they may call and speak to their child's early childhood teacher or educator(s) at an agreed time
  - the early childhood teacher/educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in
  - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Further considerations may include but are not limited to:
  - send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (*refer to the information and Communication Technology Policy*). **Note:** For children in out-of-home care, the educator may need to seek permission from Child Protection before taking and distributing photos of the child
  - asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.
- Refer to *Attachment 2* for the general kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Refer to *Attachment 5* for cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance procedures.

### BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION



#### BACKGROUND

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (*Regulation 168(2) (k)*).

All eligible Victorian children (*refer to Definitions*) will have access to two years of Free Kinder before commencing school. Where demand is higher than availability, approved providers must adhere to

their eligibility and DE's Priority of Access criteria (*refer to Definitions and Attachment 1*) in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in DE's Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Sources*), the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Services participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme are required to comply with the registration and/or enrolment procedures of that scheme.

The Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), co-designed by DE provides access to families to register for and secure a place for their children in kindergarten. It is a collaborative model that brings together councils, service providers, MCH staff, support services and other stakeholders to support children and their families. Currently more than half of all local councils across Victoria operate a form of central enrolment or central registration scheme. These schemes provide a single point of entry for families, simplifying the kindergarten enrolment process and improving equity of access.

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*).

## LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)



## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. approved provider, nominated supervisor, notifiable complaints, serious incidents, duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

**Access to Early Learning (AEL):** is an early intervention program for a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment. It aims to provide intensive support to eligible families with multiple and complex needs, assisting them to access universal kindergarten programs.

**Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement:** The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable).

**Authorised nominee:** (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

**Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage** (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)

**Children with additional needs:** Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances (*refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy*) (*refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition*).

**Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES):** CRES provides a single point for families to apply for multiple kindergarten services within a local government area, helping them secure a place that meets their needs and enabling funded kindergartens to work collaboratively with other services to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

**Central Registration System (CRS):** Provides an equitable and transparent application and allocation process, enabling families to access local kindergarten services within a local government area.

**Deferral:** When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the annual confirmation in April DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for a DET funded kindergarten place in the following year.

**Early Start Kindergarten (ESK):** Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher. ESK is available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- the family have had contact with child protection.

These children can also access free or low cost year-before-school kindergarten through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

**Eligible child:** as defined by the Victorian DE Kindergarten Funding Guide:

- a child who is at least four years old on 30 April in the year of attendance; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service
- a child who is at least three years old on 30 April in the year of attendance and is enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for a minimum of 5 hours per week
- any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualifies for the 16-weeks grace period

**Enrolment record:** the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (*Regulations 160, 161, 162*) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders;



and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

**Kindergarten registration fee:** a payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service, if applicable. (*Refer to Free Kindergarten Fees policy*)

**Kindergarten registration form:** The process of families providing initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by MIKA (*refer to Definition*). This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten (*refer to Attachment 3*)

**Grace period:** allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*) or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with families during enrolment and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the grace period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*) and to encourage families to access immunisation services.

**Local Government Area (LGA):** a geographic area governed by a local council or shire.

**Maroondah Integrated Kindergarten Association (MIKA) :** Maroondah Integrated Kindergarten Association (MIKA) is run by the Maroondah council which is the central enrolment platform where enrolments for Tarralla are submitted.

**Priority of access:** in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate places using the criteria outlined in the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Attachment 1 and Sources*).

**Registration:** The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by Tarralla Kindergarten. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.

**School Readiness Funding:** funding provided by DE for programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.

**Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten:** second year eligibility may be considered when a child shows delays in key outcomes of learning and development. An assessment is carried out for each child by an early childhood teacher in Term 3 (the year before the child is to attend school) when a second year is being considered.

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## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



### SOURCES

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au)
- Australian Government Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
- Department of Health, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: [www2.health.vic.gov.au](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au)
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Victorian Department of Education): [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

### RELATED POLICIES

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
  - Compliments and Complaints
  - Dealing with Infectious Disease
  - Dealing With Medical Conditions
  - Delivery and Collection of Children
  - Fees
  - Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
  - Inclusion and Equity
  - Privacy and Confidentiality
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## EVALUATION



In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
  - monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
  - keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
  - revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
  - notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172](#)).
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## ATTACHMENTS



- Attachment 1: Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program
  - Attachment 2: General kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
  - Attachment 3: Sample kindergarten registration form for non CRES services
  - Attachment 4: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation
  - Attachment 5: Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance
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## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Tarralla Kindergarten on [Date].

**REVIEW DATE:** [DAY]/[MONTH]/[YEAR]

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## ATTACHMENT 1. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

### FOR A FUNDED KINDERGARTEN THREE OR FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded kindergarten programs:

- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend four year old kindergarten, or who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend three year old kindergarten.
- children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET (refer to *The Kindergarten Guide*, available at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/kindergarten-school-age.aspx>)
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year, but;
  - deferred
  - withdrew from the service prior to data collection.
- children may enrol in three year old kindergarten before they turn three years of age but are subject to the following conditions:
  - Children cannot attend the kindergarten sessions before their third birthday.
  - Children under three years of age may attend the first orientation session that is also attended by their parent/guardian.
- children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of four year old kindergarten in accordance with *The Kindergarten Guide* available at [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)
- children who are younger than the eligible age for four year old kindergarten, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs
- three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/early-start-kindergarten.aspx>

Kindergartens are required to support vulnerable families to access kindergarten programs and consider potential barriers to participation and how they might be addressed. **There are categories of 'Priority of Access' for children that are required to have access to a funded kindergarten program. MIKA must provide places for these children first.** These categories reflect the Department of Education (DE) criteria on priority for allocating places in approved education and care services

In instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available, services must:

- prioritise children based on the Department of Education (DE) criteria listed in the table below
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional DE office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

## DE's Priority of Access criteria

High priority children	Criteria and processes for verifying need(s)
<b>Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care</b>	<p>The child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eligible for ESK or AEL, and/or</li> <li>• family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to Child Protection or in out-of-home care, and/or</li> <li>• referred by one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker)</li> <li>• Maternal and Child Health nurse</li> <li>• out-of-home care provider.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children</b>	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' and record this information in KIMS
<b>Asylum seeker and refugee children</b>	<p>Child or family holds a visa or supporting documentation and information, including an ImmiCard, identifying the child and/or parents, carers or legal guardians as a refugee or asylum seeker and/or</p> <p>Referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD outreach worker.</p>
<b>Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy</b>	<p>A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or</p> <p>The child is identified on their birth certificate as one of a set of triplets, quadruplets or more.</p>
<p><b>Children with additional needs, defined as children who:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program</li> <li>• require a combination of services which are individually planned</li> <li>• have an identified specific disability or developmental delay</li> </ul>	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, and/or</li> <li>• has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program, and/or</li> <li>• has been referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the National Disability Insurance Scheme</li> <li>• Early Childhood Intervention Services</li> <li>• Kindergarten Field Officer</li> <li>• Maternal and Child Health nurse, or</li> <li>• is assessed as having delays in 2 or more areas and is declared eligible for a second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Remaining Places

- will be allocated according to proximity to the kindergarten

### \* Early Start Kindergarten and Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

During the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) (*refer to Definitions*) will continue to provide 15 hours a week of funded kindergarten for all eligible children up until 2029, when three-year-old children across the state will have access to 15 hours

It is important to continue to enrol eligible children in ESK, even if funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is available at the service.

The Kindergarten Funding Guide 2023 states for ESK funding, service providers should:

- provide up to 15 hours in a kindergarten program free of charge and maximise access to 15 hours of kindergarten (children accessing ESK can be enrolled in a 3-year-old group, a 4-year-old group, a mixed age group or a combination of groups in order to access the full 15 hours per week)

This guarantees that children experiencing vulnerability will continue to be enrolled in the full 15 hours of kindergarten in all service settings, including long day care. It also ensures that service providers can continue to receive all funding entitlements.

Service providers are expected to continue to provide the full 15 hours funded through Early Start Kindergarten, even in instances where three-year-old groups are being offered fewer than 15 hours.

ESK is available to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment and who:

- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- have had contact with Child Protection
- have a refugee or asylum seeker background\*

\*Children/families without a current refugee visa or ImmiCard who have a recent refugee experience may be eligible by exception for Early Start Kindergarten, for more information contact your local Department of Education and office.

Refer to the Department of Education's website for up-to-date information: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

## ATTACHMENT 2. GENERAL KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

### KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION PROCESS

Stage	CRES Role (MIKA)	Family Role	Kindergarten Role
1. Proactive engagement and awareness	Ensures families are aware of the importance of ECEC, the CRES and available assistance to help them engage with the CRES.	Searches for information about ECEC and CRES.  Receives information from a service provider, MCH staff or support service they have contact with.	Communicates information about ECEC and CRES to families  Obtains consent for family contact details to be shared with the MIKA.
2. Registration	Obtains information about children to initiate the process of allocating places.	Completes a registration form.	Supports families to complete registration forms if they find it difficult, or refers them directly to the CRES Provider.
3. Allocation	Equitably allocates kindergarten places and optimise the supply and demand of places.	Receives an update on the progress of their registration.	
4. Confirmation and communication	Clearly communicates with families and carers to confirm their allocated place and inform service providers of their enrolment list.	Accepts their offer of place or rejects the offer and goes on a waiting list.	Supports families to understand what an offer means and what they need to do next.
5. CRES planning, maintenance and development	Plans for success every year by evaluating and improving the CRES.	Begins to engage with the service provider to start the enrolment process.	Supports families to enrol and begin kindergarten.  Provides feedback to MIKA about your experience so they can improve it for the coming year.

\* If the kindergarten believes a family will need extra support completing a registration form or are likely to miss the first round registration date, refer them to the MIKA with the attached referral form. MIKA will follow up with this family or carer to offer support in getting their children into kindergarten.

## Kindergarten registration dates

If families miss the registration close deadline, they can still register although they will be placed into a pool for second-round (or even later rounds) of allocation and are less likely to get their top preference. After second round offers have been confirmed, MIKA will continue to allocate children to kindergarten places where they are available. More places may become available as children move kindergartens or withdraw, or when kindergartens add capacity.

Date	Activity
1 <sup>st</sup> March	Registrations open
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Registrations close*
1 <sup>st</sup> August	First round offers
15 <sup>th</sup> August	Acceptance of first round offers due
Ongoing from 15 <sup>th</sup> August. If places are not available they will be placed on a waitlist.	Subsequent offers on an individual basis

\*Registrations will still be accepted after 30 June, but registrations received prior will be allocated first. Children eligible for Priority of Access will be prioritised regardless of when registration is received.

## Registration

Tarralla Kindergarten undertakes enrolments through M.I.K.A (Maroondah Integrated Kindergarten System).

Enrolment application forms can be filled out online through the MIKA website [www.mika.org.au](http://www.mika.org.au). If you are unable to apply online then enrolment application forms are also available from Tarralla Kindergarten, Maroondah City Council Offices, Maternal and Child Health Centres. The MIKA website also provides information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation.

Families cannot register directly with the kindergarten, they must go through the centralised registration process. Kindergarten's can direct families to register through MIKA and assist them to complete the registration.

Enrolment applications for the funded 4 year old program will be accepted for children turning 4 by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April of the year of commencement.

Enrolment applications for the funded 3 year old program will be accepted for children turning 3 by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April of the year of commencement.

A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the centre. If your child is being enrolled in a second funded year of four year old kindergarten your teacher will advise MIKA that a place is to be held for your child while they apply for this through the DET. Enrolment forms for the proposed year will still need to be filled out but no application through MIKA is required.

Parents/guardians of children currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application form for the following year.

The registration form asks families for:

- Basic information about the child including name, date of birth, language spoken at home, previous kindergarten attendance and immunisation status.
- Details of any additional support the child might require due to a disability including intellectual, sensory or physical impairment.
- Contact details for the family or carer and any additional adults that should be kept informed throughout the process (e.g. another family member, a case worker or other support service staff member the family or carer trusts).
- Whether the child is identified as fulfilling any of the following criteria:
  - Is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
  - Is from a multiple birth (triplet or greater)
  - Is known to Child Protection
  - Is in Out-Of-Home Care

- Holds, or has a family member who holds, a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card or White Card, or a Refugee or Asylum Seeker Visa.

Parents/guardians of children currently attending a three-year-old program must submit an enrolment application form for the following year for the four-year-old program.

All enrolment applications must be accompanied by;

- Proof of identity: the child's birth certificate, birth notice or passport
- Proof of residence: a utility bill, rental agreement or rates notice with family name and address (this must be the main residence of the child).
- A current Australian Immunisation Register history statement.
- Subsidy card and immigration visas (where applicable).
- Documents from Family Support Services or a MCH nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability, or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).
- Credit card (to pay the registration fee). The fee can also be paid in person at their nearest council office. This fee is waived for all families and carers eligible for ESK/KFS/priority allocation.

All applications must be accompanied by an enrolment application processing fee, payable to M.I.K.A. A **\$27.00 (non-refundable, but transferable) Enrolment Application Fee**, payable to "Maroondah Integrated Kindergarten's Association Inc.". **If you are enrolling under the Priority of Access Guidelines, the enrolment application fee is waived.** This information will remain confidential. This charge covers the cost of administration of the MIKA central enrolment scheme and is not a deposit for kindergarten fees.

**M.I.K.A is responsible for all allocation of places – Tarralla Kindergarten is not involved in this process.**

Acceptance Offers of places will be sent to applicants on the first business day on or after the 1st of August in the year prior to commencement.

Upon receiving a place, you will need to provide your **confirmation via the link on the acceptance offer** by the date nominated (Refer to the Fees policy for further details).

Applicants who are successful will be notified, by email, of a confirmed place. Offer of places in the funded three-year-old programs and funded four-year-old programs will be made at the same time.

Subsequent round offers will be made **continuously** until all places are filled.

Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a tentative or confirmed place, or intend to defer or withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify MIKA, the Approved Provider, or the person responsible for managing the enrolment process at the service, in writing as soon as possible.

When there are more applications than places available, M.I.K.A. will determine the priority of access (refer to the M.I.K.A website, [www.mika.org.au](http://www.mika.org.au))

Enrolment applications will be accepted any time from the 1<sup>st</sup> March until the 30<sup>th</sup> June in the year prior to commencement. After 30<sup>th</sup> June registrations will still be accepted however all registrations received before 1<sup>st</sup> July will be allocated first.

Applications will be entered on the waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria.

## Enrolment

Once a kindergarten place has been accepted, the enrolment process can begin.

To enrol a child, families will need to complete;

- an online enrolment form via EnrolNow software which will be sent out via email once the place has been accepted.
- a funding declaration form to confirm that Tarralla will receive the kindergarten funding for the child

Families will also need to provide copies of the below by uploading them at the time of entering their enrolment form:

- Concession cards and immigration visas (where applicable).
- Documents from Family Support Services or a Maternal and Child Health nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).



- Documents detailing any medical conditions or requirements the child has.
- Immunisation History Statement (unless experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, at which point they can take advantage of a 16-week 'grace period'. More information is available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>)

The Immunisation History Statement is assessed as outlined in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* by the person responsible for the enrolment process on behalf of the Approved Provider. The "Key dates work form for immunisation and enrolment" in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* is used to determine the date at which immunisations must be up to date. The toolkit also provides guidance on assessing immunisation documentation to determine if a child is up to date or qualifies for an exemption. The following documents and resources can be accessed from <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au>:

- The Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services (search 'Immunisation enrolment toolkit')
- The Key dates work form for Immunisation and enrolment (search 'Key Dates work form')
- Hard copies of the immunisation resources (search 'immunisation resources order form')

The acceptable outcomes of the assessment for offering a confirmed place are:

- That the next due vaccine for the child on the AIR Immunisation History Statement, is within the acceptable timeframe for an enrolment, or;
- That the child has been assessed by Tarralla Kindergarten as being eligible for a 16-week grace period

Parents/guardians who **do not** have an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement and whose child is **not** eligible for the grace period cannot be offered a place and are referred to Australian Childhood Immunisation Register or to an immunisation provider (refer to Appendix 4 – Letter for parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation).

Kindergartens may also require additional documentation. The kindergarten should ensure that information regarding any additional documentation is easily accessible for families, carers and support services.

**Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any outstanding fees owed to the service by the family is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the service (refer to *Fees Policy*).**

### Enrolment Records

Enrolment records (*refer to Definitions*) form part of the enrolment procedure and are completed by families after they have been allocated a place, and before commencing attendance. An example enrolment form can be found on the DE website: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

### Cancellations

Families to notify Tarralla Kindergarten in writing of their intention to leave the service.

### Allocation within Groups

Where Tarralla Kindergarten provides more than one funded four year old program or funded three-year-old program, places within the programs will be allocated on acceptance of a place at the centre by the **Tarralla Kindergarten Enrolment Officer** as follows:

- Timing of submission of the online preference form
- Needs of the individual children
- Needs of the group

*Please note: In extenuating circumstances, written applications for special consideration for specific group allocations for both 3 and 4 year old class placements may be forwarded to the Educators and Committee of Management for consideration.*

## Second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

- All children in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten will be expected to transition to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in the following year. A funded second year of kindergarten will only be available for children in the Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program who meet the criteria.
- Families of children who have been determined as eligible for a second year must complete and submit a kindergarten registration form for a second year, signed and dated by the early childhood teacher.
- A Declaration of Eligibility Form for a second year of kindergarten must be completed and submitted to the relevant funding authority.

## Early entry to Four-Year-Old kindergarten

- Early entry to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten may be appropriate for some gifted children where families are seeking an early entry to school for their child i.e. the child will not be 5 years of age before 30 April in the year of school commencement.
- Early entry to school is approved only when exceptional circumstances apply and is subject to an application process and rigorous eligibility criteria. It is important to note that most children who enrol early in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten are not approved for early entry into school because they did not meet the eligibility criteria.
- The decision regarding early entry should be discussed with parents/guardians and consider the following:
  - Children are not guaranteed early school entry as a result of being enrolled to attend kindergarten early.
  - To start school early, the child must possess suitable academic ability as evidenced by a formal cognitive assessment, and be considered at risk of long-term educational disadvantage if they don't early entry to school.

## School Exemption

- Children who will turn six during the kindergarten year must apply for an exemption from school from the relevant their local ECIB that their child is seeking an exemption from school by submitting an Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program form to the appropriate departmental regional office by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning 6.
- The kindergarten service must sight the approved exemption form from relevant education authority and note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record. Data on the number of children attending Kindergarten who are six years plus, and confirmation that the exemption was sighted for each child, must be provided as part of funding data collection process.
- Children who will turn 6 while attending their second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten can be exempted from school if a Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten has been completed by the child's kindergarten teacher.

## Withdrawal/Deferral

Some children who have commenced kindergarten may benefit from withdrawing from the program, in order to access kindergarten in the following year.

- A withdrawal can occur without any impact on government funding for that child's place the following year, only if it is implemented **before** the first funding data collection.
- If a withdrawal occurs later in the year, the government funding will not be available in the next year.
- Parents/guardians must notify the Enrolment Officer in writing of their wish to withdraw their child from Tarralla Kindergarten, stating the date of their withdrawal.

### **ATTACHMENT 3. SAMPLE OF KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT FORM**

The Tarralla Enrolment form can be seen on the below link;

<https://forms.enrolnow.com.au/231847179095972>

## ATTACHMENT 4. LETTER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WITHOUT ACCEPTABLE IMMUNISATION DOCUMENTATION

Tarralla Kindergarten  
38 Gracedale Avenue  
Ringwood East VIC 3135

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Tarralla Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Tarralla Kindergarten in the [insert 3 year old or 4 year old program] in [insert year].

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided AIR Immunisation History Statement.

AIR Immunisation History Statement includes evidence of immunisations and is used to assess whether your child is fully vaccinated for their age.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, and your child is not eligible for the 16 week grace period, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

- your doctor
- [insert details of local government immunisation service]
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Immunisation Register: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register)
- Better Health Channel website: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play)

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by an AIR Immunisation History Statement. The new application would be considered in line with Tarralla Kindergarten's *Enrolment and Orientation policy*.


Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

Tarralla Kindergarten

Example of an immunisation history statement

  
 Australian Government  
 Department of Human Services  
**medicare**

### Immunisation history statement

**As at:** 01 June 2019

**For:** ARMANDO D BOWERS

**Date of birth:** 01 Nov 2017

**Immunisation status:** up to date

Schedule	Immunisation	Date given	Brand name given	Provider type
Birth	Hepatitis B	01 Nov 2017	Engerix-B	Hospital
2 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 Jan 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
4 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 Mar 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
6 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 May 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
12 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Meningococcal C Hib	01 Nov 2018	MMR II Menitorix	GP
18 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella	01 May 2019	Priorix-Tetra	GP
<b>Next immunisation/s due</b>				<b>Date due</b>
Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Poliomyelitis				01 Nov 2020

## ATTACHMENT 5. CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT AND NON-ATTENDANCE

### FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

#### Cancellation of Enrolment

Families MUST notify Tarralla Kindergarten and/or an Enrolment Officer in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment. Fees will continue to be generated for that place until the Tarralla Kindergarten is notified.

**Note:** This process does not apply to vulnerable children (*refer to Definitions*). Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; early childhood teacher or educator will need to inform their Case Officer.

#### Non-attendance

##### Term One

- Families that have accepted a placement and have not completed an enrolment form and not attended the service within the first 3 weeks of Term One will be contacted and informed their placement has been cancelled.

##### Families Traveling Overseas

- Families are required to notify Tarralla Kindergarten prior to extended periods of travel, and ensure any applicable fees if applicable are paid if they wish to return to the service.

##### Non-contactable Families

- After two/three weeks of a child not attending the service, early childhood teacher or educator to call the family. If there is no response, educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
- After second week of the child not attending and the family has made no attempts to contact the service, early childhood teacher or educator to contact the family via phone/text and/or email. If there is no response, Educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
- After third week of non-attendance, early childhood teacher or educator to inform nominated supervisor and cross check families contact details.
- Nominated supervisor or approved provider to email family, ensuring a response date is documented in the email.
- If the family have made no attempt to communicate with the service before the response date, post a final attempt letter, ensuring a response date is documented in the letter.
- If the family has not responded to the final attempt letter before the response date, their placement will be cancelled.