



ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc., and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services
- requirements in relation to No Jab No Play

POLICY STATEMENT

• VALUES

Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting families to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

• SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.

• 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)).
- It is intended by 2022 that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to two years of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit

choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, the Approved Provider must adhere to their eligibility and priority of access criteria (refer to *Definitions*) in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in *The 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. Criteria for access and inclusion are outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*). Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

- Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. is part of the Boroondara Kindergarten Central Enrolment Scheme (BKCES) – a system for processing kindergarten enrolments. BKCES manages enrolment applications and the initial offer of places for both three- and four-year kindergarten.
- Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Boroondara City Council dated 10/10/2007. By signing this agreement Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. has agreed to abide by the BKCES Enrolment policy.
- 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* 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:

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- 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, 177, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
- Standard 6.1: Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained
- Element 6.1.1: There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019* (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

• DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g., Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* document.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: is the only form of acceptable evidence of immunisation. The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. Parents/carers must provide a copy of their most recent AIR Immunisation History Statement, which shows that the child is up to date with their immunisations upon enrolment and when a child has received or been due to receive a vaccination while attending the service. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form, and supplies it to the AIR. In order to confirm enrolment, the Immunisation History Statement must show the child is up to date with the vaccines they can have, medical contraindication and indicate the due date for the next vaccinations the child is able to receive in the future if applicable.

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 Confidential Enrolment Form.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need to consider a risk assessment on an individual basis to determine if a person under the age of 18 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

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*).

Eligible child: as defined by the Kindergarten Funding Guide; a child that is at least four years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a 4-year-old program; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service. Or a child that is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment and is enrolled in a funded 3-year-old kindergarten program. Any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicate that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualify 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 the confidential enrolment form; details of any court orders; and immunisation documentation as specified in the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services*. This information is kept confidential by the service.

Fee: A charge for a place within a program at the service.

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.

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 spaces using the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Funding Guide*.

Security deposit: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. The security deposit is refundable in the circumstances set out in the Fees Policy.

• SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:* www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- Australian Government Department of Health, *National Immunisation Program Schedule:* <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-throughout-life/national-immunisation-program-schedule>
- Department of Health and Human Services, *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service:* <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:* www.acecqa.gov.au/
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au/
- The Kindergarten *Guide (Department of Education and Training):* www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Service policies

- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Administration of Medication Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:

- complying with this policy, the Inclusion and Equity Policy and the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy
- providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the child's AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period, copy of birth certificate provided and deposit paid
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation **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
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
- advising parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services
- taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending

(Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).

- taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) from all parents/guardians after enrolment to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)
 - Rowen Street Kindergarten central enrolment database automatically updates and requests an up-to-date statement when required.
- ensuring that the Enrolment record (refer to *Definitions*) complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records (refer to *Definitions*) 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 (Regulation 183)
- ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- 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
- 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 (Regulation 157), 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 National Law: Section 167
- Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service.
- Ensuring that enrolment record (refer to *Definitions*) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances.
- Ensuring families have access to the kinder information handbook and policies of the service
- Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.
- Receiving written confirmation from families confirming they are attending one funded kindergarten program per child, per year
- 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
- Working with the families to obtain an alternate form of identification if a birth certificate or other official documentation is not available
- 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

The person responsible for the enrolment process is accountable for the following:

- Collating enrolments, assessing immunisation documentation to determine if a child's vaccination status complies with requirements and collecting a copy of a child's birth certificate
- Forwarding welcome letters, Confidential Enrolment forms, Fee Schedule and Payment Agreement to those with a confirmed place in the program
- Forwarding letters for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation advising that their child/children cannot attend the service and referring them to an immunisation service

- For children enrolled under a grace period taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from the parents/guardians
- Ensuring the Enrolment and Orientation Policy, available on the Rowen Street Kindergarten's Website, is kept up to date
- Collecting the enrolment deposits and forwarding the monies to the Treasurer
- providing a monthly report to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered
- complying with this policy and the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

The Nominated Supervisor and other educators are responsible for:

- responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- ensuring that the Confidential Enrolment Forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service
- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to Definitions and the Inclusion and Equity Policy)
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
 - developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into the service
 - become familiar with service policies and procedures
 - share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
 - share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs
 - discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning
- working with families to create procedures for children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with special needs with parents/guardians, where required
- complying with this policy, the Inclusion and Equity Policy, and the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this policy
- completing the Confidential Enrolment Form prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child's immunisation status, a copy of the child's birth certificate and other documentation as required
- compulsory attendance of scheduled interview session/s prior to their child's commencement at the service. If parents/guardians are unable to attend the designated interview session dates/times, they are required to arrange a time to meet with their child's teacher prior to their child's commencement at the service
- where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
- where a parent/guardian wishes to discuss medical or other issues with the Teacher that will require more than 2 minutes, this needs to occur outside of the session time at a mutually agreeable time to be agreed upon by the parent/guardian and the Teacher
- ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service

- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this Policy and its procedures

GENERAL ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

1. APPLICATION FOR A PLACE & SELECTION CRITERIA

- The Boroondara Kindergarten Central Enrolment Scheme (BKCES) manages the offers process which commences in July of the year preceding attendance. Places are allocated according to the selection criteria detailed in the BKCES Enrolment Policy. The BKCES Enrolment policy can be found at: <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/media/37611/download?attachment>
- Enrolment applications will be accepted any time after the child has turned 2 years of age.
- Applications for the BKCES member kindergartens can be made online at the City of Boroondara website: <https://bkces.boroondara.vic.gov.au/>
- Information Kits and Application Forms are available to be downloaded from the City of Boroondara's website.
- An application must be made for each proposed year of attendance at the kindergarten and a separate application form must be completed for each child.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment applications should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).
- Parents/guardians of children applying for a second year of funded kindergarten or currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application form (via BKCES) for the following year.

2. PROCEDURE FOR OFFER OF PLACES

- BKCES will directly send parents/guardians an email offering their child a tentative place at one of the kindergartens listed on their BKCES Application Form conditional on your child being:
 - a) fully vaccinated for their age, or
 - b) in a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations, or
 - c) has a medical reason not to be vaccinated.
- Once parents/guardians have accepted their offer through BKCES, BKCES will then provide Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. with the class lists.
- Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. will directly send parents/guardians:
 - a) firstly, an offer letter (including requirement to pay security deposit) making clear that confirmation of places is not final until immunisation documentation has been received, assessed and found acceptable; and
 - b) secondly, following payment of the security deposit, an enrolment package. The enrolment package will include the Confidential Enrolment Form, Privacy statement, Permission form for photographs and videos, Fee Schedule and Payment Agreement, Code of Conduct Policy and School Funding form.
- Parents/Guardians will be required to confirm their acceptance of an offer of a tentative place by paying the security deposit by the date specified in the offer letter. Following payment of the security deposit, Parents/Guardians must complete and return the Confidential Enrolment Form, Permission form for photographs and videos, Fee Schedule and Payment Agreement, birth certificate and Immunisation History Statement to Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. by the date

specified in the enrolment package.

- The documentation 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 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 (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 or the Immunisation Status certificate is within the acceptable timeframe for an enrolment, or;
 - That the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule if they have fallen behind with their vaccinations, or;
 - That the child has a medical reason not to be vaccinated, or,
 - That the child has been assessed by Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. as being eligible for a 16-week grace period.
- Payment of the security deposit in full (in accordance with the Fee policy) is payable to Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. upon acceptance of this offer to hold the place for the relevant year.
- Once the security deposit is paid and the Confidential Enrolment Form and Immunisation History Statement are received and assessed, parents/guardians will be advised in writing that their child's place at the service is confirmed and will be provided with a receipt and information regarding Orientation Day.
- Parents/guardians will be invited to attend an Orientation Day. A Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. Information Booklet will be sent to parents/guardians via email.

3. PROCEDURE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ENROLMENT

- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a tentative or confirmed place, or intend to withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify BKCES, the Approved Provider and the person responsible for managing the enrolment process at the service, in writing as soon as possible.
- If a confirmed place is withdrawn prior to commencement, the security deposit will be retained in accordance with the Fees Policy.

4. PROCEDURE TO DEFER A PLACE

- A family who accepted an offer from BKCES, but the child does not attend may defer their place to the following year (subject to compliance with BKCES enrolment policy).
- If the security deposit has been paid to Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc., it will be retained by the kindergarten for the following year.
- Parents/guardians must also notify BKCES of their deferral.

5. PROCEDURE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF AN OFFER OF A PLACE

- If a family has not paid the security deposit by the date set out in the offer letter, the Committee of Management may cancel their offer of a place and request BKCES to offer it to the next person on the list.

- If a family has outstanding Kindergarten fees, a child or any siblings may not be eligible for enrolment until the family pays all outstanding fees in full. If outstanding Kindergarten fees are not paid the Committee of Management may cancel the offer of a place and request BKCES to offer it to the next person on the list.
- Parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation cannot be offered a place and are referred to Australian Immunisation Register or to an immunisation provider.

6. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Due to regulations, children who have not turned three by the commencement of the kindergarten year cannot commence attending the kindergarten until they have turned three. However, where applicable, full fees must be paid to hold their place (refer to BKCES enrolment policy).
- All parents/guardians must complete and return to the kindergarten prior to confirmation of enrolment the Confidential Enrolment Form, birth certificate and a copy of their child's Immunisation History Statement. The information requested in the Confidential Enrolment Form is required to be maintained on the Kindergarten's enrolment records at all times (regulations 160, 161, 162). This form includes authorization for medical treatment (regulation 161). All information included in the form will remain confidential.

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
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures which may have a significant impact on
 - (a) the kindergarten's provision of education and **care to any** child enrolled at the service; or
 - (b) the family's ability to utilise Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the **Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.** Committee of Management, at a committee meeting on 9 October 2023

Review date: JUNE 2024