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KINDERGARTEN CENTRAL REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT SCHEME (CRES) POLICY

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| Version Number | 4.2023 |
| Responsibility | WPSA Executive Committee |
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| Review Date | May 2025 |

1. Purpose

The policy provides guidance for current and future parents/carers who wish to have their children enrolled in a Whitehorse PreSchool Association (WPSA) Member Kindergarten.

2. Scope

This policy applies to parents/carers who wish to apply for a kindergarten position for their children with a kindergarten participating in the WPSA Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), and kindergarten committees or their representatives involved in the allocation of placements of children to a kindergarten program.

This policy outlines the criteria, processes and priorities used when registering a child for funded three-year-old and/or four-year-old kindergarten, with a member kindergarten, through Whitehorse PreSchool Association's Kindergarten CRES, and member kindergarten committees or their representatives involved in the allocation of placements of children to their kindergarten program.

3. Background

WPSA is a non-profit organisation formed in 1965 as Nunawading PreSchool Association by several preschools in the then City of Nunawading who wanted to set up a support network for themselves. When the government amalgamated Cities of Nunawading and Box Hill, the name of the Association changed to Whitehorse PreSchool Association.

WPSA has grown from a small networking group to an information and support service for parents/carers and member kindergartens, and to a CRES.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring all Victorian children have access to a high-quality kindergarten program and making the process for families as simple and accessible as possible.

Central Registration and Enrolment provides a single point of contact for families to apply for multiple kindergarten services in their area and helps ensure children secure a place that best suits their needs. It also allows local government or non-profit CRES to establish strong links with support services, including the Maternal and Child Health Service, to identify and engage children and families who may need more support. This is why the Victorian Government is investing over \$5.5 million to support local governments to adopt, establish and enhance their own or local non-profit Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme.

4. Policy Objectives

- Provide parents/carers with a single access point for information on attending and applying for WPSA Full Member kindergarten.
- Parents/carers experience a smoother pathway to apply for and attend a WPSA Full Member kindergarten.
- Places at WPSA Full Member kindergartens are allocated in a transparent, consistent, and equitable way, and in line with the Department of Education's (DE's) Priority of Access (POA) criteria.
- WPSA Full Member kindergartens can better respond to the needs of the community, through the collection of accurate, consistent, and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity and utilisation of services.

5. Whitehorse Sessional Kindergartens

5.1 WPSA Full Member Kindergartens

WPSA takes applications on behalf of these kindergartens.

The following sessional kindergartens participate in WPSA's CRES and unless otherwise indicated* use the WPSA Eligibility and Priority of Access criteria.

- Aurora School Community Kindergarten, Blackburn South
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Barriburn Preschool, Vermont South (YBallarat)
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Benwerrin Kindergarten, East Burwood
- Birralelee Preschool, Vermont South
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Blackburn Preschool, Blackburn
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Box Hill North Primary School Kindergarten, Box Hill North
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Box Hill South Preschool, Box Hill South
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Dr. Stanley Cochrane Memorial Kindergarten, Mitcham
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- East Burwood Preschool, East Burwood (YBallarat)
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)

- Florence Road Preschool, Surrey Hills
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Friend Street Preschool, Box Hill North*
- Heatherdale Preschool, Mitcham
- Holbury Children's Centre, Blackburn South
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Indra Preschool, Blackburn South
- Katrina Preschool, Blackburn North (YBallarat)
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Larch Street Kindergarten, Blackburn (YBallarat)
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Mt Pleasant Kindergarten, Nunawading
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- NewHope Baptist Preschool, Blackburn North
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- NextSense Kindergarten, Blackburn
(WPSA makes offer on behalf of)
- Parkmore Preschool, Forest Hill (YBallarat)
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Parkside Preschool, Box Hill (YBallarat)
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Pope Road Kindergarten, Blackburn*
- Rangeview Preschool, Mitcham
- Seedlings Whitehorse Kindergarten, Blackburn North*
- Warekila Preschool, Nunawading
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Wattle Hill Kindergarten, Burwood
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)
- Woodhouse Grove Kindergarten, Box Hill North
(WPSA makes offers on behalf of)

*Indicated kindergartens do not use the WPSA Eligibility and Priority of Access criteria, contact directly to obtain a copy of their eligibility and priority of access criteria.

5.2 WPSA Associate Member Kindergartens

WPSA does not take applications on behalf of these kindergartens. Applications and enrolments for these kindergartens are made directly with the kindergarten.

- Eastmont Preschool, Vermont
- St. Augustine's Kindergarten, Mont Albert
- Vermont Primary School Kindergarten, Vermont

5.3 Non-Participating Kindergartens

These kindergartens are not a WPSA member.

Applications and enrolments for these kindergartens are made directly with the provider.

- Burwood Heights Primary School Kindergarten, Burwood

6. Eligibility

6.1 Year of attendance eligibility

To determine the year your child can commence kindergarten, and check their age eligibility, please visit DE date calculator – <https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life#when-to-start-three-year-old-kindergarten>

6.2 Three-year-old kindergarten program eligibility

Children can only access one year of funded 3-year-old kindergarten. Children are not eligible to apply for a repeat 3-year-old year.

The following children are eligible for one year of funded 3-year-old kindergarten:

- children who are at least 3 years of age on or before 30 April in the year of kindergarten attendance (please note, as per Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012, a child must be 3 years of age before they can commence a program)
- children who were eligible to attend a 3-year-old kindergarten program in the previous year but delayed commencement.

6.3 Four-year-old kindergarten program eligibility

The following children are eligible to access funded 4-year-old kindergarten:

- children who are at least 4 years of age on or before 30 April in the year of kindergarten attendance.
- children turning 6 years of age during the kindergarten year who have been granted an exemption from school entry age requirements by their regional DE office. (refer item 6.3.4).
- children who are younger than the eligible age but whose parents/carers have submitted a written request to their regional DE office and have been approved for their child to attend kindergarten the following year (refer item 6.3.2).
- children eligible for Early Start Kindergarten (refer item 6.3.1).
- children who have a Declaration of Eligibility for a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten (refer item 6.3.3).

6.3.1 Early Start Kindergarten

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) is available to eligible children and provides them with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten a week, in the two years before they start primary school. To be eligible for ESK a child must turn 3 on or before 30 April of the first year of kindergarten attendance, and:

- are from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or
- are from a family that has had contact with child protection.

Four-year-old children who meet the above criteria can also access free or low-cost kindergarten the year before attending school through the ESK Extension Grant, regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

Parents/carers who think they are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten are encouraged to contact the DE Early Years team or talk with their Maternal & Child Health Nurse to confirm eligibility and for support.

6.3.2 Early entry

A child who is less than four years of age by 30 April in the year they are to attend a funded 4-year-old kindergarten program, may only attend the program if the child's parent(s)/carer(s) have requested and been granted approval for early entry to school.

Requests must be made in writing to the appropriate DE regional office in accordance with government school entry processes, or directly to the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the written approval for early school entry must accompany the registration. The kindergarten service must also sight this approval and include a copy in the child's enrolment record.

Parents/Carers must be aware that early entry into kindergarten does not guarantee early entry into school, and if their child does not proceed to primary school the following year as planned, they will be unable to access another year of funded kindergarten, unless approved by DE (refer item 6.3.3).

6.3.3 Second Year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten funding

A child is eligible to receive a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten if:

- a) The child is observed as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, and
- b) There is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes if the child attends a second year of 4-year-old kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these areas which will better facilitate transition to school the following year.

The Early Childhood Teacher is responsible for determining a child's eligibility to receive a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten.

If the child is turning 6 years of age in their second year of kindergarten an exemption from attending primary school must be sought from DE by the parents.

WPSA must be notified by the kindergarten of the number of estimated second year places before the end of June in the year prior to the second year of attendance.

Repeat notifications must be advised to WPSA from the kindergarten and not the parents/carers to ensure the repeat is teacher recommended and supported.

6.3.4 Exemption from Primary School

Children who are turning 6 years of age* (the compulsory school age) during the first or second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten must be approved for kindergarten funding and exempted from attending school by the Department of Education (DE).

It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure an "Exemption from school due to attendance in a funded kindergarten program" form is submitted to the relevant DE regional office by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning 6.

*The exception to this is children who will turn 6 in late December (between the last day of the school year and 31 December). They can attend 4-year-old kindergarten in that year and attend school the following year.

6.4 Immunisation Status

'No Jab, No Play'

The Victorian Government has amended the Public Health & Wellbeing Act 2008, effective January 2016. The amendments mean that early childhood education and care services cannot confirm enrolment of a child unless the parent/carer has provided the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) History Statement that shows the child:

- is fully vaccinated,
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations, or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated.

Parents/Carers are required to obtain an Immunisation History Statement for their child from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). You can access the child's immunisation history statement using either the Medicare online account through myGov or via the Medicare mobile app. Alternatively, you can:

- ask your vaccination provider to print a copy for you from the AIR site
- call the AIR on 1800 653 809 (8am-5pm, Monday to Friday) and request a copy to be mailed to you (this can take up to 10 business days)
- request a copy at a Services Australia Service Centre.

In some circumstances, a 16 week 'grace/support period' can be applied so a child can start at the service while a statement is obtained. Children whose parents/carers have not provided evidence of their immunisation status or have provided evidence that states they are not up to date with their immunisations are eligible for the support period if they:

- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- are a refugee or asylum seeker
- are from multiple births of triplets or more
- hold or their parent/carer holds a healthcare card
- have a parent/carer who is a pension concession card holder
- are evacuated from their home due to an emergency (such as a flood or bushfire)
- are in the care of an adult who is not their parent due to exceptional circumstances (such as parental illness or incapacity)
- are in the care of a parent who is a **Gold or White Department of Veterans' Affairs** card holder
- are involved with child protection services, or have been in the past
- receive support through Family Services, or have in the past
- are living in crisis or emergency accommodation
- are being supported by a housing agency or family violence service

7. Application Process

7.1 Lodging an Application

- Applications are lodged through our website www.wpsa.com.au online applications. Applications can be lodged for 3yo, or 4yo, or both 3yo&4yo combined.
- Applications can be lodged from a child's second birthday.
- Applications must be accompanied with an accepted proof of residential address document or an explanation why an accepted document cannot be provided.
- Applications must include the child's up-to-date Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) History Statement. This document will also provide proof of a child's date of birth.
- A copy of a concession card held by the family or child must be provided with the application showing names and expiry date. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to keep WPSA advised of up-to-date card and expiry date.
- Applications must include at least one kindergarten choice and can include up to three.
- As of 9 February 2024 an application fee is no longer required thanks to CRES funding through the [Central Enrolment Project](#).
- Applications should be lodged by 30 June the year prior to that being applied for. Applications received after this date each year may be placed on a late waitlist. This includes any changes to existing applications.
- Support is available through WPSA to complete the application process if needed.
- Applications will receive an automatic bounce back email and will be followed up with a formal acknowledged from WPSA by email once they are checked as complete.
- Changes to existing applications are made by email to WPSA.
- Second funded year notification must be made by the kindergarten or educator, so it is known to be teacher recommended and supported. A new application is not needed for the repeat child already applied with WPSA.

7.2 Offer and Allocation Process

- Applications received by 30 June with all correct supporting documents will be part of first round offers.
- Offers will commence late July for next year's places.
- Places will be allocated as per each kindergarten's eligibility and priority of access criteria.
- WPSA Eligibility and Priority of Access Criteria, see Appendix 1.
- Offers will be emailed to the preferred email address registered on the application.
- The offer will need to be responded to by the date stipulated in the offer email otherwise it may be rescinded and offered to the next person on the waitlist.
- An acceptance deposit may be required to be paid to confirm a position. This deposit will be offered as a refund once a child commences in the kindergarten program.
- Vacancies created from declined offers will be offered in order of sorted applications, as per the application of the eligibility and priority of access criteria.
- First round offers will continue until a kindergarten's request list is exhausted or all positions have been offered and accepted.
- Second round offers will commence mid-August and will be when second and third choices are considered.
- Late applications and late changes received after 30 June will be considered for a position mid-late August.

8 Definitions

| Word or Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| WPSA | Whitehorse PreSchool Association – non-profit centralised service for kindergarten information and applications in the Whitehorse area. |
| CRES | Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme – a central service for streamlining the process of applying for kindergarten. |
| DE | Department of Education – government department that oversees early childhood education. |
| POA | Priority of Access – DE guidelines to support fair and equitable access to kindergarten. |
| Full Member Kindergarten | Kindergartens in the Whitehorse area for whom WPSA takes applications on their behalf. |
| Associate Member Kindergarten | Kindergartens in the Whitehorse area who are members of WPSA, but WPSA does not take applications on their behalf. |
| Sessional Kindergarten | Kindergarten providing a set timetable on set days |
| Late Application | New applications or changes to existing applications received after 30 June in the year prior to that applied for. |
| EYM | Early Years Manager – an organisation responsible for the management of a kindergarten |
| YBallarat | An EYM |
| Central Enrolment Project | Established to support councils and other organisations to adopt, expand and enhance central enrolment across Victoria. |

REFERENCES

Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) Development Guide

Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) Practice Guide

Kindergarten Funding Guide January 2023

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

WPSA Eligibility and Priority of Access criteria for 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten

4-year-old kindergarten is a government funded program, 15 hours per week of free kindergarten.

3-year-old kindergarten is a government funded program, 5-15 hours per week of free kindergarten.

ELIGIBILITY

- All children must meet 'No Jab, No Play' Legislation requirements.
- 4-year-old (4yo) or mixed age - a child must have turned 4 years of age by April 30 in the year they are to attend to coincide with school entry.
- Children who turn 6 during their 4yo kindergarten year and have received approval for an exemption to attend school from the Department of Education (DE).
- Children younger than the 4yo kindergarten eligible age who have a written request and response from the Department of Education (DE) seeking an early entry to school. (Note: very few early school entry requests are approved by DE and if the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed onto school the following year, it is not possible to access another year of funded 4yo kindergarten).
- 3-year-old (3yo) or mixed age - A child must have turned 3 years of age by April 30 in the year they are to attend to coincide with school entry.
- 3-year-old (3yo) or mixed age - A child must be 3 years of age before they can commence the program as per Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.

1. PRIORITY OF ACCESS – Residential address must be within Whitehorse or within local proximity to first preference kindergarten for Priority of Access.

- **PRIORITY CHILDREN** – as per Department of Education Priority of Access criteria.

| High priority children | Criteria and processes for verifying need(s) |
|--|---|
| Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in out-of-home care | The child is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• eligible for ESK or AEL, and/or• family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to Child Protection or in out-of-home care, and/or• referred by one of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Child Protection– Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker)– Maternal and Child Health nurse– out-of-home care provider |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children | Family identifies the child as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander |
| Asylum seeker and refugee children | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child or family holds a visa or supporting documentation and information, including an ImmiCard, identifying them as a refugee or asylum seeker.• Referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD outreach worker. |
| Children that meet the eligibility criteria for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children or parent who holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card• Multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets or more) |
| Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• with an identified specific disability or developmental delays• who requires additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program• who require a combination of services which are individually planned | The child: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• holds a Child Disability Health Care Card• has previously been approved for KIS program• has been referred by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– the National Disability Insurance Scheme– Early Childhood Intervention Service– Preschool Field Officer– Maternal and Child Health nurse• is assessed as having delays in 2 or more areas and is declared eligible for a second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten |

- **REPEATING CHILDREN – Funded 4-year-old only**
 - Children who have attended the funded 4yo program at the same kindergarten and are declared eligible for a second year of funded 4yo kindergarten as recommended by the Early Childhood Teacher.
 - Repeating 4yo without funding approval is not available.
 - Children can access one year only of 3yo funded kindergarten. Children are not eligible to apply for a repeat 3yo year.
- 2. **LOCAL FACTORS – considered in conjunction with each other.**
- **PROXIMITY**
 - For this clause, the residential address will be used, appropriate proof of address must be supplied. As the crow flies is used to calculate distance.
- **RELATIONSHIP TO KINDERGARTEN**
 - CONTINUITY 4yo only - Applicant attended for a minimum of 3 terms in the 3yo program at the first preference kindergarten the previous year to that applied for.
 - SIBLINGS - Siblings of previous or current attendees at the first preference kindergarten; OR, where the first preference kindergarten is part of a Primary School, current attendees at the school and/or kindergarten.
- 3. **OTHER REPEATING – 4 YEAR OLD ONLY**
 - Children who have attended a funded 4yo kindergarten program and are eligible for a second year of funded 4yo kindergarten as recommended by an Early Childhood Teacher and have a Declaration of Eligibility and request the second funded year of 4yo kindergarten to be at another kindergarten.
- 4. **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES - may be considered in conjunction with above criteria**
Any special circumstances, which the Committee and Early Childhood Teacher agree is appropriate to consider. For example:
 - Additional Needs – an applicant who has additional needs or a family member of the applicant who has additional needs not considered under Priority of Access.

If there are more applicants than positions available, and applicants are on equal standing after the above criteria has been applied, offers will be determined by ballot.