

Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Policy

April 2027

DRAFT

Responsible Directorate: Community Services

Authorised By: Council, appendix updates approved by Director Community Services

Date of Adoption: April 2027

Review Date: February 2032

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

DRAFT

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Purpose	5
1.2	Scope	5
1.3	Corporate framework	5
2	Background	6
2.1	Policy Environment	6
2.2	Policy context	7
3	Methodology	8
4	Policy statement	9
4.1	Local Agreed Allocation criteria	9
4.2	CRES roles and responsibilities	10
5	Implementation and monitoring	12
5.1	Evaluation	12
5.2	Accountabilities	12
6	References	13
6.1	Related documents	13
6.2	Definitions	13
	Attachment 1- Local Kindergarten Agreed Allocation Criteria	16
	Attachment 2 - Special Consideration Requests	18

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Policy (the Policy) is to outline how the Boroondara Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) operates for all stakeholders.

1.2 Scope

This Policy applies to:

- kindergartens who are members of CRES, including committees and staff.
- parents or guardians who wish to have their children enrolled at a CRES member kindergarten, or have children already enrolled at a member kindergarten.
- Council and officers responsible for the management of CRES, including within the Health and Wellbeing Services department.

1.3 Corporate framework

This Policy supports Council's Mission and Vision by addressing the following aims in the Boroondara Community Plan 2025-2035:

Theme 1: Our Community

- Aim 1.4 Lifelong Learning - Our community has access to learning opportunities at every stage of life.
- Aim 1.6 Diversity and inclusion - Our community celebrates diversity and we actively remove barriers to participation for vulnerable groups.

Theme 2: Our Places

- Aim 2.4 Community spaces and facilities - Our places form a network of well-designed, multi-purpose and highly utilised community facilities and infrastructure that enable connection and participation in community life.

Theme 4: Our Council

- Aim 4.2 Accountability and financial management - Our Council practices responsible governance by making transparent, fair, and accountable decisions and managing finances efficiently.
- Aim 4.3 Effective operations - Our Council is effective and responds to our community's needs through innovation, valuing diverse perspective and continuous improvement.

The Policy is underpinned by 6 key principles as outlined in the Victorian Government Department of Education CRES Practice Guide 2023:

- **Simplicity**
 - Processes are simple to understand, follow and implement.
 - Support is available from Council CRES staff, as required.
- **Inclusivity**
 - Families feel respected, safe and supported when engaging with CRES staff, processes and member kindergartens.
 - Families who may experience barriers to access kindergarten are proactively engaged.
- **Adaptability**
 - Flexible to cater for unique family and carer circumstances and needs.
 - Adapts to different types of service provision and the needs of service providers.
- **Consistency**
 - Information collected from and distributed to families is consistent.
 - Aligns with the Victorian Government Department of Education policy and guidelines.
 - Guidelines, practices and policies are equitably and consistently applied to every family or carer, provider or service.
- **Transparency**
 - Process is clear and easily understood by families, carers and services.
- **Collaboration**
 - Families, member kindergartens and CRES staff work in partnership to deliver the best outcome for children.
 - Council staff work in partnership with member kindergartens and other key stakeholders to identify and enrol vulnerable children.

2 Background

2.1 Policy Environment

CRES streamlines the process for registering children in kindergarten for families and service providers, ensuring the process is simple, transparent, consistent, inclusive, and equitable.

Council supports kindergarten services through the administration of CRES. Once families have registered and been allocated a place through CRES, they undertake enrolment processes at the kindergarten where they have received an offer to attend.

All sessional kindergartens operating from Council-owned infrastructure must be members of CRES as a condition of their use of community assets.

Council has no direct role in the operations of kindergarten services. Council plays a supporting role in the early childhood education and care sector through several activities, including the provision of existing Council owned infrastructure for kindergarten programs.

Council owned buildings are leased to community managed, not for profit kindergartens and long day care services. These services are managed by a combination of Early Years Management and volunteer, parent-run committees of management as approved providers. The delivery of kindergarten programming, including session types and days (e.g. timetabling) and employment of teachers, educators and support staff, are the responsibility of approved providers.

As Council is not the decision maker regarding Victorian Government kindergarten policy and funding, approved providers must fully comply with their Victorian Government funding and service agreements to continue to operate from a Council building.

2.2 Policy context

2.2.1 Victorian Government

The Victorian Government is primarily responsible for kindergarten policy, funding settings and program implementation. It provides funding to deliver 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs and sets operational requirements for providers through the Kindergarten Funding Guide and associated policy settings. It also establishes Priority of Access (PoA) criteria to guide enrolments where demand exceeds available places and provides funding directly to approved service providers under defined conditions and agreements. The PoA criteria are published on the Victorian Government's website at www.vic.gov.au/priority-access-criteria and may be updated from time-to-time.

Through the Best Start, Best Life reforms, the Victorian Government is expanding access to funded kindergarten, including statewide three-year-old kindergarten, Free Kinder and increased hours of 4-year-old kindergarten. Funded 3-year-old kindergarten will increase to 15 hours a week across Victoria by 2029. Funded 4-year-old kindergarten, will increase from the existing 15 hours to a maximum of 30 hours by 2036.

The Victorian Government supports local government areas to establish and administer a CRES wherever possible to support families to enrol in kindergarten through a process that is simple, transparent, equitable and accessible. CRES services also build links with support services (including Maternal and Child Health) and strengthens the capacity to identify children and families who may need more support to enrol and attend kindergarten.

Victorian Government policies, strategies and plans specifically related to the Policy include:

- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)
- [Best Start Best Life Early Childhood Reform Plan \(2022\)](#).
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#)
- [Child Safe Standards 2022](#)
- [City of Boroondara Privacy and Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Department of Education CRES Practice Guide](#)
- [Department of Education Kindergarten Funding Guide \(2023\)](#)
- [Department of Education Kindergarten Priority of Access Criteria](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Law 2010 and Regulations 2011](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#)
- [Gender Equality Act 2020](#)
- [Local Government Act 2020](#)
- [Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment \(No Jab, No Play\) Act 2015](#)

2.2.2 Approved providers of kindergarten programs

Approved providers are responsible for meeting all kindergarten funding, operational and enrolment requirements set by the Victorian Government. Victorian Government funding will vary depending on the kindergarten service's decision and capacity to offer licensed places and the format of the kindergarten program it offers.

3 Methodology

This Policy has been developed in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Victorian Government's Central Registration and Enrolment Practice Guide.

In reviewing this Policy, feedback was obtained through consultation with the following groups:

- Member kindergartens.
- Council officers involved in administering, planning, and delivering CRES.
- Victoria Government Department of Education.
- Municipal Association of Victoria.
- Peak bodies, including the Early Learning Association of Australia.
- Residents of the municipality, including families with pre-school aged children.

4 Policy statement

This Policy sets out the requirement of member kindergartens to:

- enable fair, transparent and equitable access to kindergarten programs for all children, based on the current Victorian Government Priority of Access (PoA) criteria, followed by the agreed Local Agreed Allocation Criteria (LAA);
- consider a request for registration that details special consideration in a fair, transparent and consistent manner;
- comply with applicable requirements as set out in the Kindergarten Funding Guide and provide a program in accordance with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework;
- comply with the relevant legislation relating to anti-discrimination, human rights and child safe standards;
- comply with Council's Privacy and Data Protection Policy;
- align with the Boroondara Community Plan and Council's commitment to the principles of community first; environmental sustainability; clear and responsible decision-making; access, inclusion and equity; local living; innovative delivery; and leadership, partnership and advocacy.

The Policy is effective for all registrations received or allocated from the date of policy adoption.

4.1 Local Agreed Allocation criteria

The CRES includes a Local Agreed Allocation Criteria (LAA) (Attachment 1) that will prioritise allocations to kindergarten programs where there are more registrations than available places. The Victorian Government's PoA criteria must be applied before any locally agreed allocation criteria.

The LAA must reflect the requirements of anti-discrimination and human rights law.

The CRES Local Agreed Allocation Criteria is reviewed in the context of relevant legislation to ensure that it aligns with the Victorian Government policy and funding setting and reflects the emerging needs of the Boroondara community as identified through Council's Boroondara Community Plan. Amendments are authorised by the Director Community Services and published on Council's website before registrations open for the following kindergarten year.

Where there are more PoA applicants than available places, CRES can apply the LAA to registrations. The approach supports equitable access for children with the highest level of need.

Council also recognises that some children and families may experience complex circumstances that are not fully captured by the PoA or LAA.

Council applies a special consideration process (Attachment 2) to ensure that requests are considered in a fair, transparent and consistent way while maintaining alignment with relevant Victorian and Australian Government legislation.

4.2 CRES roles and responsibilities

Responsible Party	Role and Responsibility
Victorian Government Department of Education	• Sets the strategic policy framework for kindergarten services across Victoria. • Sets the mandatory Priority of Access criteria for all funded kindergarten services. • Enters into funding and service agreements with Approved Providers to deliver funded kindergarten services across eligible early childhood service settings. • Monitors funding, service and Priority of Access compliance across funded kindergarten services. • Determines eligibility for an additional year of kindergarten in funded kindergarten services. • Monitors regulatory compliance of Approved Providers in relation to the National Law and Regulations for early childhood services. • Assesses and rate kindergartens under the National Quality Framework
Council as administrator of CRES	• Works in consultation with the Victorian Government Department of Education as part of Council's CRES function. • Responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the CRES Policy and administration of CRES. • Sets any fees associated with CRES in Council's Annual Budget. • Maintains current information on the City of Boroondara website. • Maintains the CRES database and liaise with parents/guardians. • Ensures secure storage and maintenance of the confidential status of online kindergarten registrations and the information contained within them. • Plans and implements improvements as required utilising the self-assessment tool and consider feedback from service providers, families and the broader community. • Liaises with enrolment officers and Committees or Early Years Managers of the kindergartens. • Sets timelines for operational requirements of CRES. • Works with services to ensure access and participation in proposed sessions are at appropriate capacity. • Allocates children to kindergarten places based on registered

Responsible Party	Role and Responsibility
	preferences and according to the mandatory Priority of Access and Local Agreed Allocation Criteria. • Offers places by email in accordance with the procedures set out in the Department of Education CRES Practice Guide. • Provides kindergartens with their confirmed list of children that includes information about immunisation and Priority of Access status for each confirmed child. • Provides a regular report to the member kindergartens regarding the status of registrations. • Responsible for the oversight and management of Council owned infrastructure to ensure usage aligns with Council's Community Plan.
Approved Providers - as member kindergartens (Committees of Management or Early Years Management)	• Responsible for all aspects of their role as Approved Provider of the Kindergarten service and in line with Kindergarten Funding Guidelines are • Responsible for enrolment of children who attend their service. • Responsible for planning and maximising capacity and utilisation of kindergarten facility to respond to levels of demand for funded kindergarten. • Determine the programs, utilisation, and hours of attendance to be offered at their kindergarten, based on registrations received, the licensed capacity of the kindergarten and the financial viability of the programs to be offered. • Responsible for the cost and administration of optional additional hours and confirming attendance with families within Kindergarten Funding Guidelines. • Ongoing liaison with Council representatives for allocation, registration and enrolment matters. • Ensure kindergarten staff refer families asking about vacancies to Council. • Pay any fees as set for CRES in Council's Annual Budget. • Advise Council officers of provisional programs, group size and hours according to the CRES timelines. • Responsible for the cost, administration and liaison with families for any changes to session times and program changes outside of the timelines set by CRES • Ensure that a representative of the member committee is nominated and will attend all CRES management meetings. • Notify Council of any changes relating to enrolment numbers, withdrawals, group sizes, cancellations, or change in family contact details.

Responsible Party	Role and Responsibility
Parents/Guardians/ Care givers	• Provide accurate information and documentation when registering for kindergarten through the CRES. • Read and understand the policies and procedures regarding CRES.

5 Implementation and monitoring

5.1 Evaluation

Council will:

- Seek feedback from the community to inform updates to the policy.
- Consider feedback from member kindergarten Committees of Management and Early Years Management.
- Monitor the implementation, compliance and complaints in relation to this Policy.
- Keep the Policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice.

The policy will be reviewed in 2032. Amendments to the LAA are authorised by the Director Community Services.

5.2 Accountabilities

For all queries or feedback regarding this Policy, please use the contact details for the responsible department below.

Position title	Contact number	Contact department email
Manager Health and Wellbeing Services	9278 4444	boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au

6 References

6.1 Related documents

- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- City of Boroondara Community Plan
- City of Boroondara Complaints Policy
- City of Boroondara Privacy and Data Protection Policy
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Education and Care Services National Law 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Member kindergartens policies on fees, complaints, and inclusion of children with additional needs
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Victorian Government Boroondara Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan
- Victorian Government Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme Practice Guide
- Victorian Government Department of Education Kindergarten Funding Guide

6.2 Definitions

Term	Definition
Allocation criteria	The criteria for registration and allocation of places to kindergarten programs and kindergarten groups (where applicable) in a member kindergarten.
Approved Provider	A committee of management or organisation that has been assessed and granted legal approval by the Victorian Government Regulatory Authority to operate one or more education and care services (such as kindergartens or childcare). They are legally responsible for overall compliance and the wellbeing of children.
Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES)	A model that streamlines the process of registering and allocating kindergarten applications and subsequent offers of a place in either 3-year-old or 4-year-old kindergarten/Pre Prep. Boroondara's Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme is managed by Council on behalf of member kindergartens.

Term	Definition
Closest Kindergarten	Closest member kindergarten to their residential address as measured by a geographical straight line (as the crow flies).
Early Years Manager	A professional, community-based or local government organisation that assumes the legal, financial, and compliance responsibilities of an Approved Provider under the National Quality Framework. Early Years Management organisations also enter into lease agreements with Council for kindergarten facilities.
High priority children	Defined in the Victorian Government Kindergarten Funding Guide and Priority of Access.
Kindergarten	Kindergarten provides a universal early childhood program and is funded by the Victorian Government, for 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten programs.
Funded kindergarten	A funded kindergarten program meets the requirements of the Kindergarten Funding Guide in relation to kindergarten program hours, qualifications of educators and operational requirements.
Committee of Management	The legal entity responsible for the operation of a kindergarten service. Committees are generally comprised of volunteer parents that comprise the executive and general members. Committees are responsible for the employment of staff, the operations of the services in accordance with legislation/regulation, quality frameworks and funding agreements. The legal entity enters into lease agreements with Council for kindergarten facilities.
Kindergarten Enrolment	Once families accept an offer, the kindergarten is responsible for enrolling the child with their service.
Local Agreed Allocation Criteria	Local Agreed Allocation Criteria (LAA) is applied once the Victorian Government's Priority of Access has been administered. It is reviewed by council officers to ensure that it aligns with the Victorian Government policy and funding settings, reflects the emerging needs of the Boroondara community identified through Council's Community Plan, member kindergarten feedback, and in the context of anti-discrimination and human rights law.

Term	Definition
Member Kindergarten	A kindergarten operating from a Council owned building or a kindergarten located within City of Boroondara that has elected to be part of CRES.
Offer	Generated by CRES processes a parent/guardian of a child who is registered may receive an offer of a place at one of the member kindergarten services. The offer can be accepted or declined.
Registration	The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in a kindergarten in CRES. This includes collection of contact information, kindergarten choices and group preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation of available kindergarten places.
Sibling	A sister or brother by birth, adoption, step or foster arrangement.
Special Consideration	A request by a parent/guardian for their child to gain a place at a specified kindergarten due to exceptional circumstances, as outlined in the Policy and in adherence to the process (Attachment 2).
Special Consideration Review Panel	A panel of council officers that reviews all requests for special consideration in accordance with the Policy and in adherence to the process (Attachment 2).

Attachment 1- Local Kindergarten Agreed Allocation Criteria

The Local Kindergarten Agreed Allocation Criteria will be applied for 3- and 4-year-old registered children following the application of the Victorian Government's mandatory PoA.

City of Boroondara Local Kindergarten Agreed Allocation Criteria <i>For 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten</i>	
1. Boroondara residents	Residents of Boroondara, registering for kindergarten in order of: • Closest CRES kindergarten to home address (measured in a geographical straight line), with a sibling enrolled at that same kindergarten within the previous: • 5 years if registering for 2028, • 4 years if registering for 2029, • 3 years if registering for 2030 and thereafter. • Closest CRES kindergarten to home address (measured in a geographical straight line). • Registering for kindergarten that is not their closest CRES kindergarten (measured in a geographical straight line), with a sibling enrolled at that same kindergarten within the previous: • 5 years if registering for 2028, • 4 years if registering for 2029, • 3 years if registering for 2030 and thereafter. • All other residents of Boroondara.
2. Non-residents of Boroondara	Non-residents of Boroondara registering for kindergarten in the order of: • A sibling enrolled at that same kindergarten within the previous: • 5 years if registering for 2028 • 4 years if registering for 2029 • 3 years if registering for 2030 and thereafter. All other non-residents

If all criteria are equal, positions shall be determined by a computer-generated random allocation. Fulfilling the criteria for registration does not guarantee a placement at a member kindergarten due to the number of applicants being greater than the number of places available.

Registrations received from residents of the City of Boroondara before 30 June each year will be processed before registrations received from non-residents.

If demand exceeds available places and all other criteria are equal, priority will be given to families with twins who are registered to attend the same kindergarten in the same calendar year. A separate registration is required for each child. Priority will only apply where the family has nominated the same kindergarten for both children.

If demand exceeds available places and all other criteria are equal, priority will be given to families registering a child who will attend the same kindergarten, in the same calendar year, as an older sibling who is already enrolled there. A separate registration is required for each child. Priority will only apply where the family has nominated the same kindergarten for all children.

For example, this applies where an older sibling already enrolled at the kindergarten is registering to move into the 4-year-old program and a younger sibling is registering to attend a 3-year-old program, with both children attending the same kindergarten in the same calendar year.

Attachment 2 - Special Consideration Requests

A parent or guardian may request special consideration for their child to be prioritised for a place at a specific kindergarten where unexpected and unavoidable circumstances outside the family's control create an extra barrier to accessing kindergarten.

Requests must be made when completing the registration and must include supporting documentation where relevant. Requests submitted after initial registration or after allocations have been finalised will generally not be considered. Where a late application is accepted a child already allocated will not be displaced.

Special consideration may be applied where:

- the family lives in the City of Boroondara and has registered for a member kindergarten
- the registration shows an exceptional need based on circumstances affecting the child or their immediate family (parent, guardian or sibling) that create additional barriers to accessing kindergarten.

Examples of supporting documentation may include letters or reports from a GP, paediatrician, psychologist, allied health professional, Maternal and Child Health nurse, family support service, housing service, family violence service, or other relevant professional or agency. A statutory declaration may be considered where formal supporting documents are not available. Council officers reserve the right to request clarifying or additional information to assess the request. Families applying for special consideration must consent to council officers contacting the professionals who provide supporting documentation if further information is required to assess the request.

The Special Consideration Panel will assess each request against the Victorian Government Priority of Access criteria and the Local Agreed Allocation Criteria. In doing so, the panel will use professional judgement and consider the circumstances affecting the family's access to kindergarten.

The Special Consideration Panel will include:

- Senior Coordinator Children, Young People and Families (Chair)
- Coordinator Early and Middle Years
- Coordinator Maternal and Child Health (or delegate)
- Early Years Planning and Development Officer

The Panel will be supported by the Central Registration Officer who will prepare recommendations for the Panel and record final decisions.

Families will be advised of the outcome through the registration and allocation process.

Previous or current parent or caregiver involvement with a kindergarten service, including volunteering as a committee member, is not a reason for special consideration.

Special consideration does not guarantee a place at a particular kindergarten or a particular kindergarten group.

Families who are dissatisfied with the Panel's decision may raise their concerns and request a review through Council's Complaints Policy.

DRAFT