

3 YEAR OLD ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- the criteria for enrolment into 3 year old kindergarten at Mentone Pre-School
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child into 3 year old kindergarten at Mentone Pre-School, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Mentone Pre-School.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Mentone Pre-School is committed to:

- equal access for all children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- complying with DEECD funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in government-funded kindergarten places
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided on enrolment forms
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Mentone Pre-School.

3. 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 that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to one year 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, a priority system for access must be determined by the Approved Provider in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places will vary from service to service, but is generally based on a service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2012*. 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.

Childcare services providing approved care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

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, 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
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

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

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. 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* section of this manual.

Approved care: Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers. Details are available at:

www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

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.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need 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.

Child Care Benefit (CCB): A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Benefit. Details are available at:

www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

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 April data collection. DEECD considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DEECD funding in the following year.

Eligible child: A child who meets the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide*.

Enrolment application form: A form to apply for a place at the service.

Enrolment application 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.

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. This is completed after a place has been offered by the service and accepted by the applicant. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Enrolment record: Contains information on each child, as required under the National Regulations, including contact details, names of authorised nominees (refer to *Definitions*), names of persons authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication, names of persons authorised to take the child outside the service, details of any court orders, personal and health information including specific healthcare needs, medical management plans and dietary restrictions etc. (Regulations 160, 161, 162). This information is kept confidential by the service.

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

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000:
<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2006B01541>
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/
- *Priority for allocating places in child care services:*
<http://education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>
- *The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development):*
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/default.aspx>

Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Mentone Pre-School, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy
- developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program, and considering any barriers to access that may exist
- complying with the *Inclusion and Equity 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
- ensuring that enrolment forms (refer to *Definitions*) comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162
- reviewing the enrolment form to determine its effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and 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 DEECD funding criteria
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, 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 or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

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

- providing enrolment application forms (refer to Attachment 2 – Sample Enrolment Application Form)
- collating enrolments
- maintaining a waiting list
- collecting, receipting and banking enrolment fees
- offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- providing a monthly report to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered
- storing completed enrolment application forms in a lockable file (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*) as soon as is practicable
- complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service
- providing a copy of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* with the enrolment application form.

The Nominated Supervisor, Certified 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
- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, 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 or educators under the Law (Regulation 157)
- 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
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- providing comfort and reassurance to 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 parents/guardians, where required
- complying with the service's *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 *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing enrolment forms prior to their child's commencement at the service
- ensuring that all 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.

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.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: 3 year old enrolment procedures
- Attachment 2: Sample letter of offer – 3yo
- Attachment 3: Sample enrolment form – 3yo

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Mentone Pre-School on 13/8/2017.

REVIEW DATE: 13/8/2020 or as dictated by changes in regulations.

ATTACHMENT 1 3 year old enrolment procedures

The following information aims to define the process involved in enrolling a child for the 3 year old kinder program and to ensure that all families joining Mentone Pre-School are aware of their obligations.

1. Operational Requirements

- The child must be 3 years old by the 30th April in the year of attendance. However, applications for children who turn 3 years old after the start of term 1 will not be accepted until on, or after, their third birthday (see section 3 below, for application process after the enrolment period).
- Ideally two parents per session will be rostered to aid in the smooth operation of the program.
- The 3 year old group will run twice weekly, one session comprising 3.5 hours and one session of 2.5 hours, totalling 6 hours per week (effective 2018)
- A teacher and one assistant will run the kindergarten program.
- Each year 20 offers will be made to families who have applied for a place at the kindergarten. An additional place will be held until term 4 in the event that a child in the current 3 year old group is to stay on and complete the 3 year old kinder year again. If this place is not required, then it will be made available to another child on the waiting list.
- Parents are encouraged to toilet train their children for day time before they start kindergarten. Due to the lack of changing facilities, and the importance of adequate staff supervision for the group, it is difficult for staff to be absent from the group to change children. We do acknowledge that all children have different needs and develop at different rates and this is not always possible. In these instances, we request your child wear pull ups to kinder. Staff will do their best to ensure that toilet training is maintained at the kindergarten. Parents are welcome to discuss any concerns that they may have about toilet training with our staff.

2. Application for a place during the Enrolment Period

Application for a place during the enrolment period can only be accepted for children who will turn 3 before the start of term on the year of attendance.

- Applications will be accepted during the enrolment period. The enrolment period will begin on the annual open day, held on the first Saturday of May each year, and will close on the Friday, 13 days later. Applications must be received by last mail on this day.
- The enrolment period will be advertised in the local Leader newspaper
- The Mentone Pre-School website (www.mentonepreschool.com.au) will also be updated with details of the open day and enrolment period dates
- Applications forms and copies of the enrolment policy will be available for collection from Mentone Pre School (6 Station St, Mentone) from the beginning of May.
- Enrolment forms can also be downloaded from www.mentonepreschool.com.au or by emailing 3yoenrolments@mentonepreschool.com.au
- Parents/guardians of children applying for a second year of kindergarten or currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application form for the following year.
- All applications must be accompanied by the following (and will only be accepted when all below are received):
 - A non-refundable enrolment application fee of \$10. (This fee is to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application and is not refundable)
 - A copy of the child's Birth Certificate/Extract
 - Proof of address

Completed enrolment application forms are to be forwarded to the person responsible for the enrolment process at the service (Attn: 3 year old enrolment officer, C/- Mentone Pre School, 6 Station St, Mentone 3194)
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
Applications will be entered on the waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria as listed below (refer to point 5).

3. Application for a place after the Enrolment Period

Applications received after the closing date will be considered, in date order, using the date in which complete applications¹ are received and after all other applicants who applied in the enrolment period² have been offered a place, in line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of Mentone Pre School.

4. Allocation of places

- Equal consideration will be given to all applications received during the enrolment period. If there are more applications than available places, then a weighted priority system (see below) will apply.
- Applicants who are successful will be notified in writing of a confirmed place
- Formal offers of a place in the 3 year old program will be sent out (via email or post) before the beginning of Term 3 of the preceding year offering a place in the group.
- A reply to this letter with a non-refundable kindergarten fee deposit of \$100 (payable via EFT or cheque) is required to confirm each child's place. This must be received within 3 weeks of the offer being made. The kindergarten fee deposit becomes the working bee levy (see *Fees Policy for further information*). Positions will be offered until all positions have been confirmed as filled (i.e. the \$100 non-refundable deposit has been paid).
- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place, or intend to withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify the Approved Provider, or the person responsible for managing the enrolment process at the service, in writing as soon as possible. If a child is withdrawn during a term any fees paid for that term will not be refunded.
- One position is held until term 4 of the preceding year for any child who may not be ready to transfer to the 4 year old program. This position will be offered at the discretion of the kindergarten teacher upon discussion with the family concerned. If this position is not filled by the end Term 4 in the preceding year, it will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.
- All remaining children will be placed on a waiting list in application received date order. Parents / Guardians will be notified of their position on the waiting list.
- Once accepted, payment of first term fees IN FULL by the due date as stated on fee invoice (which is the last day of term 4 of the year prior to your child starting). Please note invoices are emailed – please ensure you provide correct email address at time of enrolment. All remaining fees are due prior to the end of the previous term.
- Parents/Guardians with children joining the Pre-School part way through the term will be referred to the three year old Group Enrolment Officer for information and fees will be charged pro rata.
- Please note: Enrolment into four year old Kindergarten is administered through the Kingston Council central enrolment system. Children are eligible to apply for enrolment from the date of their third Birthday.
- Children enrolled in the three year old group DO NOT receive automatic enrolment in the four year old kinder program.
- An enrolment form and other relevant information will be provided after the place is accepted and the deposit has been paid.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any substantial debt 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*).

5. Eligibility and access criteria for three-year-old children

Children are eligible for attendance in the three-year-old program provided they have turned three prior to the 30th April in the year of their attendance.

Children will only be able to attend a second year of three-year-old kindergarten in exceptional circumstances (after consideration by the Approved Provider) or when all eligible children on the waiting list have been offered a place.

¹ Note that applications are not considered complete until they include copies of proof of age and application fee payment (or proof of payment), however, proof of address is not required for applications received after the enrolment period

² In line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of Mentone Pre School and as described in section 2 above

The following weighted priority system is used to determine eligibility applicable to the service:

WEIGHTED PRIORITY SYSTEM

A weighted priority system will apply if there are more applications than places. The following criteria will be applied:

Criteria 1

The completed application (as well as accompanying documentation and application fee) has been received within the enrolment period in the year prior to attendance.

Criteria 2

The applicant has a **sibling** who is currently attending Mentone Pre-School or who has attended the kinder in previous years.

Criteria 3

Applicants will be weighted based on proximity of their primary residence to the kindergarten. A zoned system will apply. Those living in zone 1 will be accepted first, followed by those in zone 2 and so on. The zone map is currently available at www.mentonepreschool.com.au

In the event that there are more applications than places all applicants in that criteria will be placed in a ballot.

For example:

After Criteria 1, we have 10 positions filled; those ten secure their place.

After Criteria 2, we have another 7; they secure their position, giving 17 total.

After the first zone we have another 2, these two secure their position, giving 19 total.

If we have 5 applicants in the next criteria (zone 2 on the map), those 5 applicants only will be placed into a ballot to secure the remaining 2 positions.

Maintaining the zoned system, remaining applicants will also be balloted to determine the order on the waiting list.

If your property is dissected by a boundary, it will be considered inside the boundary at the discretion of the committee.

Applications received outside the application period will be placed on the bottom of the waiting list based on the date the application is received.

In the case of multiple birth families, children will receive offers and/or be balloted together.

6. Deferred applications

- A decision to defer a child must be made by the end of Term Two. After consultation with the teacher, a child will be offered an automatic place at the kinder for the following year on the condition that the child is re-enrolled as per current policy.

7. Withdrawl/Non-attendance

- Any family wishing to withdraw their child from the program must formally do so in writing both to the teacher and the Pre-School Committee. Until such time as formal notification is received, parents remain liable for fees as per the fee policy.
- Parents are responsible for notifying the kindergarten of any planned extended absences. Any enrolled child who fails to attend without notification for a period of four weeks will be deemed to have vacated their position and without notification their place will be offered to the next on the waiting list.

ATTACHMENT 2
Sample Letter of Offer 3 YO

Dear _____,

We are pleased to offer your child, _____, a place in the 3 year old group at Mentone Pre-school for the year (insert year).

Due to a shortage of 3 year old Kindergarten places in this area, we ask that you don't accept our offer if you have accepted, or intend to accept, a place at an alternative Kindergarten. By doing this, more children will be able to get the benefit of a 3 year old Kindergarten programme.

Please complete the enclosed form and indicate if you wish to accept the offer.

FEES

- 2019 fees are \$440 per term – however fees for 2020 are **currently under review**.
- A **non-refundable** placement fee of \$100 is required with the acceptance form to secure the placement. This placement fee is deducted from Term 4 fees upon the attendance of one Working Bee during 2015.

***No government funding is received for 3 year-old kindergarten so the fees must cover all costs.*

SESSION TIMES

Terms 1-4 **Tuesdays 8.30am-12noon** **Thursdays 2pm-4.30pm**

To ensure that the placement is not offered to another child, the form and placement fee need to be returned to the following address by _____.

Att: 3 Year Old Enrolment Officer
Mentone Pre-School Association Inc
6 Station Street
Mentone 3194

An Orientation Day for 3 year olds will be held at the Pre-School from 9.00-10.00am on Saturday (insert date)

We would also ask that at least one adult family member attends our Annual General Meeting and Information Night to be held at 7:30pm on (insert day & date) at the Pre-School. This is a great opportunity to meet other parents and to have any queries answered.

Yours sincerely,

3 Year Old Enrolment Officer

ATTACHMENT 3

MENTONE PRESCHOOL 3 YO ENROLMENT FORM

Please complete this enrolment application form and:

- enclose a copy of the child's birth certificate or suitable evidence of the child's birth date
- Arrange direct deposit or cheque payment (payable to Mentone Pre School Association Inc) of the \$100.00 enrolment application fee, which is non -refundable and covers administrative costs.

Bank details: Account name: Mentone Pre School
BSB: 633 000 Acc No. 151 937 232

Please use your child's surname and the code 3YO20 in transfer details and provide confirmation of same

- forward the completed enrolment application form (section A questions 1-5 or section B) with relevant attachments to 3 year old Enrolment officer, 6 Station St, Mentone VIC 3194
- notify the service of any changes to your address or other relevant information by contacting enrolments@mentonepreschool.com.au
- Read and understand our policies available online at www.mentonepreschool.com.au or in the foyer of kindergarten

SECTION A: Enrolment Acceptance

Child's Surname: _____ **Given Name/s:** _____

Preferred Name: _____
(This name will be used on class roll)

Date of Birth: _____

Mother's Name: _____

Father's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Numbers: (H) _____ (W) _____ (Mob) _____

Email address: _____

Session timetable:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Dolphins  8.30am-12noon		Dolphins  2pm-4.30pm	

1. Food Allergies

Does your child have food allergies?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify: _____

It is very important for us to know as soon as possible if your child has food allergies as it will reflect the foods brought into the Pre-School

2. Children with additional needs

Does your child have additional needs?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify: _____

You are encouraged to discuss your child's needs with the educator when your child's place is confirmed.

Is your child registered with a specific support service/agency?

Yes

No

Name of support service/agency: _____

3. Signature

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

SECTION B: CANCEL / DEFER ENROLMENT

The place at Mentone Pre-school for (insert child's name) _____ is **NO** longer required.

Reason for cancellation of enrolment (please tick)

- Moving from area
- Child attending childcare
- Child attending school
- Unable to afford fees
- Day and/or session times unsuitable
- Unable to get into preferred pre-school
- Fees more affordable at other pre-school outside municipality
- Days and session at other pre-school outside municipality more suitable
- Offered place at pre-school outside of municipality

Signature of parent/guardian: _____ Date: _____