Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Policy first issued	29th July 2016
Current review date	18th September 2024
Personnel responsible	Childcare Operations

NQS 2 Children's Health and Safety

NQS

QA 2	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
QA 6	6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions

National Regulations

Regs	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
	78	Food and beverages
	79	Service providing food and beverages
	80	Weekly menu
	88	Infectious diseases
	90	Medical Conditions Policy
	92	Medication record
	93	Administration of medication
	96	Self-administration of medication
	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
	99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
	100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
	101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
	102	Authorisation for excursions
	157	Access for parents
	160	Child enrolment records to be kept by Approved Provider and family day care educator
	161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
	173	Prescribed information is to be displayed
	177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by Approved Provider
	181	Confidentiality of records kept by Approved Provider
	183	Storage of records and other documents

EYLF

LO1	Children feel safe, secure and supported

Aim

To ensure that each child's enrolment is completed as per our legal requirements. Additionally, we aim to ensure that each child and family receives an enrolment and orientation process that meet their needs, allowing the family and child to feel safe and secure in the level of care that we provide.

Relating Policies

Additional Needs Policy
Administration of Authorised Medication Policy
Child Protection Policy
Excursion and Centre Events Policy
Food, Nutrition, Beverage and Dietary Requirements Policy
Health and Hygiene Policy

HIV AIDS Policy
Immunisation and Disease Prevention Policy
Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy
Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Record Keeping and Retention Policy
Interactions with Children Policy
Sleep, Rest, Relaxation and Clothing Policy
Unenrolled Children Policy

Who is affected by this policy?

Children
Families
Educators

Implementation

Our Centre accepts enrolments of children aged between 0-6 years.

Enrolments will be accepted providing:

- The maximum daily attendance does not exceed the approved number of places of the Centre.
- Child-educator ratios are maintained across the Centre (in each room).
- A vacancy is available. (Please see Priority of Access Guidelines below).
- That the start date is no more than one month from the date of offer.
  (Unless bookings are for the beginning of the New Year).

Priority of Access Guidelines:

Children who are enrolled at the Centre or whose families are seeking a place at the Centre will be given Priority of Access in accordance with the guidelines that have been established by the Federal Government. Below are the Priority of Access levels, which the Centre must follow when filling vacancies.

1. A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
2. A child of a single parent / guardian who satisfies, or of parents / guardians who both satisfy the work / training / study test.
3. Any other child.

Within these three categories priority is also give to the following children:

- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Children in families which include a disabled person.
- Children in families on low income.
- Children in families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Children in socially isolated families.
- Children of single parents / guardian.

As we are providing a funded kindergarten program we must meet the Victorian Government's Priority of Access criteria and will prioritise the enrolment of children who:

- Are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- Are asylum seekers or refugees.
- Are eligible for the Kindergarten fee subsidy

- Have additional needs e.g. require additional assistance to participate, have an identified specific disability or developmental delay, require various services which are individually planned.

Upon enrolment families will be notified of their priority and advised that if the Centre has no vacancies and their child's position is a priority 3 under the Priority of Access Guidelines, it may be required that their child leave or reduce their days in order to make a place for a higher priority child.

Early or Late Entry to Kindergarten
Children can start school if they turn five by 30 April of the year they start school, and must be enrolled in school by the age of six, unless they have an exemption. This means children born between 1 January and 30 April can start school in the year they turn five, or in the following year, and therefore can start kindergarten in the year they turn four or the year they turn five. Each child is different. We encourage families who are unsure when their child should start kindergarten to speak with our early childhood teacher/staff.

Enrolment Procedure

When a family has indicated their interest in enrolling their child in our Centre, the following will occur:

- A tour of our Centre. During this tour, the educator conducting the tour will give the family information about the Centre including, but not limited to programming methods, meals, incursions, excursions, inclusion, fees, policies, procedures, our status as a Sun Smart service, regulations for our State and the licensing and assessment process, signing in and out procedure, the National Quality Framework, room routines, educator qualifications, introduction of educator in the room the child will be starting in and educator and parent communication. Families are also invited to ask any questions they may have.
- Families will be asked to complete the '*Expression of Interest form*' and return it to the Centre.
- Families are given a copy of the Parent Handbook to read and are invited to ask questions.
- Discussions are held between office staff and families regarding availability of days, a start date and tailoring an orientation process to suit the needs of the family and child. Families are informed of the *Priority Access Policy,* and have their position assessed as to how they place within this system. Any matters that are sensitive of nature, such as discussing a child's medical needs, Court Orders, parenting plans or parenting orders, will be discussed privately with the Nominated Supervisor at this time. We request that parents begin to fill out enrolment forms at that time, and discuss their child with us so we can accommodate their needs in the Centre from the first day they start with us. Should a child use English as a second language, or speak with another language at home, we request that families provide us with some key words in the languages the child speaks at this time so that educators can learn the words.
- Families will be invited to bring their child into the Centre at a time that suits them so the child and family can familiarise themselves with the environment.
- Before the child begins their first day with us, the Centre must have all required documentation for the child. The child will not be accepted into the Centre without this being completed.
- We will formally advise families in writing if their child is receiving a funded Kindergarten program.

On the child's first day:

- The child and their family are welcomed into their room for the first day.
- The Nominated Supervisor will ensure all details are finalised and complete and sign the '*Enrolment and Orientation Induction*'.

Fee Information

For fee information, please see our Payment of Fees Policy.

Information and Authorisations to be kept in the Enrolment Record
Our *Record Keeping and Retention Policy* outlines the information and authorisations that we will include in all child enrolment records.

Enrolment Package

Contents;
This enrolment pack includes:

Return to the Centre:

- Enrolment Confirmation Letter
- Enrolment Form / Direct Debit or Debit Success form
- **Terms and Conditions**
- Enrolment and Orientation Induction for families
  (Please complete the orientation date section and return to the Centre)

Information to be provided to families:

- Terms and Conditions of Enrolment
- DET Required Policies (Overview)
- CCMS – Child Care Information for Families
- Parent Handbook
- Curriculum
- Safe Sleeping brochure from Red Nose
- **No Jab No Play Fact Sheet**
- **ACEQUA Information Sheet**
- **Medical Conditions Policy**
- **Movement between levels 4 and 5 Procedure (Kids on Collins only)**
- Orientation Package
  - Emergency Evacuation Plan Diagram
  - Calendar Events Schedule
  - Menu
  - Current Centre Newsletter
  - My Story Example
  - Educator Team Photos (Rooms and Relievers)
- Centre Business Card / Contact Details

Before the child begins their first day with us, the Centre must have all required documentation for the child. The child will not be accepted into the Centre without this being completed.

- **Enrolment Communication Plan:**
  Details for the enrolment are communicated between relevant educators, kitchen staff and Certified Supervisors.

English as a second language
Should a child use English as a second language, or speak another language at home, we request that families provide us with some key words in the languages the child speaks at this time so that educators can learn the words.

Specific Information
Any sensitive matters, such as discussing a child's medical needs, Court Orders, parenting plans or parenting orders, will be discussed privately with the Nominated Supervisor at this time.

Other information about our Centre's enrolment includes:

- We will try to accommodate families so that children from the same family can attend our Centre. This will be carried out in line with our obligations under the Priority of Access Policy.
- There are strict immunisation requirements for children who are enrolled at the Centre. Please see our *Immunisation and Disease Prevention Policy*.
- In accordance with the National Law and Regulations, our educators will support each child to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of other children and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts. We will also work with each child's family to support any children with diagnosed behavioural and social difficulties. However, a child's enrolment at our Centre may be terminated if the Nominated Supervisor decides the child's behaviour threatens the safety, health or well-being of any other child at the Centre.

Orientation / Settling

We believe orientation is an important process where educators are able to get important information about the new child's needs and those of the family. This process helps to make the transition from home to care as smooth as possible with the aim to maintain continuity between home and the Centre, which helps the child adjust to the new setting.

The Centre Director will arrange for the new child to attend the Centre (together with parents) to visit and meet the Educators, and to become familiar with the Centre environment. The children may participate in the activities if they so desire. A number of young children prefer to just watch, rather than do. Positive interactions at this time (between parents, educators and the child) are important for the children to build positive attitudes to the Centre environment. Educators are aware that some children respond to new experiences faster than others and will adapt to the situation.

At this time, the daily routine and educational program will be discussed, as well as routines and any special requirements for the child that may need to be accommodated. Parents will also be encouraged to send any special comfort items (teddy etc.) to help the child in the initial settling in period. Educators will also discuss how best to tailor the child's settling in period – with some parents choosing to gradually build up to a full day so the child is reassured that the parents will return to collect them. Educators will encourage parents to say goodbye when dropping off and be reassured that if the child remains distressed over a period of time, that educators will contact them. Parents are able to stay as long as needed to reassure their child, but sometimes for the educator to settle the child it is better for the parents to come earlier on collection to spend time with their child rather than do this at drop off time.
Parents will also be invited to ring and check on their child at any time if there are any concerns. A main part of the orientation visit is for educators to develop partnerships with families. Please feel free to talk with educators about your family's culture, background, special talents and interests.
Parents will be kept informed about how their child is settling in on collection and are welcome to discuss any aspects with the Nominated Supervisor at a convenient time.

Orientation Session Dates and Times

The child's orientation dates and times should be nominated on the *Enrolment and Orientation Checklist* form. The orientation sessions must occur on the days which the child has been accepted unless otherwise approved by the Centre Director.
The Centre offers two time frames as options for children to orientate into our care, 9.30am – 10.30am or 2.30pm – 3.30pm. Orientation times for babies and younger infants are flexible to suit the individual routine of the child.
An adult must accompany all children attending an orientation session at the Centre. The parent is welcome to sit in the parent waiting area whilst the child / children engages in the program, but must not leave the Centre at any time during the orientation period.

Information and Authorisations to be kept in the Enrolment Record

Our *Record Keeping and Retention Policy* outlines the information and authorisations that we will include in all child enrolment records.

On the child's first day:

- The child and their family are welcomed into their room for the first day.
- The Nominated Supervisor and parents will ensure all details are finalised and complete and sign the Orientation Checklist.

Saying Goodbye

Saying goodbye to a child can be an emotional time for both the parents and the child. Families should discuss with the educators the best way to settle their child on arrival and develop a routine which suits them. The following may assist:

- Once parents / guardians say goodbye, it is time to leave. If the child becomes upset and the parent / guardian stays, they are only delaying the process of the child starting their day and their educational experience.
- Parents / guardians should always say 'goodbye'. If they just disappear, this may make their child feel unsure about whether they are coming back.
- When parents / guardians have left the Centre, they may telephone the Centre to check on their child. The Centre will contact parents / guardians if we feel the child is distressed and not benefitting from our program.
- The educators will do their best to reassure, redirect and comfort each child on arrival.
- In line with our Declaration of Intent, we see it to be our responsibility to meet each child's individual and developmental needs. The Centre has carefully planned rooms that allocate specific age groups to ensure that activities are appropriate and that children have the opportunity to mix with children of a similar age.

Transition from one room to another

The Centre Director and leading educator will work in collaboration to ensure that each child is placed in the correct room relevant to the child's age and stage of development. The Centre Director will assess bookings and spaces available and where possible move children into appropriate rooms throughout the year as required.
Change is harder for some children than others; however, by making this transition as smooth as possible for children and families, we are helping build the child's resilience. A room transition throughout the year will be supported by a communication plan between the Centre Director, leading educator, parents and child. Together the process of transition will be carefully planned and steps to ensure that it is a smooth transition will be put in place.

Transition to school

When a child first attends school, there is a great change for that child and for their family. We believe that the child's parents are the most important link in this transition.

- Recent research suggests that the better the transition between home and school, the better the education. The Centre will always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.
- If possible, information on local schools will be made available to parents.
- Toward the end of each year an excursion is arranged to visit the local school so as to familiarise the children with the school environment.
- Parents with children who are of eligible age to commence school in the following year will be given a School Readiness Transition Report in October.
- Information regarding school readiness is issued in October.
- Children will be encouraged to wear their school uniform and bring a school lunch for a week in December to help prepare for school. Parents will be provided with information regarding appropriate nutrition and lunches for school.

Implementation

Measures taken to ensure smooth transitions and settling are:

- Discussions held about the prospect of a room move between the Centre Director, parents and leading teacher.
- Talk to families about how their child handles change and the strategies they use to help their child cope with change.
- Present the child with a graduation certificate.
- Provide them with a picture of the educators in their new room.
- Introduce the child and parents to the educators of the new room.
- Plan to have the child and parents introduced to the educators of the new room.
- Invite the new teacher to visit the child in their room numerous times.
- Talk about change, starting from 2 weeks before the transition.
- Talk about their new teacher every day in general conversation.
- Celebrate the child's last day in the room with a special event or by singing a special song you made together.
- Support the child and parents through the transition by giving feedback.

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

- Providing enrolment application forms
- Collating enrolments
- Maintaining a waiting list
- Offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy.
- 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 Centre.
- Providing a copy of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy,* if requested with the enrolment application form.

Sources

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007
Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
National Quality Standard
A new Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
Early Years Learning Framework
Kindergarten Funding Guide: Department of Education and Training

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually. The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Last reviewed: 18.09.2024
Date for next review: September 2025