ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

QUALITY AREA 6



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for:

- enrolling a child at Thomastown West Kindergarten
- the orientation of new families and children into Thomastown West Kidnergarten
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education [DE] Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment.
- adhering to DE's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children



POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child are the paramount consideration and must guide all decisions, actions and practices of educators within the education and care service.

From 2021, where demand for funded kindergarten places exceeds availability, the service will apply a two-tier Priority of Access framework, ensuring children who will benefit most from early access and participation are prioritised first (Tier 1), followed by eligible continuity placements (Tier 2), in line with Department of Education requirements.

VALUES

Thomastown West Kindergarten is committed to:

- families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten *(refer to Definitions)* eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Thomastown West Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
- Ensuring that copies of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families, and available for inspection	**R**	Ö			
- Applying the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Thomastown West Kindergarten, as described in the Department of Education's [DE] *The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1)*	**R**	□	□		
- Working with local council, other local kindergarten services, key stakeholders and the local ECIB to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place	**Ö**	Ö			
- Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood, VIT registered teacher, and offering at least: 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or 600 hours per year 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or 600 hours per year]	**R**				
- Ensuring children eligible for more hours *(refer to Definitions)* are prioritised and supported to access: up to 25 hours per week up to 30 hours per week from 2028 Supporting enrolment across multiple groups to meet required hours	**R**	√			
- Ensuring eligible children are prioritised for enrolment and supported to access their full additonal hours through flexible enrolment arrangements across groups	**R**	√			
- Providing a free kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering between 5 to 15 hours a week or 200 to 600 a year	**R**				
- Providing communication to families explaining their access to one year of three-year-old and one year of four-year-old funded kindergarten program	**R**	Ö			
- Ensuring families sign DE's one funded kindergarten place form in Term 4 and confirm in writing in Term 1. Service providers must use the form provided on the department's template and must not adapt the content into service's own templates *(refer to Sources)*	**R**	Ö			
- Ensuring that all enrolment and attendance data is collection is implemented as per the Arrival requirements *(refer to Sources)*	**R**	√			

- Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	R				
- Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April *(refer to Sources)*	□	□	□		Ö
- Ensuring the following is displayed: the current Kinder Tick	□				
- Ensuring the following is displayed: information promoting ESK information promoting the KFS in services not participating in Free Kinder operating times and name(s) of the qualified teachers delivering the program.	R	Ö			
- Communicating to parents: providing clear information about Priority of Access and enrolment allocation processes waiting lists access and inclusion policies availability of ESK and KFS where applicable details of the annual kindergarten parent opinion survey to parents, carers or legal guardians that the service will prepare a Transition Statement for all children to help them transition to school.	R	Ö			
- Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families): Early Start Kindergarten *(refer to Definitions)* Early Start Kindergarten extension grants *(refer to Definitions)* Access to Early Learning *(refer to Definitions)* Additional year of funded kindergarten *(refer to Definitions)* Supporting access to full funded hours	R	□	□		
- Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption *(refer to Attachment 2)*	□	□	□		
- Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	□			
- Receiving written confirmation from families confirming they are attending one funded kindergarten program per child, per year. Ensuring enrolment is not confirmed until funding eligibility is verified	R	Ö		Ö	
- Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access a kindergarten program Actively engaging families experiencing vulnerability Working with MCH, Child Protection and support services Holding places for high priority children where required	R	□	□		
- Working with the families to obtain an alternate form of identification if a birth certificate or other official documentation is not available Where a birth certificate cannot be produced, other acceptable evidence of a child's full name and date of birth includes: statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Medicare card letter from the doctor or midwife who attended the birth doctor's note attesting to a child's age passport	R	Ö			

citizenship documents or Australia visa documents or Immicard.					
- Complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*	R	R	□	□	□
- Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity, utilisation of services and to meet School Readiness Funding requirements	R	R			
- Ensuring families have access to: Parent information handbook Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety Fees Policy Privacy Statement Code of Conduct Policy Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Dealing With Medical Conditions Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness	R	□	□		
- Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy *(refer to Attachment 2 and 3)*	R				
- Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	□	□	□		
- Ensuring access and inclusion is applied in all enrolment decisions *(refer to Attachment 1 and 2)*	R	□			
- Where applicable, providing families with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes *(refer to Attachment 2)*	R	□			
- Complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	□	□
- Providing opportunities for interested families to attend the open days to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program	Ö	□	□		
- Seeking information from parents about any specific health care need, allergy or medical condition, including whether a medical practitioner has been consulted in relation to a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition	R	Ö	Ö	Ö	
- Ensuring that medical management plan has been provided and that the risk minimisation plan has been developed and both documents are kept in the child's enrolment records	R	Ö	Ö	Ö	
- Providing any required authorisations, such as for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service and, if required, transportation by an ambulance service				Ö	
- Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (*refer to Sources*) for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week support period *(refer to Definitions)*	R	□	□		
- Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements *(refer to Definitions)* have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the support period *(refer to Definitions)* have confirmed places in the program. Ensuring enrolment is not confirmed until all eligibility requirements are met	R	□	□		
- Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* and who are not eligible for	R	□	□		

	the support period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services *(refer to Attachment 4)*					
-	Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a support period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (**Note:** the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).	R	□	□		
-	Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing all associated enrolment documents and AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* of their child's immunisation status				□	
-	Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks support period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* to the service				□	
-	Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* from all parents/guardians after enrolment, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval *(Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)*	R	□	□		
-	Ensuring all authorised nominees *(refer to Definitions)* have been completed on the enrolment record for each child *(refer to Definitions)* *(Regulations 160 and 161)* as well as authorisations from parents relating to medical treatment, regular outings, health information and transportation	R	Ö		Ö	
-	Ensuring that the enrolment record for each child *(refer to Definitions)* both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of *Regulations 160, 161, 162* and DE funding requirements (Arrival) and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	R	□	□		
-	Ensuring that enrolment record for each child *(refer to Definitions)* is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances	R	□	□	□	□
-	Ensuring that enrolment records for each child *(refer to Definitions)* are kept confidential *(Regulations 181, 182)* 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 (1a) (2d))*	R	□	□		
-	Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	□	□		
-	Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	□	□	□	
-	Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for *(Regulation 157)*, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the *National Law: Section 167*	R	R	□	□	□
-	Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment *(refer to Attachment 5)*	□	□	□		

- Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (*refer to Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)	☐	☐	☐		
- Encouraging parents/guardians to: stay with their child as long as required during the orientation period, keeping in mind the best interest of the child make contact with educators at the service, when required	☐	☐	☐	☐	
- Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	☐	☐	☐	☐	
- Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	☐	☐	☐	☐	
- Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	
- Developing strategies to assist new families to: feel welcomed into the service and help them to become familiar with service policies and procedures share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating	☐	☐	☐	☐	
- Reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*	R	R	R	☐	☐
- Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				☐	
- Notifying Thomastown West Kindergarten in writing [if possible] if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				☐	

PROCEDURES

The information contained within the procedure is to be used as a guide and modified according to the services context.

GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- *Offer families the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service*
- *Provide reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation period*
- *Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child*
- *Reassure the family:*
  - *they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time*
  - *they may call and speak to their child's early childhood teacher or educator(s) at an agreed time*
  - *the early childhood teacher/educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in*
  - *they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.*

- Further considerations may include but are not limited to:
  - send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (refer to the Information and Communication Technology Policy). Note: For children in out-of-home care, the educator may need to seek permission from Child Protection before taking and distributing photos of the child
  - asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.
  - [As required] Arrange telephone, on-site or video interpreters to assist with orientation conversations with parents/carers who speak a language other than English or use Auslan. See Early Childhood Language Services for more information.
- Refer to *Attachment 2* for the general kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Refer to *Attachment 5* for cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance procedures.

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))*.

All eligible Victorian children can access two years of funded kindergarten before starting school. The Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reforms expand access to early childhood education, including the introduction of Free Kindergarten and the staged rollout of Pre-Prep.

From 2026, children from priority cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, and children who have had contact with Child Protection, can access up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep per week. This will increase to up to 30 hours per week from 2028.

Where demand exceeds available places, services must allocate places in accordance with the Victorian Department of Education Priority of Access criteria. Priority of Access must be applied before any local enrolment criteria, and high priority children must be allocated places regardless of registration date. Local criteria may only be applied after all high priority children have been placed.

Enrolment and allocation processes must support equitable access, particularly for children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage. Services are expected to actively engage and support these families to access kindergarten programs.

The Kindergarten Funding Guide sets out requirements for eligibility, enrolment, attendance and funding. Services must ensure enrolment practices comply with these requirements, including confirming that each child is accessing only one funded kindergarten program per year.

Accurate and timely data collection is required to support funding, planning and compliance. Services must ensure enrolment and attendance data is recorded in Department systems, including Arrival.

The Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), co-designed by DE provides access to families to register for and secure a place for their children in kindergarten. It is a collaborative model that brings together councils, service providers, MCH staff, support services and other stakeholders to support children and their families. Currently more than half of all local councils across Victoria operate a form of central enrolment or central registration scheme. These schemes provide a single point of entry for families, simplifying the kindergarten enrolment process and improving equity of access.

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)*.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

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

- *Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au*
- *Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au*

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. approved provider, nominated supervisor, notifiable complaints, serious incidents, duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks cataloque.

Access to Early Learning (AEL): *is an early intervention program for a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment. It aims to provide intensive support to eligible families with multiple and complex needs, assisting them to access universal kindergarten programs.*

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: *The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable).*

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.*

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage *(in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torre Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)*

Children with additional needs: *Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy) (refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition).*

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES): *CRES provides a single point for families to apply for multiple kindergarten services within a local government area, helping them secure a place that meets their needs and enabling funded kindergartens to work collaboratively with other services to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families.*

Central Registration System (CRS): *Provides an equitable and transparent application and allocation process, enabling families to access local kindergarten services within a local government area.*

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): *Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free kindergarten each week led by a qualified early childhood registered with Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). ESK is available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:*

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- the family have had contact with child protection.

These children can also access free kindergarten the year-before-school through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

Eligible child: as defined by the Victorian DE Kindergarten Funding Guide:

- a child who is at least four years old on 30 April in the year of attendance; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service
- a child who is at least three years old on 30 April in the year of attendance and is enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for a minimum of 5 hours per week
- any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualifies for the 16-weeks support period

Enrolment: An enrolment occurs when the provider has an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide education and care to a child.

Enrolment deposit: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. This should not act as a barrier to enrolling for any families. Services must ensure that families understand that the enrolment deposits will only be refunded if the child commences in the service *(Refer to Fees - Free Kinder policy)*

Enrolment record: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations *(Regulations 160, 161, 162)* and DE funding requirements (Arrival) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Free Kinder: A Victorian Government Best Start, Best Life initiative providing Free Kinder programs for four-year-old and three-year-old children in funded services, that have opted into the initiative.

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:

- providing a free 15-hour program to 4-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- providing a free 5 to 15-hour program to 3-year old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for 3 and 4-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service.

Kindergarten registration 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, if applicable. *(Refer to Free Kindergarten Fees policy)*

Kindergarten registration form: The process of families providing initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the CRES/CRS Provider *(refer to Definition)* or by the kindergarten service. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten *(refer to Attachment 3)*

Support period: allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. Services complete the support period eligibility form with families during enrolment and keep a copy with each child's enrolment record. The 16-week support period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the support period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement *(refer to Definitions)* and to encourage families to access immunisation services. Note: services are not required to exclude the child from the program at the end of the support period if an up-to-date history statement is not provided, except in the instance of an outbreak of an infectious disease.

Local Government Area (LGA): a geographic area governed by a local council or shire.

Orientation: Process to support the child's transition to the service, whereby families spend time at the service with the child a few times before leaving the child on their own. The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family.

Pre- Prep priority cohort: *From 2026 across the state, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, and children who have had contact with Child Protection services can access to up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep a week, increasing to up to 30 hours a week from 2028. Children from this priority cohort can be enrolled in more than 1 group at a single service (including 4-year-old, mixed age, and 3-year-old groups). In addition, any child who was supported by the Access to Early Learning program as a 3-year-old is eligible for these same hours of Pre-Prep as a 4-year-old from 2026.*

Priority of access: *in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate places using the criteria outlined in the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1 and Sources).*

Registration: *The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by the service provider/EYM/CRES Provider. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.*

School Readiness Funding: *funding provided by DE for programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.*

Additional year of funded kindergarten: *Eligibility for a second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten is determined by the child's early childhood teacher, if the child is observed as having developmental delays in at least 2 VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcomes and there is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school. From 2026, across Victoria, children who meet the eligibility requirements due to their learning or developmental needs can access an additional year of either, three-year-Old Kindergarten; or Pre-Prep (or Four-Year-Old Kindergarten for children not eligible for Pre-Prep), but not both.*

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au
- Department of Health, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- Department of Education, Arrival: Information for sessional services: https://www.vic.gov.au/arrival-information-sessional-kindergarten#more-information
- Department of Education: Stating age calculator
- Department of Education: Early Childhood Language Services
- Department of Education: Supporting CALD families to engage in kindergarten
- Department of Education: Information about kindergarten in your language
- Department of Education, Resources for funded kindergartens: www.vic.gov.au/resources-funded-kindergartens
- Free Kinder funding requirements for long day care providers: www.vic.gov.au
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Victorian Department of Education): www.education.vic.gov.au
- Going to kindergarten if your child is 6 years old: www.vic.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Compliments and Complaints
- Dealing with Infectious Disease
- Dealing With Medical Conditions
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Fees
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness

- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk *(Regulation 172)*.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program
- Attachment 2: General kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Attachment 3: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation
- Attachment 4: Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Thomastown West Kindergarten on 26TH OCTOBER 2026

REVIEW DATE: AUGUST 2027

ATTACHMENT 1. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

FOR A FUNDED KINDERGARTEN THREE OR FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Priority of Access (PoA) helps service providers determine which children are offered a funded kindergarten place first when there are more applications than places. This applies to all funded kindergarten programs in sessional and long day care services including places allocated through a Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES).

Services must use the PoA criteria when there are more eligible children than available kindergarten places. This means services must:

offer places based on the PoA criteria
work with other local kindergarten services and the local ECIB to help all eligible children access a kindergarten place.
PoA must be applied before any locally agreed criteria. Long day care services must apply the PoA criteria to all funded kindergarten places.

PoA applies to all children, whether they live inside or outside the local government area (LGA) where a service is located.

If your service is in a Pre-Prep rollout LGA, once you apply the PoA criteria you must then prioritise children who live in the LGA. Children from outside the LGA whose nearest service is within it, must be prioritised before other children from outside the LGA.

These criteria apply to all 2027 enrolments.

All information relating to PoA criteria should be respectfully collected from families upon enrolment, recorded in each child's confidential enrolment record and entered into Arrival, where applicable.

DE's Priority of Access criteria

High priority children	Criteria and processes for verifying need(s)
Tier 1	
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	The child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning, and/or The family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to or having had contact with Child Protection or in Out-of-Home Care and/or The parent or carer or child is experiencing family violence and/or has had contact with The Orange Door and/or The child or family has previously accessed Flexible Support Packages and/or The child or family is referred by one of the following: Child Protection Child and family services Maternal and Child Health nurse (MCH) Out of Home Care provider
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' and record this information in Arrival
Asylum seeker and refugee children	The child, a parent, a carer or a legal guardian holds, has previously held, or is applying for, a refugee or asylum seeker visa (see list of visas in the Kindergarten Funding Guide), and/or The child, a parent, a carer or a legal guardian holds a current or expired ImmiCard, and/or Children, parents, carers or legal guardians who previously held a refugee or asylum seeker visa and now hold Australian Citizenship or permanent residency.
Children and/or families holding concession cards	A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veterans' Affairs Card.
Children from families with multiple births	Multiple birth children (i.e. triplets or more).
Children and/or families with additional needs who require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program	Child and family with additional needs who meet one of the following. Child:

	is eligible under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or undergoing a continuing assessment of a disability under the NDIS (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) is eligible for Early Childhood Intervention Service Continuity of Support (ECIS COS) is diagnosed with a disability or developmental delay or are undergoing diagnosis (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) presents with developmental concerns that presents barriers to accessing a kindergarten program (supported by a letter or other evidence from a MCH nurse or similar practitioner such as an allied health practitioner) has complex medical needs that presents barriers to accessing a kindergarten program (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) holds a Disability Health Care Card previously accessed the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program, Commonwealth Inclusion Support Program or another similar program the child is referred by one of the following: the National Disability Insurance Scheme Early Childhood Intervention Service Continuity of Support (ECIS COS) Preschool Field Officer program, or MCH nurse or similar professional such as an allied health specialist, where developmental concerns have been identified. Parent or carer: is eligible under the NDIS or undergoing a continuing assessment of a disability under the NDIS (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) has complex medical needs that present barriers to accessing a kindergarten program (supported by a letter from a medical practitioner or specialist) holds a Disability Health Care Card.
Children accessing an additional year of Three- and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten or Pre-Prep	Children assessed with delays in two or more areas and are identified as eligible for an additional year of funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten or Pre-Prep.
Tier 2	
Children currently attending the service	Children attending the service in the Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program and seeking to access Four-Year-Old Kindergarten or Pre-Prep at the same service for continuity of learning. Priority should be given to these children to remain at the same service for their Four-Year-Old Kindergarten or Pre-Prep year.

Services in Pre-Prep rollout LGAs
The department's PoA criteria apply to all enrolments for 2027, including Pre-Prep. Children that meet the Pre-Prep priority cohort criteria also meet the Tier 1 PoA criteria. These children must be given priority over children who do not meet the Tier 1 criteria. For services located in Pre-Prep rollout LGAs: apply Tier 1 and Tier 2 PoA criteria first then give priority to children who live in the LGA, and to those who live outside the LGA but whose nearest service is located within it, ahead of other children from outside the LGA.
Locally agreed criteria
Service providers and CRES can apply locally agreed criteria after applying PoA and, if relevant, Pre-Prep criteria for Pre-Prep roll-out. Examples include: how close a family lives to the service whether they have a connection to the service.

These criteria must be documented and shared with families.

Kindergarten places must be allocated in line with anti-discrimination and human rights laws.

ATTACHMENT 2. GENERAL KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

The information contained within this attachment is to be used as a guide and modified accordingly for kindergarten services that are part of a CRES

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION PROCESS

Stage	CRES Role	Family Role	Kindergarten Role
December to February			
1. Proactive engagement and awareness	Provides kindergarten with promotional and registration materials for families and carers, including a promotional pack, registration form copies or online link, and an information pack for CRES partners.	Searches for information about ECEC and CRES. Receives information from a service provider, MCH staff or support service they have contact with. Receives information that kindergarten registration will open shortly.	Receives CRES information for the year from Whittlesea council. Communicates with Whittlesea Council to revise service agreement and provide any necessary information for the following enrolment cycle (such as capacity and session times). Communicates information about ECEC and CRES to families Notifies CRES Provider of vulnerable families currently accessing their service with prekindergarten aged children and an action plan to ensure they reach kindergarten.
March to May			
2. Registration	Provides the registration form, or link to the form, to families and carers. Supports families and carers to complete the registration form if necessary. Captures registration data in a standard format. Ensure Priority of Access indicators are captured during registration.	Completes a registration form. Receives assistance from support services or MCH to complete the form if necessary.	Encourages awareness and registration for the [CRES] system. Supports families and carers in completing the registration form if needed. Supports families experiencing vulnerability to complete registration and ensures registration processes do not create barriers to access. Ensures families with children in Three-Year-Old Kindergarten register for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. Refers families needing additional support to relevant services.
June to July			

3. Allocation	Allocates children to kindergarten places, ensuring appropriate session capacity and options. Follows registered preferences and standard guidelines, prioritising based on: • DE's Priority of Access criteria *(refer to Attachment 1)* Reserves spots for late registration of priority groups, based on historical data. High priority children must be allocated places regardless of registration date. Places must be reserved where required for late high-priority enrolments. Services must support enrolment of Pre-Prep eligible children across multiple groups to meet required hours.	Receives confirmation that their registration has been received and a timeline for allocation and enrolment processes.	Identifies children who may be eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten, and flag this with the Whittlesea council Assists any families or carers who did not register before the closing date to register and informs them of the process for second round allocation.
August to September			
4. Confirmation and communication	Informs family, nominated contacts, and support services of child's placement or waitlist status. Provides service providers with a list of allocated children and contact details for support services, with consent. Adds any families or carers who have declined their offered position to the list of next round allocations.	Receives confirmation of placement or waitlist status in the **First-Round Allocations**. Accepts or declines the offered kindergarten place. If declined, receives timeline for second round allocations and can update preferences. If changing mind after acceptance, calls the CRES Provider for re-allocation or waitlist placement. **Subsequent Round Allocations** - receives confirmation of their child's placement in kindergarten and accepts the offer or is assisted to find an alternative place if none are available. Receives information about next steps to enrol their child with the kindergarten directly. Completes enrolment forms with their kindergarten.	Receives list of allocated children for their kindergarten sessions. Informs the Whittlesea Council f a child they are aware of (through siblings or community, or a child requiring a second year of funded kindergarten) should be registered but is not and requests that a space is held in the next allocation round. Supports these families and carers to register. Confirm enrolment only after eligibility and documentation requirements are met Verify the child is not enrolled in another funded kindergarten program. Enrols children through a consistent internal process, including interviews, orientation days and other preparation activities.
October to January			

5. CRES planning, maintenance and development	Plans for success every year by evaluating and improving the CRES.	Begins to engage with the kindergarten to start the enrolment process.	Complete one- funded letter and confirmation of enrolment in a 3YO/4YO funded kindergarten program Gives information to [CRES Provider] about service capacity and session times. Continue to support families to enrol and begin kindergarten. Provides feedback to the Whittlesea Council about your experience so they can improve it for the coming year.

* If the kindergarten believes a family will need extra support completing a registration form or are likely to miss the first round registration date, refer them to the [CRES Provider] with the attached referral form. [CRES Provider] will follow up with this family or carer to offer support in getting their children into kindergarten.

Kindergarten registration dates

If families miss the registration close deadline, they can still register although they will be placed into a pool for second-round (or even later rounds) of allocation and are less likely to get their top preference. After second round offers have been confirmed, Whittlesea Council will continue to allocate children to kindergarten places where they are available. More places may become available as children move kindergartens or withdraw, or when kindergartens add capacity.

Registration

The quickest way to complete a registration form is online at [insert link to registration form page]

Families can also complete a paper form and post it to [CRES Provider]. Registration forms are provided by [CRES Provider] to the kindergarten service and distributed to families. A separate registration form must be completed for each child.

Families cannot register directly with the kindergarten that are part of the CRES, they must go through the centralised registration process. Kindergarten's can direct families to register through [CRES Provider] and assist them to complete the registration.

To fill out the registration form, families will need to provide information about themselves and their child. At this stage they may ask to attach any supporting documentation. They will need a credit card (to pay the registration fee). The fee can also be paid in person at [council office]. This fee is waived for all families and carers eligible for Priority of Access allocation.

The registration form may ask families for:

Basic information about the child including name, date of birth, language spoken at home, previous kindergarten attendance and immunisation status.
Details of any additional support the child might require due to a disability including intellectual, sensory or physical impairment.
Contact details for the family or carer and any additional adults that should be kept informed throughout the process (e.g. another family member, a case worker or other support service staff member the family or carer trusts).
Whether the child is identified as fulfilling any of the following criteria:

- Is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Is from a multiple birth (triplet or greater)
- have had contact with Child Protection
- Is in Out-Of-Home Care
- Holds, or has a family member who holds, a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card or White Card, or a Refugee or Asylum Seeker Visa.

It is strongly recommended that you **do not collect** documents proving the child's birth date, address, visa status, concession card status or similar at the registration stage. A statement at the end of the registration form that certifies the information provided is true can suffice as a legal declaration.

This will make accessing kindergarten as easy as possible for families, particularly those who are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage. Gathering documentation can be a barrier for many families and carers attempting or completing the form and establishing contact with the CRES. Once registered, the CRES Provider, the kindergarten service, MCH or support service staff can assist the family or carer to gather documentation for the enrolment stage.

If your CRES does require documentation at this stage and this cannot be changed, include the information below.

Proof of identity: Where a birth certificate cannot be produced, other acceptable evidence of a child's full name and date of birth includes:

- Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)
- Medicare card
- letter from the doctor or midwife who attended the birth
- doctor's note attesting to a child's age
- passport
- citizenship documents or Australia visa documents or Immicard.

Proof of residence: a utility bill, rental agreement or rates notice with family name and address (this must be the main residence of the child).
Subsidy card and immigration visas (where applicable).
Documents from Family Support Services or a MCH nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability, or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).
Other proof required to verify the child meets local criteria.
Credit card (to pay the registration fee). The fee can also be paid in person at their nearest council office. This fee is waived for all families and carers eligible for ESK/KFS/priority allocation.

Enrolment

Once a kindergarten place has been accepted, the enrolment process can begin.

To enrol a child, families will need to provide copies of (if not already done so):

Proof of identity: child's birth certificate, birth notice or passport
Proof of residence: a utilities bill, rental agreement or rates notice with your family name and address (this must be the main residence of your child).
Concession cards and immigration visas (where applicable).
Documents from Family Support Services or a Maternal and Child Health nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).
Immunisation History Statement (unless experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, at which point they can take advantage of a 16-week 'support period'. More information is available at https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit
Documents detailing any medical conditions or requirements the child has.
* Where a birth certificate cannot be produced, other acceptable evidence of a child's full name and date of birth includes:

statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)
Medicare card
letter from the doctor or midwife who attended the birth
doctor's note attesting to a child's age
passport
citizenship documents or Australia visa documents or Immicard.
Kindergartens may also require additional documentation. The kindergarten should ensure that information regarding any additional documentation is easily accessible for families, carers and support services.

Enrolment Records

Enrolment records *(refer to Definitions)* form part of the enrolment procedure and are completed by families after they have been allocated a place, and before commencing attendance.

Cancellations

Families to notify [Service Name] in writing of their intention to leave the service.

Additional year of funded Kindergarten

Families of children who have been determined as eligible for an additional year must complete and submit a kindergarten registration form for an additional year, signed and dated by the early childhood teacher.

The Declaration of Eligibility Form for an additional year of kindergarten must be submitted to the Department of Education

From 2026, across Victoria, children who meet the eligibility requirements due to their learning or developmental needs can access an additional year of either, three-year-old Kindergarten; or Pre-Prep (or Four-Year-Old Kindergarten for children not eligible for Pre-Prep), but not both.

Early entry to Four-Year-Old kindergarten

Early entry to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten may be appropriate for some gifted children where families are seeking an early entry to school for their child i.e. the child will not be 5 years of age before 30 April in the year of school commencement.

Early entry to school is approved only when exceptional circumstances apply and is subject to an application process and rigorous eligibility criteria. It is important to note that most children who enrol early in Four-Year-Old Kindergarten are not approved for early entry into school because they did not meet the eligibility criteria.

The decision regarding early entry should be discussed with parents/guardians and consider the following:

- Children are not guaranteed early school entry as a result of being enrolled to attend kindergarten early.
- To start school early, the child must possess suitable academic ability as evidenced by a formal cognitive assessment, and be considered at risk of long-term educational disadvantage if they don't early entry to school.

School Exemption

Children who will turn six during the kindergarten year must apply for an exemption from school from the relevant their local ECIB that their child is seeking an exemption from school by submitting an Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program form to the appropriate departmental regional office by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning 6.

The kindergarten service must sight the approved exemption form from relevant education authority and note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record. Data on the number of children attending Kindergarten who are six years plus, and confirmation that the exemption was sighted for each child, must be provided as part of funding data collection process.

Children who will turn 6 while attending their second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten can be exempted from school if a Declaration of eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten has been completed by the child's kindergarten teacher.

Adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide, 2023

ATTACHMENT 3. LETTER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WITHOUT ACCEPTABLE IMMUNISATION DOCUMENTATION

Thomastown West Kindergarten

[Address]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Thomastown West Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at [Service Name] in the [insert 3 year old or 4 year old program] in [insert year].

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided AIR Immunisation History Statement.

AIR Immunisation History Statement includes evidence of immunisations and is used to assess whether you child is fully vaccinated for their age.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, and your child is not eligible for the 16 week support period, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

your doctor
[insert details of local government immunisation service]
National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
Australian Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register
Better Health Channel website: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play

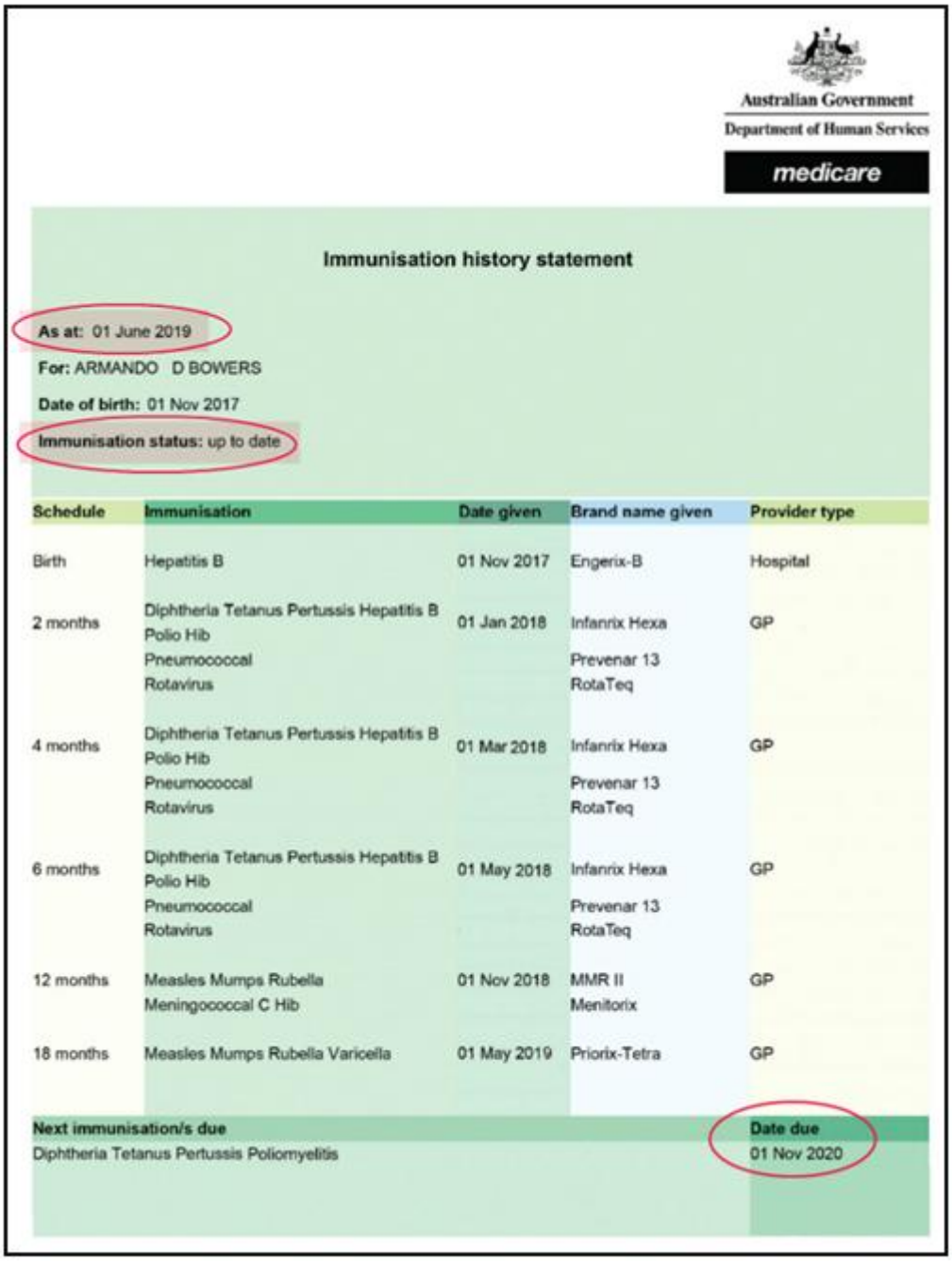
Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by an AIR Immunisation History Statement. The new application would be considered in line with Thomastown West Kindergarten's *Enrolment and Orientation policy*.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

Thomastown West Kindergarten



Australian Government
Department of Human Services
medicare

Immunisation history statement

As at: 01 June 2019

For: ARMANDO D BOWERS

Date of birth: 01 Nov 2017

Immunisation status: up to date

Schedule	Immunisation	Date given	Brand name given	Provider type
Birth	Hepatitis B	01 Nov 2017	Engerix-B	Hospital
2 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B Polio Hib	01 Jan 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Pneumococcal		Prevenar 13	
	Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
4 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B Polio Hib	01 Mar 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Pneumococcal		Prevenar 13	
	Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
6 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B Polio Hib	01 May 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Pneumococcal		Prevenar 13	
	Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
12 months	Measles Mumps Rubella	01 Nov 2018	MMR II	GP
	Meningococcal C Hib		Menitorix	
18 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella	01 May 2019	Priorix-Tetra	GP

Next immunisation/s due	Date due
Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Poliomyelitis	01 Nov 2020

ATTACHMENT 4. CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT AND NON-ATTENDANCE

FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

- **Cancellation of Enrolment**

Families MUST notify Thomastown West Kindergarten and/or an Enrolment Officer in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment. Fees will continue to be generated for that place until the Thomastown West Kindergarten is notified.

Note: This process does not apply to vulnerable children *(refer to Definitions).* Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; early childhood teacher or educator will need to inform their Case Officer.

- **Non-attendance**

Term One

Families that have accepted a placement and have not completed an enrolment form and not attended the service within the first 3 weeks of Term One will be contacted and informed their placement has been cancelled.

Families Traveling Overseas

Families are required to notify Thomastown West Kindergarten prior to extended periods of travel, and ensure any applicable fees are paid if they wish to return to the service.

Non-contactable Families

After two/three weeks of a child not attending the service, early childhood teacher or educator to call the family. If there is no response, educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.

After second week of the child not attending and the family has made no attempts to contact the service, early childhood teacher or educator to contact the family via phone/text and/or email. If there is no response, Educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.

After third week of non-attendance, early childhood teacher or educator to inform nominated supervisor and cross check families contact details.

Nominated supervisor or approved provider to email family, ensuring a response date is documented in the email.

If the family have made no attempt to communicate with the service before the response date, post a final attempt letter, ensuring a response date is documented in the letter.

If the family has not responded to the final attempt letter before the response date, their placement will be cancelled.