

Kindergarten Central Application Scheme Policy and Procedures

Category	Council Staff Kindergarten Management and Staff Residents Department of Education & Training (DET)
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1. POLICY

The purpose of this Kindergarten Central Application Scheme (KCAS) Policy is to ensure that eligible children in the municipality seeking a high quality kindergarten program are allocated a place in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.

2. CONTEXT / RATIONALE

Kindergarten programs are play based curriculums aiming to engage children in quality learning experiences, promoting communication, learning and thinking. Research shows that quality early childhood education results in positive long-term educational and social outcomes for all children, particularly for those experiencing educational and social disadvantage.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the KCAS seek to:

Identify the eligibility criteria for kindergarten applications, the process for prioritisation and reservation of applications including:

- second year of funded kindergarten (4 year old only), and
- priority of access

Ensure the KCAS policy and procedures are in alignment with State Government policy directions, legislation, funding criteria and accountability (including fee subsidies).

Increase access and sustained participation of children and families experiencing vulnerability in early year's education services.

Detail the timelines and process for submitting a kindergarten application and subsequent steps.

3.2 The objectives are both informed and achieved by the following principles:

Kindergarten programs provide parents and families opportunities to be part of a community focused on children's wellbeing.

Participation in a kindergarten program assists early childhood educators in identifying children who may require additional support for their development and offers links to targeted support services, ensuring children receive assistance and/or early intervention as soon as possible.

There is priority of access for children experiencing vulnerability into kindergarten programs. This is consistent with Council's vision *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all* and Department of Education and Training guidelines.

Council supports the State Government policy direction which identifies "a responsibility shared by government and other services to work together to

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prevent child abuse and neglect, reduce the impact when it does occur, and improve the outcomes for children and young people in the statutory child protection system”ⁱ.

In the City of Whittlesea, community organisations, schools, non-profit organisations and private operators provide a choice of high quality, flexible kindergarten programs with a variety of models and settings. Council does not provide kindergarten programs directly, it does however support kindergarten providers via the provision of the Kindergarten Central Application Scheme, advice, infrastructure and maintenance programs.

3.3 The objectives are further informed by:

The Victorian State Government’s recognition that high quality early childhood education and care programs enhance children’s development in the provision of 15 hours of subsidised kindergarten per week for four year old children in the year prior to primary school, and a further commitment to an additional year of subsidised kindergarten for three year old kindergarten that will be rolled out in stages between 2022–2029 in Whittlesea.

In addition, the State Government provides funded Early Start Kindergarten for 15 hours per week to eligible three year old children. Research shows that ‘two years of kindergarten also has a bigger impact on children’s long term development and health compared with one year of kindergarten, which can lead to stronger academic outcomes at school’ⁱⁱ.

4. RELATED LEGISLATION AND COUNCIL POLICY

4.1 National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (NQF)

4.1.1 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

4.1.2 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

4.1.3 National Quality Standard (NQS)

4.1.4 The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) – Belonging, Being and Becoming

4.2 Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)

4.3 Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026

4.4 DET Kindergarten Funding Guide

4.5 Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) – Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Guide and Resources for Victorian Local Government, November 2020

4.6 Supporting Children and Families in the Early Years – A Compact between DET, DHHS and Local Government (represented by MAV) 2017-2027

4.7 Whittlesea 2040, A Place For All

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- 4.8 City of Whittlesea: Thriving Children, Young People and Families Strategy 2020
- 4.9 Early Years Policy, March 2017
- 4.10 Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- 4.11 Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter signatory
- 4.12 Victoria's Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility Strategy 2013 – 2022
- 4.13 City of Whittlesea: Kindergarten Lease (as varied from time to time)
- 4.14 City of Whittlesea: Disability Action Plan 2017-2021
- 4.15 City of Whittlesea: Privacy and Data Protection Policy 2020
- 4.16 Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- 4.17 Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- 4.18 Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- 4.19 Victorian Child Safe Standards 2016
- 4.20 City of Whittlesea: Child Safe Policy 2019
- 4.21 Disability and Discrimination Act 1992

5. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Application	An online electronic or hard copy application form submitted to Council to register their interest in their preferred kindergarten
Children and families experiencing vulnerability	<p>For the purpose of this policy: 'Vulnerability refers to a child and family where there are risks for a child's wellbeing and development. In families experiencing vulnerability, there are often a range of risk factors that adversely affect health and wellbeing outcomes. Vulnerable families are likely to have multiple characteristics of varied complex needs which may include parental mental health issues, family violence, alcohol or other drug addiction, homelessness, and/or poverty.'ⁱⁱ</p> <p>Vulnerability can be of varying durations, long or short term and or situational. Consideration needs to be given to the context of the situation of the child/family.</p>

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DET	Victorian Department of Education and Training
Early childhood teacher	A qualified educator who holds an approved early childhood teaching qualification and who plans and delivers the kindergarten program to meet the needs of each eligible child, as per the KFG.
Enrolment	The confirmation by the kindergarten management body to the parent for their child/ren's attendance at the kindergarten.
KEO	Council's Kindergarten Enrolment Officer. The KEO receives, processes and distributes all applications for placement via the Council's Kindergarten Central Application Scheme. The KEO is responsible for maintaining the database and preparing specific reports for kindergartens and Council as required. This role also includes liaison with kindergarten management bodies and staff, families and DET officers.
KIM	Kindergarten Information Management System used by funded service providers to record annual service information for DET
Kindergarten	Kindergarten (also known as Preschool) is the service providing a universal early childhood program funded by the Victorian State Government for children in the years prior to primary school.
KFG	Kindergarten Funding Guide is developed by DET and provides guidance on operations including: enrolment policies, access & inclusion and eligibility criteria for funding
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria - a membership association and the legislated peak body for local government in Victoria.
Management Body	Group of members, such as the Committee of Management, or organisation, responsible for the governance of the early childhood service

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NQF	National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care
Placement	An offer to a child/family of a place at a kindergarten.
Registration	The data entry of a complete kindergarten application as received for preference of a kindergarten
Service Provider	The legal entity and/or the person(s) with management or control that operates the education and care service

6. SUMMARY: KINDERGARTEN APPLICATION AND ENROLMENT PROCESS

1. Family submits completed kindergarten application
2. Council receives application and registers on Central Application system
3. Council allocates offers of kindergarten placements
4. Families respond to offers
5. Council forwards a detailed list of confirmed placements to individual kindergartens
6. Kindergartens issue confirmation of enrolment to families

7. PURPOSE

Council's Kindergarten Central Application Scheme (KCAS) manages applications for enrolments for the four year old kindergarten program and for children commencing three year old kindergarten in 2022. This policy is underpinned by objectives set out in the following State and Local Government policies, frameworks and guidelines:

- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (KFG) as issued by the DET provides guidance to funded kindergarten services on enrolment policies, access and inclusion that support children experiencing disadvantage, address issues of eligibility and meet legislative requirements.
- 'Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Resource Guide for Victorian Local Government' issued by the MAV.

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- The National Quality Framework (NQF) which contains a range of documents that provide the broader context in which the central registration process is guided.
- The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 which provides that services must have policies on Enrolment and Orientation (*Division 2 – Policies and Procedures: Regulation 168*).
- Thriving Children, Young People and Families Strategy 2020
- Early Years Policy 2017

8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCEDURES

8.1 Eligibility Criteria

As per the Victorian KFG, one year of funded kindergarten is available to children who turn four years of age on or before 30 April of the year of kindergarten attendance, for a minimum of 15 hours per week,

Funded three year old kindergarten in Victoria will be available in stages. From 2022, eligible three year old children will have access to 5 hours of a funded program each week. The hours will then progressively increase to 15 hours a week for 40 weeks of the year by 2029. Eligible children will need to turn three on or before 30 April of the year of three year old kindergarten attendance in 2022.

Funded programs must be delivered by an early childhood teacher who holds an approved (Government gazetted) early childhood education qualification for 40 weeks per year.

The Victorian DET funded Early Start Kindergarten program is available to eligible children who turn three years of age on or before 30 April of the year of kindergarten attendance for 15 hours of funded kindergarten. For information on the current eligibility criteria please refer to the DET website: education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/early-start-kindergarten.aspx

City of Whittlesea residents, as well as non-residents who are working, studying or have child care arrangements in the municipality are eligible to apply.

Parents/Guardians of children born in the months of January to April, have the choice of which year to enrol their child either the first year the child is eligible to attend kindergarten or the following year.

Children enrolled in three year old kindergarten are not automatically enrolled in the four year old kindergarten program. A Kindergarten Application Form must be submitted to Council.

Under the State Government's 'No Jab, No Play' legislation the applicant will need to provide documentation/evidence regarding immunisation directly to the

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kindergarten to confirm the child's enrolment. Council does not require this evidence for the kindergarten application.

8.2 Application Timelines

Applications open on 1 February each year for placements two years prior to 4 year old kindergarten attendance, and 1 year prior to three old kindergarten attendance (commencing 2022).

Applications must be lodged at Council by 5.00pm 30 June (or previous business day for hard copies) the year prior to attendance, for consideration in the first round of offers. Applications received after this date will be processed after first round offers are complete.

Advertisements promoting applications appear each year via Social Media, Council's website, at Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Centres, local early childhood services, Family Day Care, Playgroups, and public events.

8.3 How to apply

To register an application, a Three and/or Four Year Old Kindergarten Application must be completed online, by email with attached completed form, or a hard copy submitted via mail or in person.

Apply online via Parent Web Portal on Council's website:
whittlesea.vic.gov.au/kinder

Hard copy application forms are available via:

- a. Council's website: **whittlesea.vic.gov.au**
- b. Kindergartens & Maternal and Child Health Centres
- c. Council Office: 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang
- d. Council Office:
Shop MM9, 1st Floor,
Westfield Plenty Valley
415 McDonalds Road, Mill Park
- e. Phone 9217 2170

Application forms and payment can be submitted:

- f. Online: **whittlesea.vic.gov.au/kinder**
- g. Via email to:
keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
- h. In person at Council Offices:
BH: 8.30am-5pm (Mon – Fri)
City of Whittlesea Civic Centre
25 Ferres Boulevard
SOUTH MORANG 3752

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Or

Shop MM9, 1st Floor
Westfield Plenty Valley
415 McDonalds Road
MILL PARK VIC

- i. Via mail to:
- Kindergarten Enrolment Officer
City of Whittlesea
Locked Bag 1
BUNDOORA MDC 3083

The following supporting documentation is required to be submitted with each application form:

- a. Proof of child's age (such as: an extract of a birth certificate, extract of a passport or a Maternal and Child Health Book).
- b. For residents, proof of address (such as rates, gas or electricity bills or driver's licence).
- c. Non-residents must provide proof of primary child care and/or work or study arrangements within the municipality. In the absence of these documents a signed Statutory Declaration may be used.
- d. Proof of Health Care Card, Concession Card, eligible immigration/humanitarian Visa or referral from agency.

In the case of multiple births (such as twins or triplets), an application form needs to be completed for each child, indicating that she/he is part of a multiple birth on the application form.

8.4 Receipt and Acknowledgement of Application

Applicants may select up to three kindergartens of their choice on the application form in order of preference. Applicants may select from the nominated centres within the municipality.

Council cannot guarantee applicants will receive a place at the kindergarten of preference due to the limited number of DET approved kindergarten places and State Government funding conditions.

Applications for the 'current' year of kindergarten are processed and acknowledged within 2 weeks of the receipt date. Acknowledgments are in the form of a Letter of Offer for a kindergarten placement. In the event that none of the nominated preferences are available, a Waiting List letter is sent outlining other options.

Applications for subsequent years are processed within 4-8 weeks of receipt date. An Acknowledgment of Application letter is sent via email, or post where necessary, acknowledging receipt of the application and confirming the three preferences nominated.

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In the event an application form is incomplete (such as if supporting documentation, an application fee or current concession card details are not provided), an Insufficient Documentation letter is sent outlining the reasons why the application form is incomplete and will not be processed until all outstanding documentation is submitted.

The date of receipt is allocated when the application is complete and will then be processed accordingly.

8.5 Application Fee

For those children and families who are eligible for a fee subsidy as per the KFG, the kindergarten application fee will be waived by Council to reduce any barrier to a kindergarten application.

The application fee is waived for children or families who have one of the following:

- a Commonwealth Health Care Card
- a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
- a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card
- Refugee Visa (subclass 200)
- In-country Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 201)
- Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202)
- Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (subclass 786)
- Protection visa (subclass 866)
- Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203)
- Woman at risk visa (subclass 204)
- Bridging visas A-E

Please note: if a child or family has a humanitarian or refugee visa listed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection which is not included in the above list, the child may be eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Or

- the child is identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- the child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more)

All remaining applications attract a non-refundable application fee as nominated on the kindergarten application form.

The application fee is payable via three options: in person - cash, credit card or EFTPOS, or by post - cheque or money order, or online via credit card when the application form is submitted.

Receipts will be issued to applicants paying in person.

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The application fee is reviewed on an annual basis and is subject to increases based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Fee increases come into effect as of 1 February each year. The current application fee will preside over the fee nominated on an 'previous' year's application form.

8.6 Applications received after 30 June

Applications received after 30 June of the year prior to attendance, are accepted and processed within 2-6 weeks of receipt. During that time, due consideration will be given to children identified as at risk of vulnerability as per the Priority of Access guidelines – see 8.8

Applications received after 30 June will be allocated in accordance with the Allocation guidelines to available kindergarten placements after first round offers have been completed.

If none of the preferences nominated are available, applicants will be advised of vacancies at other centres. If applicants fail to take up an available vacancy, they will be placed on the waiting list of the centre of their first choice, according to their receipt date.

8.7 Amendments to application details

Changes to application details must be made in writing by submitting online via the parent web portal on whittlesea.vic.gov.au/kinder, emailing the new details to keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or by completing the Change of Information Form and lodging as per 8.3.

Changes to application details may include preference changes, change of address or contact details. Changes must be lodged with Council by 30 June the year prior to attendance in order to be considered in first round offers.

The original application date is retained regardless of any changes made to the application.

8.8 Allocations - Priority of Access

Council is guided by the DET guidelines with respect to prioritising access to kindergarten places in accordance with following priority groups, as at January 2021:

Priority 1	Second Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who have been approved for a second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten
	High priority Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care Children identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
	Children referred by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child

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		<p>FIRST/Integrated family services/Services Connect Case Worker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal and Child Health Nurse • Out-of-Home Care provider • Children attending 3 year old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning
	Asylum Seeker and Refugee Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate visa that identifies the child and/or parents as refugee or asylum seeker
Priority 2	Children with additional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child requires additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program • Requires a combination of services which are individually planned • Have an identified specific disability or developmental delay
	Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Commonwealth Health Care Card • a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card • a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card • Refugee Visa (subclass 200) • In-country Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 201) • Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202) • Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (subclass 786) • Protection visa (subclass 866) • Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203) • Woman at Risk visa (subclass 204) • Bridging visas A-E, or • Multiple birth children (triplets or more)
Priority 3	Prior connection to a Whittlesea Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are currently enrolled in a 3 year old program registering for 4 year old kindergarten the following year
Priority 4	Residents of the City of Whittlesea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of the City of Whittlesea residents, with consideration to date of application
Priority 5	Non-residents with a link to the City of Whittlesea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those that work, study or have child care arrangements in the City of Whittlesea with consideration to date of application
Priority 6	Non-Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten applications from non-residents, will only be allocated a position if vacancies remain after resident applications have been offered places. Consideration to date of application will be applied.

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8.9 Reserved Places

Places are reserved for vulnerable or disadvantaged children who present outside normal enrolment periods and for children who have been approved for a second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten by DET. Children requiring a second year of funded 4 year old kindergarten must be assessed as meeting the criteria as set by DET. The process is completed by the early childhood educator prior to the end of the child's 4 year old kindergarten year. See 8.16 for more information.

In June of each year, prior to allocation of placements, a letter is sent to all kindergartens seeking the number of reserved places required for the following year. The number is approved in consultation between the Management Body and Council.

8.10 Allocations

Allocations of placements are made with the consideration to Priority of Access as per 8.8, and then the date of receipt of a complete application.

First round offers will be processed in accordance with vacancies and in collaboration with individual kindergartens.

Each kindergarten must operate within the DET approved service capacity and at a viable occupancy rate in accordance with State Government funding obligations, which requires a minimum number of enrolments for each kindergarten program.

Each year Council negotiates with kindergartens the required number of kindergarten placements to be made available at each of the centres based on:

- the number of applications received;
- DET approved service capacity;
- policy direction;
- demographic analysis;
- population projections.

Where application numbers exceed the number of places available at the first preference kindergarten, applicants will be allocated either their second or third preference based on availability of places.

If there are no places available at any of the stated preferences, the applicant will be notified of alternative placements or offered the choice to remain on the waiting list.

Schedules of the Offer Process are provided to kindergartens at the beginning of the offer process in June each year.

8.11 Allocation of places for children identified as experiencing vulnerability

As required, and responsive throughout the year, access to a place for a child identified as experiencing vulnerability, shall be prioritised and allocated by Council in collaboration with individual kindergartens.

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8.12 Placement Offer

Placement offers will be made in writing to applicants commencing late July each year for attendance in the following year. A written response will be required from applicants within a nominated time frame on the form enclosed.

Applicants not offered a placement in the first round are considered for their second preference during second round offers and their third preference during third round offers.

Applicants remaining on the waiting list after all offer rounds will be advised of available vacancies or asked to nominate as to whether they wish to remain on the waiting list.

8.13 Responses to Offers

Applicants must make one of the following choices:

- Accept the kindergarten placement that is on offer;
- Refuse the offer of the kindergarten placement and request to be placed on the waiting list for their preferred kindergarten;
- Defer their application to the following kindergarten year; or
- Cancel their application.

How to respond

Applicants can respond:

- a. Via Parent Web Portal: **whittlesea.vic.gov.au/kinder**
- b. Via Email to: keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
- c. In person at Council Offices:
 BH: 8.30am-5pm (Mon – Fri)
 City of Whittlesea Civic Centre
 25 Ferres Boulevard
 SOUTH MORANG 3752
 Or
 Shop MM9, 1st Floor
 Westfield Plenty Valley
 415 McDonalds Road
 MILL PARK VIC
- d. Via mail to:
 Kindergarten Enrolment Officer
 City of Whittlesea
 Locked Bag 1
 BUNDOORA MDC 3083

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Applicants will also have the opportunity on the offer form, to notify Council of any updated contact details such as new address, phone number or additional needs.

Where no response is received by Council within the specified time frame as stated in the Offer Letter, the application will be cancelled. When applicants contact Council later than the required response date, their application will be reinstated to the waiting list according to their original receipt date.

When an applicant:

- a. Requests their child to be placed on a waiting list of their preferred kindergarten, they must forego any other enrolment offered. The child is placed on the waiting list of their preferred centre according to receipt date. Enrolment is not guaranteed at the preferred centre.
- b. Accepts an offer for placement, the child cannot be placed simultaneously on a waiting list at an alternative kindergarten. Only children who have not secured a placement at a kindergarten can be placed on a waiting list.
- c. Defers an application, the applicant will forego the placement offered and the application will be forwarded to the following kindergarten year with the original receipt date if the child is still eligible to attend kindergarten.

All applicants on waiting lists are placed in order with consideration of priority of access and then original application date. An applicant's position on the waiting list may change based on the movements of other families.

Upon completion of the rounds of offers, Council will forward a detailed list of confirmed placements to each kindergarten management body including applicants' names, contact details and addresses and children's names, date of birth, gender, contact details and relevant information regarding the needs of the individual child as identified on the application form.

It is the management body's responsibility to obtain a copy of immunisation records, concession or visa details from the applicant before the child commences, to manage all information in a confidential manner and to contact each individual family with details of the kindergarten's orientation program, fees, etc.

8.14 Deferral of application

Deferral of a kindergarten application prior to commencement of the kindergarten year must be made in writing via Online Parent Web Portal at **whittlesea.vic.gov.au/kinder**, completing the Deferral Form and lodging as per 8.3, or simply by emailing the new details to: keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Deferral requests will be processed within one week of receipt date and an Acknowledgment of Deferral letter will be sent acknowledging receipt of the deferral request, confirming the new application year and the three preferences nominated.

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As per the KFG, deferrals are not permissible once the kindergarten year has commenced and children are attending the program.

8.15 Cancellation of application or place

Cancellation of a kindergarten place must be submitted:

- a. Via Parent Web Portal: www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/kinder
- b. In writing on the:
 - Kindergarten Placement Offer form or
 - Kindergarten Change of Information form (which can be downloaded from the Council website) and returned to Council
- c. By email to: keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
- d. By phone by the applicant to Council's KEO to advise of cancellation on 9217 2170
- e. By Kindergarten management body representatives or staff members on behalf of the family whose child's placement is being cancelled.

At the time of the cancellation of the place, Council will seek information regarding the reason behind the cancellation to inform planning and central application service delivery.

8.16 Second Year of Funded 4 Year Old Kindergarten

Prior to the end of the four year old kindergarten year children assessed by the early childhood educator as having additional development needs may access a second year of 4 year old funded kindergarten. Strict eligibility criteria apply to the second year of funded kindergarten.

Criteria includes:

- Having been identified as having developmental needs in two or more areas; and
- Be likely to have better outcomes with a second year of kindergarten rather than going to school

If the child is turning six years of age in their second year of kindergarten an exemption must be sought from DET as per the KFG. See 8.20

Council's Kindergarten Enrolment Officer must be notified by the kindergartens of the number of second year places required, as detailed in 8.9.

Enrolments will be tentatively reserved until such time the 'second year application' outcome is advised.

8.17 Early Age Entry to kindergarten

As per the KFG *'Early entry to kindergarten may be appropriate for some gifted children where families are seeking an early entry to school for their child.'*

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However, it is important to note that most children who enrol early in kindergarten are not accepted for early entry into school...'

Information regarding early age entry can be found on the DET website: *The Kindergarten Guide 2016.pdf* (education.vic.gov.au) and for early entry to school information: *Enrolment: School age requirements and age exemptions* | education.vic.gov.au

The kindergarten service provider will keep a copy of the written response from the Department or non-government school with the child's kindergarten enrolment records and upload a copy on the Kindergarten Information Management System (KIM).

8.18 Children with Additional Needs

Kindergartens in Whittlesea are inclusive, and all children of all abilities are welcome.

'Victorian state funded kindergarten programs are eligible for preschool field officer (PSFO) services to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in their kindergarten program.

Preschool field officers use a locally responsive approach that includes consultative support, resourcing and practical advice to assist kindergarten teachers.

PSFOs also assist kindergartens to link families into supports and services available for children with developmental concerns and broader child and family supports'. For more information on the PSFO program: **PSFO (unitingvictas.org.au)**. In Whittlesea these services are provided by Lentara UnitingCare.

Applicants should notify Council of their child's additional needs on the application form which will also describe the Priority of Access guidelines.

Applicants should consider the value of sharing information with the kindergarten regarding the needs of the child to support the service in their planning and preparation of the kindergarten program.

8.19 Change of preference to kindergarten

Once a kindergarten placement has been accepted by an applicant, a change of kindergarten is permitted and based on the availability of a place.

Requests must be made in writing via either completing the Change of Information Form (available as per 8.2) or by emailing the new preference/s to: keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au.

8.20 Children who will turn six years of age during the 4 year old funded kindergarten year

As per the KFG, children who turn six years of age during the kindergarten year must be exempted from attending school.

Parents must apply for a school exemption before the child starts kindergarten by completing the appropriate State Government documentation and submit prior to

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1 November in the year prior to the child turning six. Information regarding this process can be found on the DET website:

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/schoolage_kinder.aspx

If an exemption has not been granted by DET, Council will need to be advised.

9. APPEALS PROCESS

Should an applicant have a dispute with the procedures, or with the implementation, they are requested to put this in writing to:

Manager Family, Children & Young People
City of Whittlesea
Locked Bag 1
BUNDOORA MDC 3083

A formal response will be sent within a week of receipt of the letter.

Council is committed to being accessible and responsive to determining the outcome of complaints quickly and creating a culture that encourages feedback. For further information regarding Council's processes: **Complaints handling & resolution - Whittlesea Council**

10. PRIVACY

Information regarding a child's application can only be discussed with the person who completed the application (applicant). Council will not disclose information to anyone other than the applicant unless approved by the applicant.

If there is a change in the child's custody/access arrangements and the original applicant is no longer responsible to act as legal guardian, documentation must be provided by the actual legal guardian as proof. When this documentation is received the application will be amended to reflect the change.

Council is committed to the responsible collection and handling of personal information. Council's Privacy and Data Protection Policy (2020) is available on request and can be viewed on Council's website. Council collects and uses personal information to provide you with the services you require. If at any time you wish to access your personal information or have a complaint in relation to privacy, please contact Council on 9217 2170.

ⁱ Fox and Geddes 2016

ⁱⁱ Kindergarten Funding Guide

ⁱⁱⁱ Lentara) **About Us | Uniting Early Learning (unitingvictas.org.au)**

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