

# Kindergarten Central Registration Policy and Procedures - 2020

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# Kindergarten Central Registration Policy

## 1. Policy alignment

Cardinia Shire Council operates a Kindergarten Central Registration Process on behalf of community kindergartens within the Shire. Council provides the Kindergarten Central Registration to:

- Support kindergarten Early Years Management Services and Committees of Management.
- Apply an equitable and fair process for families seeking kindergarten places.
- Inform Council's Early Year's Services and infrastructure planning.
- Simplifies the process of kindergarten registration for Cardinia Shire families.

## 2. Purpose

This policy provides the framework for a kindergarten central registration process incorporating Victorian Government allocation and funding criteria that:

- Offers kindergarten places fairly and equitably.
- Is developed based on local community needs, promoting local connection and continuity of learning.
- Prioritises families who are Cardinia Shire residents/ratepayer; and
- Supports children who meet "High Priority" criteria as per the Victorian State Government's *Kindergarten Funding Guide*.

## 3. Policy Statement

Kindergarten is for all children. It is usual for children to attend a kindergarten program in the year before they start primary school and all children are entitled to equal access to enrolment in accordance with anti-discrimination and human rights laws. This policy complies with Department of Education and Training's priority of access criteria relating to the enrolment of children in State Government funded kindergartens. Cardinia Shire Council will keep all information received on kindergarten registration forms confidential. The registration fee will not be a barrier for enrolling into kindergarten.

## 4. 'High priority' children and families

Cardinia Shire Council supports the Department of Education and Training (DET) policy direction that prioritises the inclusion of children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home-Care; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; asylum seeker and refugee children; children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy; and children with additional needs as defined by DET's *Kindergarten Funding Guide*. Families that demonstrate they have a child in one of these categories will be allocated to a kindergarten program as a high priority.

### 4.1 Children with additional needs

Cardinia Shire Council has a commitment to ensuring that kindergarten services are accessible to all children. We recognise that every child has individual needs, abilities, and interests. Children with additional needs are defined as children who:

- require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program
- require a combination of services which are individually planned
- have an identified specific disability or developmental delay.

- Children with a diagnosis or undergoing assessment may be eligible to receive funding through the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Scheme. These funding applications are completed by the child's Early Childhood Teacher.

A Preschool Field Officer provides services as part of the government's commitment to support the inclusion of children with additional needs.

## 5. Registration and allocation criteria

Children are eligible to attend a funded 4-year-old kindergarten program if they have turned the age of four by 30th April in the year of attendance. To attend a 3-year-old kindergarten program, children must be three years of age on or before attending. Families can register children from birth.

Processing of registrations will be on hold from 30th June each year until first round offers have been allocated. Any new registrations received after June 30 will be included in subsequent allocations. Children will be placed as per the Allocation of Preferences (section 5.1).

The following processes apply when selecting preferences:

- Preferences for 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten should be listed in order of preference on the registration portal. A minimum of 3 preferences is strongly encouraged.
- If a parent/guardian chooses to nominate one preference only and the nominated kindergarten has no vacancies, the child's name will remain on the kindergarten wait list (even if there are vacancies at other kindergartens).

In accordance with the DET *Kindergarten Funding Guide*, the following children are eligible for one year of funded kindergarten:

- Children who are four years of age or older by 30 April in the year they are to attend Kindergarten (proof of birth is required on application into the Central Registration process).
- Children turning six years of age in their year of kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school entry age requirements by their regional office of DET. Approval does not guarantee access to primary school the following year
- Children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted a written request to their regional DET office and have been approved for their child to attend kindergarten the following year (*Early Entry to kindergarten*).

Note:

For children born between 1 January and 30 April, parents have a choice about whether they commence school in the year they turn five, or in the following year, and therefore whether they commence kindergarten in the year they turn four or the year they turn five (*page 43, Department of Education and Training, Kindergarten Funding Guide*).

### 5.1 Allocation of preferences order of priority

Children who have been previously offered a place in the year prior and chosen to defer their kindergarten offer until the following year (only applicable to residents and ratepayers of Cardinia Shire Council as of July 1, 2017). Children identified by educators as requiring a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten. Children identified as high priority children as outlined in the current Department of Education and Training Kindergarten Funding Guide.

Remaining registrations are prioritised in accordance with the \*Priority of Access. A computer-generated selection process is applied to all registrations. The computer will randomly allocate offers to applicants who hold equal points.

## 5.2 Weighting points

The following priority weightings will be applied to each registration received for the relevant kindergarten(s):

- 50 points - Resident/ratepayer of Cardinia Shire
- 25 points - Proximity to kindergarten
- 10 points - A demonstrated link to your preferred kindergarten; siblings previously attended, currently attending pre-kindergarten at that centre; personal involvement e.g. committee member, family history with kindergarten

The following priority weightings will also apply for eligible families when selecting group sessions in the year prior to attending:

- 5 points - Work/study commitments
- 2 points - Access to transport
- 2 points - Other childcare arrangements

*\*Note: points applied to each weighting criteria have been determined through community consultation and analysis of the results of the Community Survey 2013 and in line with current Department of Education and Training Kindergarten Funding Guide.*

# Glossary of terms

<b>Additional needs</b>	Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program</li><li>▪ require a combination of services which are individually planned</li><li>▪ have an identified/diagnosed specific disability or developmental delay as defined by the DET Kindergarten Funding Guide</li></ul>
<b>Allocation</b>	Kindergarten and group assigned in offer process.
<b>Central Registration System (CRS)</b>	Database used by Council to process kindergarten registrations.
<b>Defer</b>	Deferring your offer until the following year.
<b>DET</b>	Department of Education and Training.
<b>Enrolment</b>	The paperwork process kindergartens send to families to complete after the allocation of kindergarten place.
<b>Funded kindergarten</b>	4-year-old kindergarten program that meets the DET requirements for minimum set hours of kindergarten each week.
<b>High priority</b>	as defined by the current DET version of the Kindergarten Funding Guide.
<b>Offer</b>	Formal notice from Council offering a kindergarten place in a specific kindergarten and group.
<b>Portal</b>	Council's online central registration system.
<b>Preference(s)</b>	Nominated kindergartens in order of preference to attend.
<b>3-year-old pre- kindergarten</b>	Non-funded kindergarten program for children aged three years of age.
<b>Proof of residency</b>	Rates notice, rental agreements and utility bills addressed within the shire with parent/guardian name(s).
<b>Proof of Birth</b>	Birth Certificate or certified extract; Newborn Child Declaration; Government documents that verify the child's name and date of birth, such as passport or Medicare immunisation statement (found via MyGov online) Resident/Ratepayer Living in the Shire or ratepayer of Cardinia Shire Council.
<b>Universal Services</b>	Maternal Child Health, Child and Family Services, Community and Family Services, Community Wellbeing
<b>Weighting</b>	Allocation of points applied to each registration based on the circumstances and preferences as outlined in <a href="#">Weighting Points</a> section
<b>Withdraw</b>	Cancelling an offer as a place is no longer required.

# Kindergarten Central Registration Procedure

## 1 Your information and privacy

Privacy is important to your family. Cardinia Shire Council is therefore committed to protecting the privacy of your child's/family's information. The privacy of your information is also protected by law. We treat your information in the strictest confidence and store it securely. A copy of Council's Privacy Policy is available on our website at: [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au)

### 1.1 What information is collected?

Information collected will include contact details, country of birth, proof of birth and priority of access information as defined in our policy [High priority children and families](#). This information is stored securely in an electronic database; Central Registration System (CRS).

### 1.2 Why do we collect your information and who sees it?

To enable eligible families to access additional support services, Council shares information internally with the defined Universal Services upon receiving a Kindergarten Central Registration Form. All other data may be used to support future community planning and infrastructure – shared planning data contains no identifiable content of any individual. Information is also shared with kindergarten providers to facilitate placement and enrolment to the kindergarten service.

### 1.3 Can you access your information?

Yes, you have the right to request your information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and ask for it to be corrected if necessary. You can email [mail.cardinia.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail.cardinia.vic.gov.au) for further information on how to go about this. You are also able to log on to your child's registration via the portal and change/update any of the personal information via your parent/guardian/carer login. Please contact the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer for assistance to access your child's details online.

## 2 Contact information and interpreter services

- The Cardinia Shire Council telephone number is 1300 787 624
- The National Relay Services (NRS) is an Australia-wide telephone access service available to everyone at no additional charge. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment and/or you use TTY or a computer with a modem, you can contact Council in the wider telephone network through the NRS
- TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1300 787 624
- Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 787 624
- Internet relay users connect to NRS (see [www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au) for details) and then ask for 1300 787 624
- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) - If you need an interpreter, phone the Translator Interpretation Service on 131 450



## 3 Registration Process

Families wishing to register for kindergarten can do so via:

- Cardinia Shire Council's online web portal via computer and mobile devices (quickest and preferred method)
- Contacting Cardinia Shire Council if you are unable to apply electronically

Registrations are processed up to close of business June 30 and resume after the first round of allocation has been processed and sent.

### 3.1 Registration Requirements

- Completion of the Cardinia Shire Kindergarten Central Registration form via the online portal or manual form for families unable to access the form electronically.
- Documentary evidence:
  - proof of child's age such as a copy of the child's birth certificate, immunisation history statement or passport
  - proof of Cardinia residency may be required upon request, such as rates notice/tenancy agreement and current utility accounts
- A once only non-refundable administration fee is payable per child per year for
  - 4-year-old funded kindergarten registration; and
  - 3-year-old kindergarten registration.

*These fees do not contribute to the annual kindergarten fees.*

- Completed registrations must be lodged online via Cardinia Shire Council's website as the preferred option, or in person at Cardinia Shire Council Customer Service.

## 4 Children with additional needs

Children identified with additional needs (see *glossary of terms*) during the central registration process are allocated as per DET's Priority of Access guidelines.

## 5 Confirmation of registration

All registrations received by Cardinia Shire Council will be sent a confirmation communication via email within ten days of receipt of a complete registration.

## 6 Changes to registration or personal details

Any changes of details concerning a kindergarten registration (for example: address, telephone number, kindergarten preference) can be updated via the online portal. Families have direct access to their registration(s) via the portal with their registered email address and password. New passwords can be created upon request on the log in screen. Changes of kindergarten preferences and information can be made all year round, except during July and August due to the bulk annual allocation.

## 7 Cancellations

Cancellations can be lodged at any time via the online portal, or by written communication/correspondence from the family or kindergarten management to the Central Registration Officer. Registration fees are not refunded.

## 8 Kindergarten Transfers

To transfer to another kindergarten within Cardinia Shire Council, families are required to:

- Advise their current kindergarten service
- Contact the Central Registration Officer to be placed on a waiting list for allocation as per the Priority of Access

## 9 Reserved places

If a family chooses to defer their child's current 4-year old kindergarten offer until the following year, a place at the same service will be offered as priority in the next year's allocation. This process must be in line with the school age attendance policy (refer DET) and is only available to residents of Cardinia Shire Council.

*Non-residents and 3-year-old families will be notified; their application year will be changed, and they will be included in the following year's allocation process as per the Priority of Access.*

Places will only be reserved for children in the following categories:

- Residents' who defer places from the previous year
- Children granted an additional year of 4-year-old kindergarten funding as per DET Kindergarten Funding Criteria.

## 10 Kindergarten readiness

Families are encouraged to carefully choose the year their child will access their funded 4-year-old kindergarten year. Once a child accesses funding by commencing, they are expected to complete that full year of kindergarten and may not be able to access an additional funded year.

Advice can be sought from professionals such as Maternal Child Health nurse, GPs, current educators, or specialist services working with your child.

## 11 Additional kindergarten year

Some children may benefit from an additional year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten where delays in two or more developmental areas are evident. Funding for an additional year of 4-year-old kindergarten requires an application form to be submitted to the DET by the Early Childhood Teacher.

Kindergarten service providers will advise the Central Registration Officer of any identified places required for a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten in June the year prior.

The child's place will be held for the following year unless the family requests that their child's additional year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten be in another service where there is a vacant place. The registration fee will not have to be paid again.



## 12 Allocation and Offer of Kindergarten Places

Kindergarten service providers will forward group session timetables and number of available places for the coming year to the Central Registration Officer in June of each year. Kindergarten allocations will commence in August for funded 4-year-old kindergarten and September for 3-year-old kindergarten.

Lists of placed children for 4-year-old funded kindergarten will be forwarded to all services in September followed by subsequent lists as per the kindergarten allocation timeline.

All kindergarten allocations and places are offered by Cardinia Shire Council on behalf of the community run kindergartens.

Eligible families will be forwarded correspondence prior to first round allocations to update preferences and choose the preferred service and group session times via the portal.

Offers will be provided to families in August for 4-year-old kindergarten programs and in September for 3-year-old kindergarten programs. Families who are unable to access the online portal will be contacted via SMS to respond to offers.

Families will need to respond to the offer online by making one of the following choices:

**Accept** – If you wish to accept the group session that has been offered.

**Accept and Wait** – If you wish to accept the group session that has been offered and remain on the wait list should a vacancy become available at a higher preference.

**Decline** – If you wish to decline the offer but remain on the wait list for future vacancies for your preferred group session (please note this option does not guarantee a place).

**Defer** – You can only defer the offer until the following year, if your child's age is in line with the school age attendance policy (refer DET) and you are a resident of Cardinia Shire Council.

**Withdraw** – a kindergarten place is no longer required, and your application will be cancelled.

## 13 Offer Rounds

### First round offers:

- 4-year-old funded kindergarten – on or before the second Monday in August
- 3-year-old kindergarten – on or before the second Monday in September

### Additional offers:

- 4-year-old funded kindergarten – during or before the fourth week of August
- 3-year-old kindergarten – during or before the fourth week of September

Additional offers of places will continue to be made on a regular basis, including offers of higher preferences and offers for applications received after close of business 30 June. Children will be offered a place as per the 'Allocation of Preferences' in order of priority.

## 14 Waitlists

Despite growing demand, there will always be enough kindergarten places across all the Kindergartens in Cardinia Shire. Every effort is made to offer a place at the preferred kindergarten, but this is not always possible.

The following process applies to the waitlist for when a vacancy becomes available:

- Places are allocated as per the Central Registration Policy.
- We are unable to tell you where your child is placed on the waiting list, as the waiting list is constantly changing.
- If you are on the waiting list, we will only contact you if a place becomes available.
- If you have declined an offer you will automatically be placed on a waiting list for your higher preferences.
- If you have only listed one preferred kindergarten, or we are unable to offer you any of your other preferred kindergartens, we will attempt to offer your child a place at the next closest kindergarten with availability.
- If you would like to be removed from the waitlist, please let us know.

## 15 No response to offer

Where no response to an offer of placement is received by the Kindergarten Central Registration Officer within the specified timeframe of two weeks, a courtesy SMS and or telephone call will be made prior to the child's place being cancelled and reallocated.