

# KINDERGARTEN CENTRAL REGISTRATION POLICY

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<b>Policy Reference No.</b>	POL/188
<b>File No.</b>	HCC15/190
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	3.2 Deliver responsible and transparent governance, service and assets that respond to community need
<b>Adopted by Council</b>	9 December 2024
<b>Re-Adopted</b>	
<b>Date for Review</b>	1 December 2029
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Manager Family, Youth & Children
<b>Department</b>	Family, Youth & Children's Services

# KINDERGARTEN CENTRAL REGISTRATION POLICY

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Victorian Government funded sessional kindergarten places are allocated in a manner which ensures equity of access and demonstrates a transparent administrative process.
- 1.2 Hume City Council is a child safe organisation with zero tolerance for child abuse. Council adheres to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related legislation. Council acknowledges the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of all children, especially children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with a disability.

## 2. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the process and priorities of kindergarten registration through the Hume Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES).

## 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to community members wishing to access funded sessional kindergarten places, service providers, and agencies who support children to register for and access sessional kindergarten places.

## 4. OBJECTIVE

- 4.1 To outline key information relating to registration in funded sessional kindergarten programs.
- 4.2 To define timelines for registration and kindergarten allocation.

## 5. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Application	The online electronic application form submitted to Council to register interest in a preferred kindergarten. <a href="#">Apply for Kindergarten - Hume City Council</a>
Additional Developmental Needs	Children with additional needs who: a) require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program. b) require a combination of services which are individually planned. c) have an identified specific disability or developmental delay.
Composite kindergarten groups	Kindergarten groups where three-year-old and four-year-old children attend together.
CRES (Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme)	Central process for families to register children to attend funded sessional kindergarten settings. The Hume CRES includes providers who deliver funded sessional kindergarten programs across the municipality.
Department of Education	Provides a framework to deliver the CRES, guided by the following principles: simple, inclusive, adaptable, consistent, transparent and collaborative.

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Kindergarten CRES Practice Guide	In line with these principles, Council is committed to continuously improve systems and processes to ensure that barriers are removed for children and families to access kindergarten. To provide feedback and contribute to decisions about the scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kindergarten providers registered through the Hume CRES are invited to attend the CRES Provider Network.</li> <li>Local organisations, agencies who work with children and families and kindergarten providers are invited to attend the Hume Early Years Partnership.</li> </ul>
Enrolment	Confirmation by the kindergarten management body to the parent/guardian for their child/ren's attendance at kindergarten.
EnrolNow	The electronic registration system used by the CRES provider to manage the application and allocation process of kindergarten places.
Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	Your child is eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy (KFS): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if your child identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</li> <li>if your child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more).</li> </ul> Your child is also eligible if they hold, or have a parent or guardian who holds, one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Commonwealth Health Care Card</li> <li>a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>a Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or White Card</li> <li>Refugee or Asylum Seeker visa (200-204, 786 or 866)</li> <li>Bridging visas for any of the above Refugee or Asylum Seeker visas.</li> </ul> For families or children with a humanitarian or refugee visa listed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection that is not included in the above list, please speak to Council for more information.
Kindergarten Service	The physical location of the kindergarten, kindergartens across Hume are managed by various organisations.
Out of Home Care	A temporary, medium or long term living arrangement for children and young people who cannot live in their family home.
Priority of Access (PoA)	The Priority of Access is a criteria set by the Department of Education outlining how kindergarten places are to be offered. See Section 8, below.
Risk of abuse or neglect	Abuse or neglect can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, family violence, emotional abuse and neglect.

### 6. KINDERGARTEN ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All children are eligible to attend funded kindergarten in the two years prior to attending primary school.

A child must be three years of age on or before the 30 April and be less than six years of age to attend funded kindergarten unless they have a school exemption. The Department of Education (DE) [Starting Age Calculator](#) can be used to determine what year a child is eligible for kindergarten.

It is important for families to consider when they would like their child to start primary school prior to deciding when to attend two years of funded kindergarten. Families who are uncertain about their child's preparedness for kindergarten are encouraged to contact Council's Registration team. The registration team can be contacted by emailing [kindergarten@hume.vic.gov.au](mailto:kindergarten@hume.vic.gov.au) or by phoning (03) 9205 2538.

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## 6.1. Children must have turned three to commence kindergarten. Children who turn three years of age between the start and last day of term one can choose:

- Delayed Start – prior to starting at kindergarten, families can delay their child's kindergarten place and will be eligible to attend two full years of funded kindergarten beginning the following year.
- Place Held and Commencement Delayed – after being offered a place at kindergarten and prior to turning three years of age, places are held until the child is three and can commence.

6.2 Children who turn 3 after the end of term one and prior to April 30 can commence on or after their 3rd birthday. Children who commence under these circumstances are unable to defer due to funding regulations. They will commence 4 year old kindergarten in the following year. Families may choose to delay their child's enrolment by notifying the CRES team prior to the end of term one in the year of attendance.

**6.3 Children turning six years of age in a kindergarten year** – parent/guardian must apply and be granted an exemption from attending school by DE. [Going to kindergarten if your child is 6 years old | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/going-to-kindergarten-if-your-child-is-6-years-old)

## 7. REGISTRATIONS

- 7.1. Registrations are completed electronically and submitted online via the council website [Apply for Kindergarten - Hume City Council](#)
- 7.2. For support with completing kindergarten registrations families can contact the CRES team on (03) 9205 2538 or via email: [kindergarten@hume.vic.gov.au](mailto:kindergarten@hume.vic.gov.au), interpreter services are available.
- 7.3. From birth, an expression of interest for a future kindergarten placement can be completed to activate a reminder when registrations will formally open.
- 7.4. Registrations open from March 1 each year for placements two years in advance.
- 7.5. Separate registrations are required for each year of funded kindergarten.
- 7.6. One registration is to be completed for each child registering.
- 7.7. Registrations submitted after June 30 the year prior to attendance will be considered a late registration and may not be included in the first round of offers.
- 7.8. Families must choose three different kindergarten preferences.
- 7.9. Families will receive confirmation of receipt of registration via email after submission.

## 8 PRIORITY OF ACCESS (PoA) criteria

If the number of children registered for kindergarten places exceeds the number of places available, the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide outlines the priority of which kindergarten places must be offered:

- 8.1 Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out of Home Care
- 8.2 Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander children
- 8.3 Are, or have parents or carers who are, asylum seeker and refugees
- 8.4 Are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy holding an approved concession or visa
- 8.5 Have additional developmental needs or are receiving NDIS support or holding a Child Disability Health Care Card or those children assessed as requiring a second year of kindergarten.

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The **Hume Central Registration** locally agreed priority of access will be applied after the DE PoA and applies to:

- 8.6 Children of Hume City residents and rate payers.
- 8.7 Children who have been previously enrolled at a nominated service.
- 8.8 In composite kindergarten groups, four-year-old children will take priority over three-year-old children.
- 8.9 Non-Hume Residents will only become eligible for placement in Hume kindergartens after the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of places have been offered. In line with DE policy when offering places to non-Hume residents, priority will be given to those, whose closest geographical kindergarten lies within Hume. All other non-residents will be offered a place subsequent to this.

## 9 RESERVED PLACES

### 9.1 Second year of kindergarten

A second year of either 3 year old or 4 year old kindergarten may be considered and agreed between the Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) and the family. For children to be eligible, they must meet the DE criteria for a second year. The ECT must complete a declaration of eligibility and a second year statement on the DE prescribed Kindergarten Information Management System.

Children will not be eligible to complete a second year of both 3 and 4 year old programs. Parents are encouraged to discuss the best pathway for their child with their child's early childhood teacher.

To support this process, kindergarten providers are required to notify CRES of the second year children. This will support CRES in determining eligibility for these places.

### 9.2 Pre-purchased places.

Pre-purchased places will be held at kindergartens as allocated by DE for families who meet DE priority of access criteria (8.1-8.5) and have not registered prior to the beginning of the kindergarten year.

## 10 ALLOCATION PROCESS

- 10.1 Prior to allocations, Council will contact the kindergarten service providers to determine places available for the following year.
- 10.2 Allocations begin in August each year for kindergarten places in the following year. Allocations are ongoing and will continue to be made until all kindergarten places are filled, including once the kindergarten year commences.
- 10.3 Children meeting DE PoA criteria as outlined in section 8 above must be allocated first, followed by those meeting the local criteria of having been previously enrolled at a nominated service. All other children meeting other local priority criteria will then be allocated by date order of application.
- 10.4 Council will endeavour to allocate families to their preferred kindergarten of choice, yet preferences are not guaranteed. This is subject to service capacity limitations and community demand.

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10.5 Families will be sent an email to notify them of their offer and can respond to the offer of a kindergarten place by:

- a) accepting the kindergarten place
- b) declining the kindergarten place and being placed on a waiting list
- c) cancelling their registration

10.6 Families may also wish to defer their child's place at kindergarten. To do this please email the registration team at [kindergarten@hume.vic.gov.au](mailto:kindergarten@hume.vic.gov.au)

10.7 If no response is received by the due date identified on the offer, Council will attempt to contact the family by phone, text message or email. If the family is unable to be contacted, the place will be cancelled.

10.8 Any grievance or appeal in relation to the kindergarten registration can be addressed through the process outlined in section 12 below.

## 11 KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT

11.1 After acceptance of application, all registration information provided for the child will be shared with the kindergarten services, following this the kindergarten service will be the main point of contact for families.

11.2 The enrolment process at kindergartens will require families to provide:

- a) Proof of child's date of birth
- b) Immunisation record
- c) Copy of valid concession card or visa (if applicable).

## 12 GRIEVANCES

Any grievance or appeal in relation to the kindergarten registration process or kindergarten offers are to be directed to the CRES team on (03) 9205 2538 or via email: [kindergarten@hume.vic.gov.au](mailto:kindergarten@hume.vic.gov.au). Should there be no satisfactory resolution, the issue will then be raised to the Coordinator Inclusion and Service Planning and the Manager Family, Youth and Children Services.

## 13 HOLDING LIST

Council will endeavour to allocate families to their preferred kindergartens of choice, yet preferences are not guaranteed. This is subject to service capacity limitations and community demand. Families are required to nominate three different service preferences when registering. In instances where there is no likelihood of obtaining a place at a preferred service, families will be provided with locations where vacancies are available.

Council will work with kindergarten providers to minimise holding lists where possible and provide information where registered places exceed proposed capacity. Council will actively engage with families who are on holding lists to identify suitable alternative locations to access funded kindergarten programs.

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## 14 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Document	Link
CRES Practice Guide	<a href="https://www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-central-registration-and-enrolment#support-for-councils-best-practice-guides-and-resources">vic.gov.au/kindergarten-central-registration-and-enrolment#support-for-councils-best-practice-guides-and-resources</a>
Kindergarten Funding Guide	<a href="https://www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide#funding-guide">vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide#funding-guide</a>
Second Year of Kindergarten	<a href="https://www.vic.gov.au/second-year-of-funded-four-year-old-kindergarten">Second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten   Victorian Government (www.vic.gov.au)</a>
Registrations	<a href="#">Apply for Kindergarten - Hume City Council</a>
Starting Age Calculator	<a href="https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life#when-to-start-three-and-four-year-old-kindergarten">https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life#when-to-start-three-and-four-year-old-kindergarten</a>

<b>Date Adopted</b>	9 December 2024
<b>Date Re-Adopted</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>	1 February 2026

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