*Council Approved Policy*

HUME CITY COUNCIL

# OCCASIONAL CARE ENROLMENT POLICY

| | |
|---|---|
| Policy reference No: | POL/182 |
| File No: | HCC10/599 |
| Strategic objective: | 3.2 A healthy community with access to opportunities |
| Adopted by Council: | 23 November 2015 |
| Re-Adopted: | 24 November 2025 |
| Date for review: | 1 November 2027 |
| Responsible officer: | Manager Family, Youth and Children |
| Department: | Family, Youth and Children |

# 1 Policy Statement

1.1 Occasional Care 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

2.1 The purpose and guiding principles of the Occasional Care Enrolment Policy (the Policy) is to ensure that families in Hume City have access to information, and a choice of high quality, flexible children services.

# 3 Scope

3.1 In accordance with the Victorian Department of Education (DE) regulatory requirements and license conditions, children may access up to 5 hours of occasional care per day and up to 15 hours per week.

3.2 Hume City's Occasional Care service is a Child Care Subsidy approved service and therefore, eligible families are able to obtain a Federal Government subsidy which may reduce Child Care Fees.

3.3 This policy applies to Hume City Council's Occasional Care program.

# 4 Objective

4.1 To facilitate the placement of children into Occasional Care through a fair and equitable booking system.

4.2 To provide details of the eligibility criteria for applications, the prioritisation of places, time lines for lodging of applications and its procedures.

4.3 To ensure placements and procedures are in alignment with the Australian Commonwealth Government Priority of Access Guidelines.

4.4 To ensure placements are provided according to Hume City Council Social Justice Charter.

# 5 Policy Implementation

## 5.1 Eligibility Criteria

5.1.1 All children aged 6 weeks to 5 years of age, who have not commenced attending Primary School, are eligible to access Occasional Care.

## 5.2 Application priorities

5.2.1 The Commonwealth Priority of Access will govern the priority of children allocated a place at Family, Youth and Children's Services Occasional Care service.

5.2.2 Priority will then be given to children of Hume City Council residents.

5.2.3 The Australian Commonwealth Government Priority of Access Guidelines are:

| Priority | Criteria |
|---|---|
| First Priority: | A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect |
| Second Priority: | A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of both parents who both satisfy, the work/study test under Section 14 of the 'A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999' |
| Third Priority: | Any other child |
| Within these main categories priority should also be given to the following children: | |
| ▪ Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.<br>▪ Children in families which include a disabled person.<br>▪ Children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold, or who or whose partner is on income support<br>▪ Children in families from a non-English speaking background.<br>▪ Children in socially isolated families.<br>▪ Children of single parents. | |

## 5.3 How to Apply

5.3.1 Casual bookings are made one week in advance as defined in the Family Handbook and Hume Council website.

5.3.2 Council cannot guarantee applicants will receive an Occasional Care place, as there is a limit at each service of 20 places per session - Educator to child ratios are adhered to as defined by the Education and Care Services National Regulations and are as follows: 1:4 for children from birth to 36 months, 1:11 for children three and up to and including preschool age

5.3.3 Families must indicate their Priority of Access Rating when requesting a booking.

### 5.4 Occasional Care Fees

5.4.1 The session fee is determined each year as part of Council's budget and is charged on a sessional basis.

5.4.2 Families who regularly utilise the service will be notified of fee changes in a timely manner.

5.4.3 Fees are charged via an online payment system. Cash payments are not permitted.

### 5.5 Occasional Care operational sessions

5.5.1 Occasional Care operational session days and times and enrolment numbers will be reviewed annually and may vary from year to year.

5.5.2 Council may make alterations to any Occasional Care session dependent on applications or centre numbers at any time.

## 6 Definitions and Abbreviations

### 6.1 *Occasional Care*

Occasional Care provides centre-based child care for children from birth to six years for up to 5 hours per day and up to 15 hours per week per child. Occasional Care is 'occasional' in the sense that it can only be booked weekly, rather than permanent bookings as is the case in traditional Long Day Care.

### 6.2 *Commonwealth Priority of Access*

The Australian Government Priority of Access Guidelines governing the priority criteria that must be followed in allocating places to children.

# 7 Related Documents

- Australian Commonwealth Government Priority of Access Guidelines
- Equal Opportunity Act (Victoria) 2010
- Children's Services Act 1996
- Children's Services Regulations 2011
- Education and Care National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care National Law Regulations 2011
- Social Services Legislation Amendment (Omnibus Savings and Child Care Reform) Bill 2017

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date Adopted** | 23 November 2015 |
| **Date Re-Adopted** | 24 November 2025 |
| **Review Date** | 1 November 2027 |