Cheltenham Community Centre Early Learning Childcare

E22. Enrolment and Orientation

1. Policy

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

- Enrolling a child at Cheltenham Community Centre (CCC) Early Learning Childcare.
- The orientation of new families and children into Cheltenham Community Centre (CCC) Early Learning Childcare.
- Ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education and Training [DET]
- Ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children

1.2 Cheltenham Community Centre (CCC) Early Learning Childcare is committed to:

- Ensuring families feel respected, safe, and supported throughout the enrolment process.
- Being flexible and catering to unique family circumstances and needs.
- Actively engaging families who may experience barriers to accessing childcare.
- Promoting fair and equitable access to childcare programs, including for those facing barriers to participation.
- Maintaining a transparent process for the registration, allocation, and enrolment of places through consistent communication and information sharing.
- Ensuring the registration and enrolment process is easy to understand, follow, and implement
- Maintaining confidentiality for all information provided during the enrolment process.
- Welcoming all families and ensuring they receive effective orientation into the service.
- Supporting families to meet enrolment requirements by providing clear and accessible information.
- Meeting the needs of the local community by ensuring equal access for all eligible children.

1.3 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 Cheltenham Community Centre (CCC) Early Learning Childcare Centre.

1.4 In order to assess whether the values and purposes of this policy have been achieved, we will:

- Welcome feedback from everyone affected by this policy regarding its effectiveness
- Monitor the implementations, 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, and
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

2. Procedures

2.1 **Enrolment:**

- Families are required to complete the online enrolment form via the Xplor platform.
- Once the form is completed, a profile for the child and each parent will be created in the system.
- Families must upload an up-to-date **Immunisation History Statement** from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)
  - This is a requirement under the Government's **'No Jab, No Play'** program.
  - Families who believe they are exempt from this requirement must discuss their situation with the Childcare Coordinator.
- If a child has any medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or anaphylaxis, families must provide:
  - A completed **Action Plan** prepared by a registered doctor.
  - A **Medical Risk Minimisation Communication Plan** form, to be discussed and completed with the Childcare Coordinator.
- If claiming CCS payments, the Childcare Coordinator will assist the family in electronically signing a **Complying Written Agreement (CWA)**.
  - This agreement allows Xplor to liaise with Centrelink and apply CCS funds to the family's account.
- Families are responsible for paying the gap fee (the difference between the childcare fee and the CCS subsidy).
- Payments must be made on a weekly basis after CCS payments are applied to their account.
- Accepted payment methods:
  - **Bank transfer** to the Centre's bank account.
  - **Payment at reception** using Square (a 1.6% surcharge applies for credit card or EFTPOS transactions).
  - **Cash payments** at reception.
- Once all required documentation and payment arrangements are completed, the enrolment process is finalised.
- Families will receive confirmation of their child's enrolment and details about orientation procedures.

2.2 When demand for childcare exceeds availability, CCC Early Learning Childcare will allocate available places in accordance with the Department of Education and Training (DET)'s Priority of Access guidelines. These guidelines ensure that places are allocated fairly and equitably, reflecting the values and beliefs outlined in our service philosophy and adhering to the requirements of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

The Priority of Access criteria are designed to support families and children who may face barriers to accessing childcare. Approved providers are required to:

- Give priority to children and families as outlined by DET's guidelines (refer to Sources for detailed criteria).
- Ensure decisions are transparent, equitable, and consistent with our service's commitment to inclusion and community support.

By following these principles, CCC Early Learning Childcare ensures that the allocation of places reflects our dedication to meeting the needs of the community while complying with relevant legislation and standards.

2.3 Orientation:

To support a smooth transition for children and families into CCC Early Learning Childcare, the following steps will be implemented:

- Families are encouraged to visit CCC Early Learning Childcare at different times of the day. This allows children and their families to become familiar with the service's routines, environment, and educators.
- Families are reassured that they can stay with their child during the child's sessions for as long as they feel comfortable.
- Educators provide families with suggestions for developing and maintaining a consistent and supportive routine for saying goodbye to their child.
- Families are encouraged to start with shorter days for their child to help them ease into CCC Early Learning Childcare. While the minimum session booking is 3½ hours, families can collect their child earlier during the initial settling-in period if needed.
- Educators may also call families to come and collect their child earlier if the child is highly distressed, as the aim is to avoid any negative impact on the child's wellbeing.
- Families can gradually increase the session length as their child becomes more comfortable and confident in the service environment.
- Families are reassured they can:
    - Expect regular updates from educators on how their child is settling in
    - Be promptly informed of any changes or circumstances that may affect their child.
    - Call anytime to check on their child's wellbeing.

These procedures are designed to create a welcoming, supportive, and collaborative orientation experience for families and children at CCC Early Learning Childcare.

3. Legislation and Regulations:

3.1 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)).

3.2 Childcare services providing approved childcare must abide by the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017 (refer to Legislation and standards). Australian families receive help with the cost of childcare through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The Australian Government, through the Department of Education (DE) and Services Australia, administers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Providers must be approved by the department to receive CCS.

DE is responsible for the legislation that underpins CCS. This legislation is called Family Assistance Law (FAL). All providers that receive CCS must follow the rules under FAL. DE monitors providers' compliance with FAL.

The Australian Government subsidises the cost of childcare. State and territory governments are responsible for the health, safety, wellbeing and educational outcomes of children.

CCS is paid directly to approved providers and passed on to families as a fee reduction.

Additional Child Care Subsidy provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. This support recognises the preventative and protective influence of quality childcare on a child's health, wellbeing and development, and the importance of continuity of care.

There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing):to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent): to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship): to help families experiencing financial hardship
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work): to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.

3.3 The Inclusion Support Program is designed to assist early childhood education and care services to include children with additional needs by providing support, in the form of practical and tailored advice and strategies on effective inclusive practice, from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

3.4 The Australian Government considers that immunisation is an important health measure for children and their families, as it is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against harmful and often deadly diseases. To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the standard vaccination schedule, be on an eligible catch-up vaccination schedule or have an approved exemption from being immunised.

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. To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule set out by the Australian Government Department of Health.

3.5 Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 199
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
- 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)
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017
- 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
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation

4. Definitions

4.1 **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).

4.2 **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.

4.3 **Centrelink:** The agency that delivers payments and services to individuals and parents/guardians on behalf of the Australian Government.

4.4 **Child Care Subsidy (CCS):** A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of childcare. Payments are paid directly to approved childcare providers.

4.5 **Complying Written Arrangement:** a written arrangement between a childcare provider and an individual to provide childcare in return for fees. The arrangement includes certain required information.

4.6 **Enrolment:** An enrolment occurs when the provider has an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide care to a child and the provider submits an enrolment notice in the Child Care Subsidy System. It is a requirement under Family Assistance Law for all children who attend childcare (or have an arrangement for care) to have an enrolment notice regardless of their Child Care Subsidy eligibility status.

4.7 **Enrolment record**: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) 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.

4.8 **Grace period:** allows specific categories of children of parents/guardians experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enroll and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with parents/guardians during enrolment and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the grace period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement and to encourage parents/guardians to access immunisation services.

4.9 **Inclusion Support Program:** A program that assists childcare services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

5. Sources and related policies

5.1 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 and Human Services, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www.health.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 Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing): www.education.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Priority of Access Guidelines for childcare service: www.education.gov.au
- The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth childcare fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): www.education.gov.au

Related Policies

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Parental Complaints
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases and Including Minimum Exclusion Periods
- Fees
- Inclusion and Equity
- Confidentiality Policy and Guidelines
- Sun Smart

Revision History

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