

MANDATORY – QUALITY AREA 6

PURPOSE

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at Helen Paul Kindergarten
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Helen Paul Kindergarten
- the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Helen Paul Kindergarten
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Helen Paul Kindergarten is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting families to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.
- adherence to the principles and processes of the current Bayside City Council Central Enrolment Scheme

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Helen Paul Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

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)).

It is intended that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to one year of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, a priority system for access must be determined by the Approved Provider in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places will vary from service to service, but is generally based on a service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2012*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Criteria for access and inclusion are outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*). Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

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* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions*).

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *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, 177, 183
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
 - Standard 6.1: Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained
 - Element 6.1.1: There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of the Policy Folder.

Acceptable immunisation documentation: documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* as acceptable evidence that a child is fully vaccinated for their age, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind their vaccinations; or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated; or has been assessed as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

Approved care: Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers. Details are available at:
www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

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.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. **Helen Paul Kindergarten has determined the age of 16 constitutes the minimum acceptable age to be an authorised nominee. A person under the age of 16 is unable to be an authorised nominee.**

Central Enrolment Scheme: Management of the enrolment process is centralised and run by the Council, whereby applications for the following years 3 year old and 4 year old kindergarten program are submitted by parent/guardian to the Council, and program places are allocated and offered by the Council. It is the responsibility of the service to complete the enrolment process by collecting and processing Enrolment application forms and Immunisation evidence requirements for those allocated a place, and to manage the entire enrolment process on an ad hoc basis throughout the year i.e. if an opening/place becomes available during the year.

Child Care Benefit (CCB): A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Benefit. Details are available at:

www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

Council: Bayside City Council.

Deferral: When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place, or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the April data collection. DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DET funding in the following year.

Eligible child: A child attending an early childhood education and care service as described in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* or a child in a kindergarten program who meets the requirements of both *The Kindergarten Guide* and the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services*.

Enrolment application fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

Enrolment application form: A form to apply for a place at the service.

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Enrolment Officer(s): General Committee Member(s) appointed by Helen Paul Kindergarten. Usually a 3 Year Old Enrolment Officer and a 4 Year Old Enrolment Officer are appointed each year.

Enrolment record: The collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including the enrolment form; details of any court orders; and immunisation documentation as specified in the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services*. This information is kept confidential by the service.

Fee: A charge for a place within a program at the service.

Weighted Priority System: Bayside City Council computerised weighted priority system that applies a number of defined criteria to determine the allocation of kindergarten places, if more applications than places are received.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:
www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000: www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2006B01541
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:* www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard:* www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *Priority for allocating places in child care services:* <http://education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>
- *The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training):*
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services 2015:*
www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit
- Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Participating in the Council Central Enrolment Scheme which sets out the process for enrolment and the selection criteria for both 3 and 4 year old places
- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Helen Paul Kindergarten, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy
- considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program
- complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- appointing a person(s) to be responsible for the enrolment process at Helen Paul Kindergarten and the day-to-day implementation of this policy. Two General Committee Members are usually appointed for this purpose: 3 Year Old Enrolment Officer and; 4 Year Old Enrolment Officer
- providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment (see Sources: *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for tools, checklists, and template letters*)

- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a **tentative place** until the child's immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable (see *Sources: Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit and Attachment 2 – Immunisation documentation*)
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation **prior to enrolment** to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16 week grace period (see *Sources: Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit and Attachment 2 – Immunisation documentation*)
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program (see *Sources: Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit and Attachment 2 – Immunisation documentation*)
- advising parents/guardians who do not provide acceptable immunisation documentation prior to enrolment that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (see *Sources: Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit and Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation*)
- taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can't continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained). See *Sources: Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit and Attachment 2 Immunisation documentation*)
- ensuring that the enrolment form (refer to *Definitions*) complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records (refer to *Definitions*) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183)
- ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

The Enrolment Officer is responsible for:

- obtaining names of successful applicants and a ranked waiting list from the Council (as a result of the Central Registration Scheme process)
- organising and providing enrolment packs to families at the Annual General Meeting
- ensuring enrolment is not finalised unless acceptable evidence of up to date immunisation is provided (refer Attachment 2 - Immunisation documentation), and if necessary, informing parents/guardians that you are unable to enrol their child (refer Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)
- maintaining a waiting list
- managing individual enrolments outside of the council Central Registration Scheme throughout the year if places become available including:
 - offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access
 - ensuring enrolment is not finalised unless acceptable evidence of up to date immunisation is provided (refer Attachment 2 - Immunisation documentation), and if necessary, informing parents/guardians that you are unable to enrol their child (refer Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)

- liaising with applicant and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- advising Teacher and Treasurer/Finance Officer of new enrolment
- providing a monthly report to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered via committee meeting
- storing completed enrolment application forms in a lockable file (refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy) as soon as is practicable
- complying with the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy of the service
- informing and updating Staff and Treasurer of any changes to enrolments (e.g families leaving the service)

The Nominated Supervisor and early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- collating enrolments and ensuring that enrolment forms and other requirements are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service
- ensuring that acceptable evidence of up to date Immunisation has been provided prior to child's commencement at the service. This includes assessing the immunisation documentation provided, and completing checklists and templates as provided in the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit and listed in Attachment 2 – Immunisation documentation
- follow up provision of acceptable immunisation documentation for any children eligible for the 16 week grace period (see *Sources: Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit and Attachment 2 – Immunisation documentation*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.

All educators are responsible for:

- responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into the service
 - become familiar with service policies and procedures
 - share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
 - share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs
 - discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning

- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- submitting applications to the Council from 1 May to 30 June in the year prior to placement sought for a child – forms are available from the Council. Applications post this period are submitted directly to the Enrolment Officer
- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing the enrolment application form and the enrolment form prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child's immunisation status
- where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
- ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, 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
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: General enrolment procedures (including selection and eligibility criteria)
- Attachment 2: Immunisation documentation
- Attachment 3: Parent enrolment letter
- Attachment 4: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Helen Paul Kindergarten on 5 September 2016.

REVIEW DUE: 2019

ATTACHMENT 1

General enrolment procedures

1. Application for a place

Helen Paul Kindergarten participates in the Bayside City Council Central Enrolment Scheme. The Council policy sets out the process for enrolment and the selection criteria and allocates positions via the Weighted Priority System for both 3 year old and 4 year old kindergarten places.

- Council Enrolment applications will be accepted 1 May to 30 June in the year prior to placement sought for the child. Enrolment application forms are available from the Council.
- A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the service.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment applications should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy).
- Parents/guardians of children applying for a second year of funded kindergarten or currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application form for the following year.
- A copy of the child's birth certificate must be submitted with all applications.
- All Council applications must be accompanied by an enrolment application fee. This fee is to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application and is not refundable.
- Completed enrolment application forms are to be forwarded to the person responsible for the enrolment process at the council.
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted to the Council, the Enrolment Officer, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
- Applications will be entered on the Council waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria.

2. Allocation of places after completion of Council enrolment process

- The Council advises the Helen Paul Kindergarten enrolment officers when the allocation of places is complete. The Kindergarten is then provided with the names of the successful applicants and with a waiting list which is ranked according to the Council's Weighted Priority System.
- The Council waiting list provided must be exhausted before Helen Paul Kindergarten can refer to any applications made directly.
- If there are places still available at the completion of the Council enrolment process or after the Council waiting list has been exhausted the kindergarten will allocate the remaining places according to this policy.

3. Direct enrolment applications

- Direct applications for a place will be accepted after the Council sends out third round offers.
- Direct applications are made to the enrolment officer by providing a \$100 deposit and a copy of the child's birth certificate (or other documentary proof of age) AND Immunisation documentation has been reviewed and deemed acceptable (refer **Attachment 2 Immunisation documentation**).

4. Selection criteria for 3 year old kindergarten applications

The selection criteria to be considered is the same as that applied by the Council, although children who turn three years of age by 30 April (rather than by 31 January, as stipulated in the Council policy) in the year they would attend kindergarten are eligible (refer **Section 9** below - Eligibility criteria for 3 year old children).

- When demand exceeds availability, the Approved Provider will consider the selection criteria of the council and refer to the service's values, philosophy and Inclusion and Equity Policy to determine the priority of access. Considerations may include things such as children who have previously deferred a placement at the kindergarten, the date of application, siblings already enrolled at the service and family association with the service and local community zoning.
- Following these considerations the Enrolment Officer and the Committee will allocate places at their discretion.

5. Selection criteria for 4 year old kindergarten applications

The selection criteria to be considered is the same as that applied by the Council.

- When demand exceeds availability, the Approved Provider will consider the selection criteria of the council and refer to the service's values, philosophy and Inclusion and Equity Policy to determine the priority of access. Considerations may include things such as children who have previously deferred a placement at the kindergarten, the date of application, siblings already enrolled at the service and family association with the service, attendance in the three-year-old program and local community zoning.
- Following these considerations the Enrolment Officer and the Committee will allocate places at their discretion.

6. Offer of Places

- Places will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of the Council.
- Offer of places in the three-year-old program/s and the funded kindergarten program will be made at the same time.
- Applicants who are successful will be notified in writing of a confirmed place.
- Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place, or intend to withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify the service provider, or the enrolment officer at the service, as soon as possible.
- Second and third round offers will be released by the council following outcomes of first round offers.
- A deposit of **\$100** must be paid to the service provider to hold the place for the following year. This deposit will be deducted from first term fees.
- An enrolment form and other relevant information will be provided after the place is accepted and the deposit has been paid.
- If there are places still available at the completion of the council enrolment process or after the council waiting list has been exhausted the kindergarten enrolment officer and committee will allocate remaining places.
- Places will not be allocated to children until any substantial debt owed to the service by the family is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the service (refer to Fees Policy).

Note: The offer of a place and subsequent enrolment is conditional upon provision of completed enrolment documentation and acceptable evidence of up to date immunisation (refer **Attachment 2 Immunisation documentation**).

7. Allocation within groups

- Places within the programs (ie. session times) will be where possible, allocated according to the preferences of the family accepting the place at the kindergarten. Other factors such as gender balance, group dynamics and children with special needs will also be taken into consideration.
- Following consideration of all relevant factors, where there are more requests than places, selection shall be by secret ballot.
- The ultimate decision regarding group allocation rests with the committee, the Enrolment Officer(s) and the Teachers.

8. Eligibility criteria for the funded kindergarten program (4 year old program)

The following children are eligible for selection in the funded kindergarten program:

- children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with *The Kindergarten Guide* available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year, but:
 - deferred
 - withdrew from the service prior to the April data collection
- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
- children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET (refer to *The Kindergarten Guide*, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/default.aspx>)
- children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs
- three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/learningdev/pages/earlystartkinder.aspx

9. Eligibility criteria for 3 year old children

Children are eligible for selection and enrolment in the three year old program provided that they have turned three years of age prior to 30 April in that year, however, they cannot commence the program **until after** they have **turned three years of age**.

For children who turn three after the commencement of Term 1 (and prior to 30 April):

Children may (at the parent's/guardian's discretion) attend Helen Paul Kindergarten before they have turned three in the following circumstances only:

- For the two sessions immediately before their third birthday, to assist with transition, and if accompanied by a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian should be involved in both sessions as a helper to the educators and must be in attendance for the whole session;
- Relevant social and welcoming events run by Helen Paul Kindergarten; and
- Any official (professional) photograph sessions e.g. annual group and individual photos

Please note all enrolment documentation must be finalised and term fees paid for the full term prior to the start of the kinder year, in line with all 3 year old program enrolments.

Children seeking to attend a second year of 3 year old kinder:

Children will only be able to attend a second year of three-year-old kindergarten in exceptional circumstances (after consideration by the council and service provider) or when all eligible children on the waiting list have been offered a place.

10. Giving notice to withdraw from a 3 or 4 year old kindergarten program

Parents/guardians wishing to withdraw their child from a 3 or 4 year old program at Helen Paul Kindergarten during the kinder year are requested to provide notice at least 4 weeks prior to the last date of attendance/ or at least 4 weeks prior to the end of term to advise that the child won't be continuing next term. Notice is requested in writing to the helenpaulkinder@gmail.com email address. Please note, if notice is given early in a term, and the date of last attendance does not coincide with the end of term, we regret that term fees already paid are not refundable.

ATTACHMENT 2

Immunisation documentation

The following information is taken from the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services 2015*: www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit

The purpose of the 'No Jab No Play' legislation is to boost immunisation rates, not exclude children from accessing services.

Helen Paul Kindergarten is required to request, assess and retain acceptable immunisation documentation, and to support parents/guardians to comply with the legislation.

Helen Paul Kindergarten does not need to maintain an ongoing record of each enrolled child's immunisation status. Whilst this is highly desirable it is not required by legislation, which only applies at the point of enrolment.

Helen Paul Kindergarten must:

1. **Request** immunisation status documentation for each child seeking to enrol **and assess** if the document provided meets the requirement for enrolment.

Include requirement for evidence of immunisation in enrolment letter: Enrolment cannot be finalised unless evidence of up to date immunisation is provided within the two months prior to the child commencing at the service. This requirement must be included in the **Letter of Offer** (Council Central Enrolment Scheme), or for enrolments outside the Council Central Enrolment Scheme i.e. throughout the year, **Attachment 3 - Parent Enrolment Letter** should be used.

Acceptable immunisation documentation: An **Immunisation History Statement** from the **Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR)** can be used as evidence of up to date vaccination. An **Immunisation Status Certificate** from a medical doctor or a local council immunisation service may also be used.

If an immunisation document other than an **ACIR Immunisation History Statement** has been provided, use the template **Immunisation status certificate checklist** from the Toolkit to determine if the document provided can be used to confirm enrolment.

Assess the Immunisation History Statement or other acceptable immunisation document (refer Section 3 of the Immunisation Toolkit for step by step procedure), and if a *next due vaccine* is listed use the template **Key dates work form** from the Toolkit. You may be unable to enrol children whose next due immunisations do not meet the key dates.

2. **Only enrol those children who provide acceptable immunisation status documentation** or who qualify for the 'grace period'

Services can use the **Grace period eligibility assessment form** from the Immunisation Toolkit to determine if a child who has not provided acceptable immunisation status documentation can enrol and attend the service while the family seeks to obtain the required immunisation documents (and undertake vaccination if required). This form is for use by service, in conversation with the parent, and if the parent/guardian answers 'yes' to one or more of the questions, the child is eligible for the grace period (*refer Section 7 of the Immunisation Toolkit for guidance as questions to determine grace period eligibility are of a sensitive nature*).

You are **unable to enrol children** where immunisation documentation is unacceptable (type of documentation or immunisations not up to date per the key dates work form). In this situation, use **Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation** to inform the parents/guardians that you are unable to enrol their child.

3. In the case that a child commences at the service **under the ‘grace period’ take reasonable steps to obtain the required documents** over 16 weeks from the first day the child attends the service.

Helen Paul Kindergarten should work closely with the parent/guardian and provide them with support to update the immunisation status of their child and/or to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation.

The end date of the 16 week grace period should be diarised to ensure follow up, and periodic contact during the 16 week period should be scheduled to track to track progress/encourage completion.

4. **Keep, with enrolment record**, immunisation status documentation, and if relevant, grace period documentation, and checklists completed

5. Where required, **provide parents/guardians with information** about:

- Requirements of the law for enrolment
- Locating and assessing immunisation services
- Obtaining immunisation documents required for enrolment

ATTACHMENT 3 Parent Enrolment Letter

(to be used to correspond with parent/guardian when seeking to finalise enrolment, for enrolments outside of the Council Central Enrolment Scheme)

Helen Paul Kindergarten

[insert address]

[insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Helen Paul Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your application to enrol your child, [insert child's name], in the [4 year old/ 3 year old] program at Helen Paul Kindergarten.

To finalise your child's application to enrol we are required to see copies of the following:

1. [insert document your service requires here]
2. [insert document your service requires here]
3. Proof that your child's immunisations are up to date for their age.

Evidence of up to date immunisation must be provided within the two months prior to your child commencing at our service.

An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register can be used as evidence of up to date vaccination. An Immunisation Status Certificate from a medical doctor or a local council immunisation service may also be used.

Other immunisation records, such as 'homeopathic immunisation' or a statutory declaration from you are not acceptable.

Immunisation History Statements are available on request at any time by contacting Medicare:

- By telephone on 1800 653 809
- By email on acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au
- Online at www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts
- In person at your local Medicare service centre.

If you are experiencing difficulties accessing vaccinations or required related documents, please contact us for assistance as soon as you are able. In some cases children can commence at the service while the required documents are obtained.

Yours sincerely,

[insert name]

Enrolment Officer

Helen Paul Kindergarten

ATTACHMENT 4

Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

Helen Paul Kindergarten

[Address]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Helen Paul Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Helen Paul Kindergarten in the [insert 3 year old or 4 year old program] in [insert year].

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided acceptable immunisation documentation.

Acceptable immunisation documentation includes evidence that your child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated
- has been assessed by our service as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

- your doctor
- [insert details of local government immunisation service]
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register Tel 1800 653 809
- Better Health Channel website: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/no-jab-no-play>

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by acceptable immunisation documentation. The new application would be considered in line with Helen Paul Kindergarten's Enrolment and Orientation policy.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

Helen Paul Kindergarten