

Central Registration & Enrolment Scheme

PURPOSE

This guideline outlines the registration, enrolment, prioritisation, and allocation of kindergarten places via the Gannawarra Shire Council's Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES). The CRES enables Gannawarra families to access funded three-year-old and/or four-year-old kindergarten by providing a streamlined, centralised registration service. Gannawarra Shire Council will ensure allocation of kindergarten places is equitable and fair for all families who require education and care in a children's service managed by Gannawarra Shire Children's Services

SCOPE

These guidelines apply to the Approved Provider, Person with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisors, staff, parents, and children attending programs and activities of Gannawarra Shire managed children's services.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the CRES is to provide families with a single point of contact to register their interest in attending sessional funded kindergartens, and to allocate children to available kindergarten places.

The CRES is managed by the Gannawarra Shire Children's Services team with the aim to:

- Ensure vulnerable (priority) children in the municipality can access free, quality kindergarten.
- Apply an equitable and fair process for families seeking funded kindergarten places, in line with the Department of Education (DE) Priority of Access criteria and Gannawarra local criteria.
- Inform Council's early year's services and infrastructure planning.
- Access reliable data about kindergarten registrations, placements, and enrolments in the municipality to help Council and providers plan to meet future demand.
- Provide a transparent allocation process to ensure appropriate allocation of children to funded kindergarten places.

ELIGIBILITY

The Victorian Government provides funding to support children to access a high-quality kindergarten program in the two years before they start school. There are eligibility factors to consider based on the child's age, date of birth, and development:

- Your child can only be funded for a kindergarten place at one service at any one time.
- Your child can only access one year in a Three-year-old Kindergarten program and one year in a Four-year-old Kindergarten program (although some children may be eligible for an additional year)
- The year that your child starts kindergarten will directly impact the age at which they start school.

The table below sets out birth dates and eligibility for kindergarten.

Child's Date of Birth	Eligible Year three-year-old	Eligible Year four-year-old
01/05/2018 – 30/04/2019		2023
01/05/2019 – 30/04/2020	2023	2024
01/05/2020 – 30/04/2021	2024	2025
01/05/2021 – 30/04/2022	2025	2026
01/05/2022 – 30/04/2023	2026	2027

Birthdates between 1 January and 30 April

Parents of children with birth dates between 1 January and 30 April can choose which year to start three-year-old kindergarten. These children can start in the same year they turn three, or the year they turn four. Children who are enrolled in their three-year-old kinder program will be eligible to attend once they have turned three.

Children eligible for a second year of kindergarten

As outlined in the Kindergarten Funding Guide, to determine eligibility for a second year of four-year-old kindergarten, an early childhood teacher must declare that:

- The child is observed as having delays in at least two key outcome areas of learning and development, as detailed in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
- There is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes if they attend a second year of kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these key outcome areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

Children who turn six during the kindergarten year

As outlined in the Kindergarten Funding Guide, children who turn six at any time during the kindergarten year must be exempted from attending school. Parents are required to apply for an exemption before the child starts kindergarten by submitting an Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program form to the appropriate Departmental regional office by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning six.

It is at the discretion of the Department of Education whether permission is granted for delayed school entry. A copy of the Approved exemption letter must be sighted by a Kindergarten Enrolment & Planning Officer at the City of Casey before the child's registration can be confirmed.

ENROLMENT PROCESS

Parents can register their child for kindergarten in the year before their child turns three years old using the following options:

- Completing the EOI form on council's website <https://www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au/Community-Services/Childrens-Services/Expression-of-Interest>
- Contacting Gannawarra Children's Services 03 5452 1357

Registration is free and parents can register for both three-year-old- and four-year-old kindergarten at the same time. Once an expression is received a link to the online enrolment platform will be sent out. Parents will need to ensure they have completed all the information in the form and uploaded proof of the child's birth, immunisation statement and any other legal documentation.

Enrolment & Allocation timelines

Expression of Interest	May – July
Enrolments Open	June
Enrolments Close	July
First Round Offers	August
Second Round Offers	October
Kindergarten begins	End of January

Priority of Access guidelines

Gannawarra Shire Council will prioritise children in accordance with the Department of Education's [Priority of Access criteria](#), outlined in the Kindergarten Funding Guide, as well as Local Criteria.

Kindergarten places will be allocated in the following order:

- High priority children (criteria set by the Department of Education)
- Local criteria (set by Gannawarra Shire Council)

Priority	Description	Criteria
1	High priority children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending a three year old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Protection ○ Child and family services ○ Maternal and Child Health Nurse ○ Out-of-Home Care provider ○ National Disability Insurance Scheme ○ Early Childhood Intervention Service ○ Preschool Field Officer

1	High priority children (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified by family or a guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Identified, or whose parent(s) are identified, as a refugee or asylum seeker via an appropriate visa Of a multiple birth of triplets or more Assessed as having delays in two or more areas Eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten Previously approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package
2	High priority families	A child of a single parent/guardian who satisfies, or of parents/guardians who both satisfy the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care) Act 2010, who reside/work in Gannawarra Shire.
3	Medium priority families	Who hold, or whose parent(s) hold, Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card or a Child Disability Health Care Card or Gannawarra Shire children's services employee (who will allow more children to be enrolled into program.)
4	(Other) Residents of Gannawarra	Children and their parents / guardians who reside in Gannawarra Shire.
5	Applying to nearest kindergarten	Should the situation arise where we have more children wanting to attend a kindergarten than we have available places and there are options to attend another service, then children who reside closest to that kindergarten will be allocated a place. This will be determined by Google Maps.
6	Non-residents high priority families	Families that work or study in Gannawarra Shire but reside outside of the Shire who meet Section 14 of the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care) Act 2010
7	Non-residents of Gannawarra	No formal connection with Gannawarra Shire.

KINDERGARTEN OFFERS

The central enrolment team allocate places to children using the priority of access criteria above. Every effort is made to offer children their first preference. Families who do not receive their first choice will be contacted and placed in another kindergarten program. Children will also be placed on a waiting list and offered a place if a spot becomes available.

Parents will receive notification via email when places are offered. Parents need to respond to the offer by completing the acceptance form. If parent wish to cancel, decline or transfer to another service they must email children@gannawarra.vic.gov.au Families who do not respond will have their offer cancelled and will be removed from the list.

DEFINITIONS

Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES)	A best-practice model that streamlines the process of registering and enrolling children in kindergarten for parents and service providers, ensuring the process is simple, consistent, inclusive and equitable.
Department of Education (DE)	The State Government Department responsible for ensuring services comply with the Kindergarten Funding Guide.
Approved Provider	An individual, organisation or company with management or control to operate and education and care service
Early Years Manager (EYM)	Organisations (Approved Providers) that are local government or community-based that oversee multiple early childhood services to provide professional leadership and centralised management of kindergarten services.
Age eligibility	To commence three-year-old kindergarten children must be 3 years of age by the 30 April in the year of attendance. To commence four- year-old kindergarten children must be 4 years of age by the 30 April in the year of attendance.
Funded Kindergarten	The Victorian State Government Policy states that a child is entitled to funding for one year of three-year-old and one year of four-year- old kindergarten experience only. When applying for kindergarten, parents need to carefully consider the age of their child and whether they will be ready for the demands of kindergarten.
Kindergarten Funding Guide	The Kindergarten Funding Guide is developed by DE and provides operational guidance relating to policies, access, and inclusion and eligibility criteria.
Kindergarten Registration	The process of registering a child/ren for kindergarten. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.
Parent/s	A biological parent or a person who has parental responsibility for the child under a decision or order of the court to complete the registration.
Kindergarten offers	The allocation of kindergarten places offered to children.
Transfer requests	A process where parents who have accepted a kindergarten place can request a transfer for another kindergarten. This process can either by completed via email or telephone call.
Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)	Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children 15 hours of free kindergarten a week for two years before starting school. To be eligible your child must be 3 years of age by the 30 April in the year they start kindergarten.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From a refugee or asylum seeker background, or Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or Your family has had contact with child protection.
Early Years Referral	It is identified that a family requires extra support to register and access a kindergarten for their child. Referrals can come in by family services workers.
Proof of Birth	Evidence parents/carer must provide to prove the child's date of birth.
Free Kindergarten	Part of the Best Start, Best Life government reforms that provides free funded kindergarten for 3- and 4-year children for services who choose to opt into the initiative
Priority of Access	Criteria set out by DE that funded services must adhere to when prioritising kindergarten placements. This criteria is applied when there are more eligible children applying for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available.
Equitable and Fair Allocation	Placement of children under the Priority of Access and local criteria that ensures children experiencing disadvantage are supported, and compliance with Victorian and National legislation (including anti-discrimination and human rights) is upheld.
Child's Enrolment Record	A legal document that a family completes following the placement into a kindergarten that contains information on the child and their family.
Immunisation – No Jab, No Play legislation	The 'No Jab, No Play' legislation aims to reduce the risk of vaccine preventable diseases through increased immunisation rates in the community. For children to attend kindergarten their immunisations must be up to date or meet the criteria for an exemption.
Weighting points	The allocation of points applied to a registration.
Waiting List	Registrations are placed on wait lists for the kindergartens listed in their preferred kindergartens. Children who have not secured a kindergarten place will remain on the wait list until a place becomes available.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012
- 2023 Kindergarten Funding Guide – Department of Education
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Immunisation and Infectious Diseases
- No Jab, No Play legislation – Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Gannawarra Shire Children's Services



- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	JULY 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2024
MODIFICATIONS	• New policy created		