

Title	Enrolment and Orientation Policy
Policy Category	Childrens Programs
Policy Type	Mandatory
NQF Standard	NQS: Quality Area 6
Related Legislation	See legislation map

Background and Context

This policy outlines:

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

Glen Education 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.

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 two years of funded kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, Glen Education must adhere to the Department of Education and Training Priority of Access Criteria (refer to *Definitions*) when allocating available places. The Criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in *The Kindergarten Guide*, the 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. Glen Education participates in central enrolment schemes for kindergarten enrolments.

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*).

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider (Glen Education), Glen Education staff, and families who wish to enrol or have an enrolled child at a Glen Education service in 2023.

Definitions

Acceptable immunisation documentation: Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement is the only form of acceptable evidence of immunisation. The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia. Families must provide a copy of their most recent AIR Immunisation History Statement, which shows their child is up to date with their immunisations for their age upon enrolment. Once enrolled, families will need to provide their child's new Immunisation History Statement whenever their child receives or was due to receive immunisation/s.

Additional hours fees: Where there are vacancies, Glen Education may offer families additional hours above the Government's funded program. These additional hours are fully subsidised by families.

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 a Glen Education service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form. **Glen Education has specified a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee of 18 years of age or older.**

Central enrolment schemes: Many councils operate a central enrolment or registration system for kindergarten services. Central enrolment schemes enable equitable access to kindergarten places for all eligible children within a municipality and support increased access to kindergarten.

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*).

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 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: *As defined by the Kindergarten Funding Guide an eligible child must be:*

- *at least three years old on the 30th of April in the year they attend their first year of kindergarten (3 year old kindergarten)*
- *at least four year old on the 30th of April in the year they attend their second year kindergarten (4 year old kindergarten)*
- *enrolled for a minimum of five hours per week in the first year of kindergarten*
- *enrolled for a minimum of 15 hours per week in the second year of kindergarten*
- *not enrol in funded kindergarten program elsewhere*
- *provide a up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualify for the 16-week grace period.*

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 (online): A form to apply/waitlist for a place at a Glen Education service

Enrolment Offer form: A form to accept, decline or defer an offer of place.

Enrolment form (online): 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 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. Enrolment records are stored securely due to their confidential nature.

Grace Period: allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to Definitions) or when the statement is assessed as not being up-to-date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with families 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 families to access immunisation services.

Glen Education Leader: A person who is nominated by Glen Education Management to provide leadership and mentoring (operational and educational) across the organisation, that aligns with the National Early Years Framework and who actively promotes and ensures adherence to all Glen Education practices, policies and procedures

Nominated Supervisor: A person who has been nominated by Glen Education under Part 3 of the Act and who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor(s) with responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations (Section 5 and 161).

Priority of access: in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service will allocate spaces using the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Funding Guide*, and by the guidelines of the relevant local council's central enrolment scheme.

Policy

Responsibilities

Glen Education is responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Glen Education, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy (refer also to eligibility and priority of access criteria)
- 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 and the day-to-day implementation of this policy
- 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. Glen Education offer scheduled tours throughout the year that prospective families can book into to view a Glen Education service (see gleneducation.org.au) and virtual tours can be viewed at any time.
- providing families with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- ensuring families are only offered a tentative place until the child's immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable

- assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services **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
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
- advising families who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation that their child/ren are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services
- taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from families of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- 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 whilst 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 Glen Education, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

The Glen Education Customer Relations Team, Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leaders and other educators are responsible for:

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to Definitions and the Inclusion and Equity Policy) to develop strategies to ensure the program meets their specific education and care needs
- responding to families' enquiries regarding the best time for their child to start a kindergarten program (see also gleneducation.org.au for more information).
- discussing the individual child's needs with families and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging families to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators at the service, when required
- assisting families to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child (see also gleneducation.org.au for more information).
- sharing information with families concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service (see also gleneducation.org.au for more information).
- discussing support services for children with families, where required.
- referring families to the Glen Education Customer Relations Team for the enrolment information
- providing families 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 which are available on the Glen Education website
- 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 and keeping updates the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Families are responsible for:

- 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 enrolment documentation
- where a child is has an immunisation grace period status, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
- providing the service with the most up to date Immunisation History Statement
- 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

Approvals and Revision

Date	Version	Author	Revision Description
Q3 2012	1.00	Glen Education Management	New Policy
Q2 2022	5.00	Glen Education Management	Policy updated due to rebranding May 2022
Q1 2023	6.00	Glen Education Management	Policy updated for 2023