

# Enrolment Policy – ELC

## Purpose

This policy outlines a clear framework for:

- providing information to families about enrolling in an early learning centre at ECMS
- managing the enrolment of families into childcare
- supporting equitable access to our programs for families through observing priority of access

## Scope

This policy applies to all ECMS employees, including educators providing information or supporting the enrolment process. It also governs the systems and procedures for managing registrations and enrolments across ECMS childcare programs.

This policy supports us in:

- responding to the needs of local communities.
- complying with state and national legislation and requirements for enrolment in long day care programs.
- upholding Privacy and Human Rights legislation.

## Background

Enrolment in ECMS Early Learning Centres meets the requirements of the Victorian Department of Education and Training and the Federal Department of Education and the Public Health Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act.

Universal access to high-quality early learning helps children get a good start in life and has positive effects across society, consistent with ECMS's purpose to foster lifelong learning.

## Childcare Enrolment

- Families will waitlist their child(ren) for a place either with their local government area (LGA) or directly with ECMS via our website.
- Places are allocated to eligible children according to the Allocation Procedure
- Families who receive a place are then sent an offer to complete an enrolment form by the ECMS enrolments team before they can attend.
- There is no deadline or closure for enrolments, though all programs have a set number of places for children available. If there are no suitable vacancies, families will be placed on a waitlist
- Families can book a tour of the early learning centre before they enrol by submitting a form on the centre page.
- Families are required to submit a completed enrolment form along with the required supporting documentation before they can commence attending.

## Free Kinder in Early Learning Centres

At ECMS, we are committed to providing accessible and affordable early childhood education for families. Some ECMS Early Learning Centres (ELCs) also provide integrated kindergarten programs. Integrated Kindergarten Funding supports our long day care services by delivering high-quality, play-based kindergarten programs within the convenience of extended care.

These programs are delivered by degree-qualified teachers, providing 15 hours per week (or 600 hours annually) of structured learning aligned with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF).

### **For families attending free kinder in a long day care**

Please note that families can only enrol their child in one Free Kinder program at a time and will nominate which service receives their Free Kinder funding.

### **Free Kinder Funding at ECMS**

Through the Victorian Government's Free Kinder initiative, families at ECMS services can access 15 hours of funded kindergarten at a significantly reduced cost in long day care settings. Here's how the Free Kinder funding applies:

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**Long Day Care Kindergarten:** ECMS receives up to \$2,050 per child annually, which is directly applied to offset fees for the kindergarten component of the program.

## **How Fees Work in Long Day Care**

For families enrolled in our long day care services:

- The Free Kinder offset reduces the cost of the 15-hour kindergarten program each week.
- Families are only charged for additional care beyond the funded 15 hours, such as wrap-around care.
- Clear fee schedules are provided within each service to ensure transparency about costs outside the funded program.

## **Payments and Service Support**

The Free Kinder funding is paid directly to ECMS by the Department of Education, allowing us to:

- Deliver high-quality kindergarten programs free or at reduced costs for families.
- Ensure equitable access to early childhood education across our services.
- Support the financial sustainability of our programs while meeting the diverse needs of our communities.

At ECMS, we believe every child deserves access to quality early learning, and the Integrated Kindergarten Funding and Free Kinder offset are vital tools in making this vision a reality. Families can enjoy the flexibility of long day care combined with the benefits of a funded kindergarten program, ensuring every child's best start to life.

## **Long Day Care Fees**

For information on long daycare fees, refer to the fees policy.

## Immunisation

In 2016, amendments were made to the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (known as the 'No Jab, No Play' policy) to require children to be up-to-date with immunisations for their age to enrol in early childhood education services.

To finalise a child's enrolment, families will provide:

- a current immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows the child is up to date with all the immunisations due for their age or
- a current immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule if they have fallen behind or
- documentation that details the child's exemption under the 'grace period provisions'. A grace period of 16 weeks from the first day of the child's attendance at the service may apply to children from families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

## ELC Priority of Access (PoA)

The priority of access criteria is applied to ensure fair and equitable allocation of childcare places in accordance with the Priority of Access Guidelines set out in the Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000.

### High Priority Children:

The groups below are given the highest priority for places within our early learning centres:

1. **Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care:** Children identified as being at risk of significant harm or neglect, including those in out-of-home care or those with a history of abuse.
2. **Children of working or studying parents:** Children of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the work, training, or study test.
3. **Any other child:** All other children who do not meet criteria 1 and 2.

### Within Priority Categories:

The following groups should also be given priority when allocating places within each of the priority groups listed above.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families:** Priority should be given to children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

- **Families with a Disabled Person:** Children from families that include a disabled person.
- **Low Income Families:** Children from families with an adjusted taxable income not exceeding the lower income threshold of \$43,727 (for 2015-2016) or whose partner is on income support.
- **Non-English Speaking Background:** Children from families who speak a language other than English.
- **Socially Isolated Families:** Children from socially isolated families.
- **Single Parent Families:** Children from single-parent families.

## Room allocation

The ECMS enrolments team will allocate families to rooms taking into account their preferences as well as Priority of Access criteria.

## Feedback and complaints

All complaints and feedback submitted by families will be managed fully, fairly, and within a reasonable time frame by ECMS. Families will not be adversely affected by raising and lodging complaints.

Families can find detailed information on this in the Complaints and Feedback policy on the ECMS website.

## Monitoring and Compliance

ECMS complies with Victorian Government requirements for access to childcare. We maintain accurate records and provide reports to ensure all benefits are passed on to families.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to reflect current regulations and ECMS's commitment to accessible, equitable, high-quality early childhood education.

For more information, visit [www.ecms.org.au](http://www.ecms.org.au).

## Roles & Responsibilities

Director of Early Childhood Education	Accountable for implementing and complying with this policy
Area Managers	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementing and complying with this policy</li> <li>• liaising with Local Government</li> <li>• providing information to the Director Early Childhood Education, and People Business Partners on workforce shortfalls</li> </ul>
ECMS Enrolments Team	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applying priority of access criteria and effectively allocating places.</li> <li>• Liaising with Local Government on registration and enrolment processes.</li> <li>• Collecting completed enrolment forms and supporting documents (e.g. Immunisation History, Health Care Card, Confirmation of Kindergarten Funding, etc)</li> </ul>
Centre Directors	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the ECMS Immunisation Policy and Procedure is followed</li> <li>• Supporting educators and families with enrolment, entry age, and second-year applications</li> <li>• Informing families receiving CCS about attendance requirements and keeping information in their Centrelink account current.</li> </ul>
Employees, Volunteers, Contractors, and Student Placement Workers	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisting families to access enrolment and supporting documents</li> <li>• Discussing concerns about enrolment processes or submitted documents with Centre Directors</li> <li>• Liaising with families about enrolment, entry age, and second-year applications</li> </ul>
Families	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following enrolment processes and providing relevant documents (e.g. Immunisation History, Health Care Cards, etc)</li> <li>• Discussing any additional needs with the team</li> </ul>



at their service.

## Sources

Related Policy and Procedure	<p>ECMS allocation of childcare places procedure</p> <p>Child Safe Culture Policy</p> <p>Child Safe Policy and Procedure</p> <p>Code of Conduct Policy</p> <p>Confidential Information Policy</p> <p>Early Learning Centre Fees Policy</p> <p>Immunisation Policy and Procedure</p> <p>Orientation Policy</p> <p>Privacy Policy</p> <p>Privacy Collection Statement</p>
Relevant Legislation	<p>Child Safe Standards</p> <p>Children, Youth, and Families Act 2055</p> <p>(VIC) Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (VIC)</p> <p>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC)</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): Sections 168, 169, 172, 173 and 175</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (VIC): Regulations 73-76, 84, 155 – 157, and 158 – 162</p> <p>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC): Sections 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43</p> <p>Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC)</p> <p>Working with Children Regulations 2006 (VIC)</p>
Sources and Further Reading	<p><a href="#"><u>Priority of access criteria for early childhood education</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Kindergarten Funding Guide</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Free kinder guidelines for services</u></a></p>



ELC Enrolments Policy

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