Mallee Track Health and Community Service	
Title:	**Enrolment and Orientation Policy**

Manual:	Early Years Services
Scope:	This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and parents/guardians with an enrolled child, or who wish to enrol a child at the Early Years Services.
Responsible Position:	Director of Community Services

1. OUTCOME

This policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- The criteria for enrolment at MTHCS Early Years Services including Kindergarten and Child Care programs.
- The process to be followed when enrolling a child, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated.
- To ensure that educators and the service are only responsible for children who are enrolled at our service to meet our legal requirements and child/educator ratios.
- Ensuring that each child's enrolment is completed as per our legal requirements.
- Providing children and families with an orientation procedure that allows the child and family to transition to their child being in the education and care service, transition to a new room within the service or transitioning to school.

2. DEFINITIONS

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 officially withdraws from a service prior to the end of Term 2. DEECD considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DEECD funding in the following year.

Eligible child: A child who meets the criteria outlined in the Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria.

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. This is completed after a place has been offered by the service and accepted by the applicant. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Enrolment record: Contains information on each child, as required under the National Regulations, including contact details, names of authorised nominees (refer to Definitions), names of persons authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication, names of persons authorised to take the child outside the service, details of any court orders, personal and health information including specific healthcare needs, medical management plans and dietary restrictions etc. (Regulations 160, 161, 162). This information is kept confidential by the service.

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

3. ENROLMENTS

Our service accepts enrolments of children between the following ages:

- Ouyen Preschool - 3 years to 5 years*
- Manangatang Preschool - 3 years to 5 years*
- Sea Lake Preschool – 3 years to 5 years*
- Mallee Minors Child Care Centre (Ouyen) - from 6 weeks old
- Mallee Minors Child Care Centre (Sea Lake) - from 6 weeks old

- Underbool Integrated program - from 6 weeks old*
- Murrayville Integrated program - from 6 weeks old*
- Mallee Minors Vacation Care Program - children already attending primary school (6 years to 12 years)

***Children attending a funded kindergarten program must be aged 4 by 30th April on the year of enrolment. Pre-kinder programs are available to eligible 3 year olds in Sea Lake, Underbool, Murrayville, Manangatang and Ouyen.**

3.1

Enrolments will be accepted providing:

- The maximum daily attendance does not exceed the approved number of places of the service.
- Child-educator ratios and supervisory requirements are maintained across the service.
- A vacancy is available (please see Priority of Access Guidelines below)
- The enrolment meets any relevant eligibility criteria e.g. requirements for funded kindergarten.

3.2

Priority of Access Guidelines:

- In cases where a service is oversubscribed, guidelines are in place to support priority of access - these guidelines are based on criteria established by the Department of Education.
- Enrolments are usually accepted in order of receipt by the service - enrolments are date marked when received.

Priority of Access levels which the centre uses as a guide when filling vacancies for a service which is oversubscribed are:

1. ***A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect. Families known to child protection.***
2. ***Families which fall into the below categories:***
   a) ***Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.***
   b) ***Children in families which include a disabled person.***
   c) ***Children in families on low income.***
   d) ***Children in families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.***
   e) ***Children in socially isolated families.***
   f) ***Children of single parents/guardian.***
   g) ***Children of *Essential Service workers.***
   h) ***Working families with limited locally based family support.***
   i) ***Children eligible for a funded Kindergarten program (where service operates an integrated program) or those that have received funding for a second year of kindergarten.***
4. ***Permanent bookings.***
5. ***Any other child.***
6. ***Any casual bookings / requests.***

*To meet the needs of our communities across the catchment, essential service workers are determined by Mallee Minors via the definition stated in Essential Services Act 1988 (NSW)

- If upon enrolment application a space is not available, families will be notified and any available options discussed e.g. enrolment at another service (if available).
- To access a funded Kindergarten place, the child must turn 4 years of age by 30th April of that Preschool year. Alternatively the child must be eligible under an early start initiative or be approved for second year of kindergarten funding.
- Children who will turn six years of age whilst attending kindergarten must be exempted from school by contacting the Loddon Mallee Regional office of DEECD

4.	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1	**The Approved Provider is responsible for:** • Determining the criteria for priority of access to programs, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy. • Developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program, and considering any barriers to access that may exist. • Complying with the Inclusion and Equity Policy. • Appointing a person 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. • Ensuring that enrolment forms (refer to Definitions) comply with the requirements of the Regulations. • Reviewing the enrolment form to determine its effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and 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 • Ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DEECD 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.
4.2	**The person responsible for the enrolment process (Nominated Supervisor) is accountable for the following:** Working with Early years managers to advertise and manage the enrolment procedures as follows: • Providing Enrolment forms. • Collating enrolments. • Maintaining a waiting list (if required). • Collecting, receipting and banking enrolment fees • Offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy (when relevant). • Providing a monthly report to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered. • 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. • Making available a copy of the Enrolment and Orientation Policy with the enrolment application form.

4.3 The Nominated Supervisor and other educators are responsible for:

- Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the Early Years Administration office for the enrolment process, as required.
- Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to the Inclusion and Equity Policy).
- Responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in.
- 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).
- 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
  - 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
- Providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members.
- 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.
- Complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

4.4 Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with this Enrolment and Orientation Policy.
- Completing enrolment forms prior to their child's commencement at the service.
- Ensuring that all required information is provided to the service.
- Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

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

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Enrolment:

New are called for in October/November for the following year; although enrolments can be taken at any time throughout the year.

Existing families will be asked to ensure enrolment details are current via the online enrolment platform on a yearly basis.

When a family has indicated their interest in enrolling their child in our service, they will be advised on available vacancies, enrolment procedures and orientation procedures.

1. ***Upon receiving the initial inquiry, proceed with interview questions to collect basic details:***
   - ***Name of parent/guardian***
   - ***Name of child***
   - ***Age of child***
   - ***Clarify which service they are inquiring about and explain bookings***
   - ***Contact number for parent/guardian***
   - ***Email address for parent/guardian***
   - ***Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander***
   - ***Any medical conditions or health care needs***
   - ***Any court orders in place***
   - ***Clarify preference for parent handbook – hard copy or electronic copy***

2. ***Send enrolment link via email and a copy of the parent handbook if electronic copy is requested.***

3. ***If any additional support is required for medical conditions or health care needs, inform the room leader.***

4. ***Once online enrolment is completed and submitted to the service, a room leader will contact the parent/guardian to organise and scheduled orientation.***

Before the child begins their first day with us, the service must have all required documentation for the child. The child will not be accepted into the service without this being completed. The orientation checklist is to be completed to assist with this process.

5.2 Orientation:

We believe orientation is an important process where educators are able to get important information about the new child's needs and those of the family. This process helps to make the transition from home to the education and care service as smooth as possible with the aim to maintain continuity between home and the service, which helps the child adjust to the new setting.

Although recommended by the service, it is not always practical as some families are time restrictive. The Room Leader will arrange for the new child to attend the service (together with parents/s) to visit and meet the staff, and familiarise with the environment. The children may participate in the activities if they so desire.

A number of young children prefer to just watch, rather than do. Positive interactions at this time (between parents, educators and the child) are important for the children to build positive attitudes to the service environment. Educators are aware that some children respond to new experiences faster than others and will adapt to the situation. Families are invited to stay with their child for as long as they feel it is necessary to help them settle in. The service will endeavor to make

information on the service's child orientation policy available in different languages when required, if this is not possible we will seek to find a suitable translator.

The following will be offered but may be tailored to meet the needs of the family:

1. ***A scheduled day and time for a tour of the service. The room leader and admin will discuss the information listed on the orientation checklist with the parent/guardian. The room leader, admin and parent/guardian will sign this list once completed.***

2. ***If the parent/guardian has requested a hard copy of the parent handbook, the room leader can present this to them and give a brief explanation of the contents.***

3. ***Any other documents such as excursion forms, medical condition & health care needs form, medical conditions risk management and communication plans to be completed with the parent/guardian.***

4. ***Families are informed of the Priority of Access as stated in this policy.***

5. ***Any matters that are sensitive of nature, such as discussing a child's medical needs, Court Orders, parenting plans or parenting orders, will be discussed privately with the Nominated Supervisor and Room Leader during the orientation.***

6. ***Should a child use English as a second language, or speak another language at home, we request that families provide us with some key words in the languages the child speaks at this time so that educators can learn the words***

6. UNENROLLED CHILDREN COMING ON SITE

- On occasion, children who are not enrolled at our service may be present at the service.
- An example of this is when families come to pick up an enrolled child and they bring their other children with them.
- At times like this, the children who are not enrolled at the service are the responsibility of the adult that brought them to the service.
- We ask these adults to keep unenrolled children off any equipment at the service, and for the child to be accompanied by the adult at all times.
- Should a child who is not enrolled at the service attend an excursion or activity with the service, they may only attend should the educator agree and on the understanding that the parent retains full responsibility for the child. The educator to child ratio should not be compromised for enrolled children.
- Any child that is enrolled at the service on a temporary basis will be included in the educator/child ratios.

7. TRANSITION

Where the service has more than one room, the service aims to arrange for room transitions when a vacancy occurs or at the beginning of the new year. As each room has different challenges and expectations, children will only be transitioned when they are ready in all aspects of their development. The opportunity to transition between groups / rooms at the service is based on many factors other than just age.

When the child becomes of the age to attend school, the service will work with the parents and the school to prepare the child for school entry. Transition visits may be arranged with the school to support the process. A full Transition Learning and

Development Statement will be prepared by the Preschool Teachers in the Integrated Service and a general Development Statement prepared by the Room Leader in the Child Care Centre's - this needs to be signed and approved by the child's parents before it is shared with the school.

Change is harder for some children than others; however, by making this transition as smooth as possible for children and families, we are helping build the child's success. Separation can evoke children's deep feelings which can trigger restlessness, frustration etc.

As to minimise any distress that the transfer may cause:

Transition between rooms:

- Think about the transition ahead of time. Lay the groundwork for a new educator to get to know their child by sharing information and insights you have gained.
- Talk to families about how their child handles change and the strategies they use to help their child cope with change.
- Plan to have the child and family visit the new group more than once if possible.
- Invite the new educator to visit the child in their room numerous times.
- Talk about change, starting from 2 weeks before the transition.
- Don't talk about the transition in terms of concern or sorrow.
- Talk about their new educator every day in general conversation.
- Celebrate the child's last day in the room with a special snack or by signing a special song you have made together.
- Be sure to say goodbye.

Transition to School:

- When a child first attends school, there is a great change for that child and for their family. We believe that the child's parents are the most important link in this transition.
- The better the transition between home and school, the better the education: that's the message of recent research.
- The Service will always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.
- Toward the end of each year transition visits are arranged with the local school so as to familiarise the children with the school environment.

8. 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.

Forms & Records:	Enrolment Checklist Enrolment Form Change of Details Excursion Authorisation Form Individual Child Profile Initial Enquiry Questions New Enrolment Medical Conditions & Healthcare Needs Management Plan Medical Conditions Risk Management and Communication Plan Orientation Checklist Staff/Parent Parent Handbook Parent Handbook Abridged Version Permission for Child to Arrive and Depart Unaccompanied (Vacation Care) Permission Form for Under Age Collection Permission to Collect / Place Children Off / On Bus to Arrive Depart from Service Permission to Delivery / Collect Children from Preschool / P012 College / Primary School / Private Residence
Related MTHCS Policy / Procedure:	Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy Administration of Medication Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Complaints and Grievances Policy Delivery and Collection of Children Policy Excursions and Service Events Policy Family Law and Access Policy Fees Policy Food Safety Policy Hygiene Policy Inclusion and Equity Policy Parental Interaction and Involvement Policy Physical Environment Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy – Early Years Services Relaxation and Sleep Policy Staffing Policy
References:	Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework Early Years Learning Development Framework Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000, included in the Legislative Extracts: www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/Operation/Pages/InstructionSheets.aspx Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/ Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/

	Priority for allocating places in child care services: www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/Operation/Pages/Priorityforallocatingplacesinchildcareservices.aspx Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria: www.education.vic.gov.au
Legislation:	A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), as amended 2011 Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2011 Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2012 Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011 Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004
Standards:	National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities QA2 – 2.1.1 – Each child's health needs are supported 2.1.4 - Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines. 2.2.1 – Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child. 2.3.1 – Children are adequately supervised at all times. 2.3 – Each child is protected 2.3.2 – Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury. 2.3.3 - Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented. 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 6.2 - Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected. 6.3.2 - Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities ISO 9001:2015 – 8.5, 7.5.3

MTHCS Early Years Services operate over two different regulatory requirements, Education and Care National Regulations 2011 and Children's Services Regulations 2009, differentiating Kindergarten services from Child Care Subsidy services. To reduce the list of Policies and Procedures produced, MTHCS Early Years Services have combined these documents. Delegations will only be referenced under the Education and Care National Regulations 2011,

however this would be equivalent to the same delegation as the Children's Services Regulations 2009 as needed but not stated.	
Education and Care National Regulations 2011	**Children's Services Regulations 2009**
The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control	The Licensee
The Nominated Supervisor or Persons in Day to Day Charge	Primary Nominee
Certified Supervisors	Approved Nominee or Accepted Nominee