

Banyule City Council Kindergarten Central Registration

Policy and Procedure April 2025



1 Document control

Record Number	Policy and Procedure April 2025
Date Created	16 April 2025
Next review date	16 April 2026
Business Unit	Early Childhood Services
Responsible Officer	Early Childhood Services Community Liaison Officer

1. Introduction

The Banyule Kindergarten Central Registration Service (Banyule KCRS) supports access for eligible children to funded three- and four-year-old kindergartens in Banyule by providing a centralised registration and allocation system for 26 local standalone kindergarten services.

The service is supported by the Victorian Department of Education (DE) through a funding agreement and aligns with the:

- Department of Education CRES Best Practice Guide
- State Government early childhood reform agenda called Best Start Best Life
- Banyule Community Vision 2041 and Banyule City Plan 2021-2025

Banyule Kindergarten Registration Service Objective

The Banyule KCRS seeks support, access and engagement with funded three- and four-year-old kindergarten in standalone preschool services by streamlining and consolidating the process of registration for both families and preschool service providers.

2. Background

The Central Kindergarten Enrolment Policy (now known as the Banyule KCRS) for funded 4-Year-old Kindergarten was initially adopted by Banyule City Council in consultation with the then Banyule Preschool Association Inc. (BPSA) in 2001. After consultation with key stakeholders during 2013, this amended policy was then adopted by Banyule City Council in September 2013 to be implemented from 1 January 2014.

In 2022, with the introduction of the State Government funded 3-year-old kindergarten, Banyule Council expanded the service to include 3-year-old kindergarten registrations.

In September 2023, Banyule Council entered into an agreement with the Department of Education (DE) to provide a funded centralised kindergarten registration service that is free for eligible families. Effective from 2024, Council removed the \$35 administrative fee that had previously been charged to families to access the service.

This latest policy and procedure update has incorporated:

- The operational policy settings that will apply from 2026 for the Best Start Best Life reforms.
- DE funding requirements for Council to deliver a free kindergarten centralised registration service.

3. Scope

The policy and procedures outlined in this document apply to the processes for receiving registrations and allocating 3 and 4 kindergarten places to the 26 standalone kindergarten services in the Banyule KCRS.

4. Principles

The guiding principles for the administration of the Banyule KCRS are:

- Three- and four-year-old kindergarten are universal programs, funded by the Victorian Government for all Victorian children two years before primary school.
- Kindergarten is an early childhood education program that supports every child's lifelong learning development and wellbeing.
- Research shows that early children education programs such as kindergarten reduces disadvantage for children who are vulnerable to poor developmental, learning and wellbeing outcomes.
- Families and children experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability are most at risk of non-participation and face multiple barriers to accessing and using kindergarten programs. Therefore, this group may require additional support to access and use kindergarten services.
- Information collected from families is consistent, supports access, and aligns with:

- Department of Education Kindergarten Funding Guide and Priority of Access requirements
 - Council's Information Privacy policy
- The registration process should be easy to access, simple to understand, not too onerous for families and as transparent as possible for the community.
- Processes and procedures support collaboration with kindergarten services and other community service providers to proactively engage families and provides additional support to vulnerable and disadvantaged families when required.
- Kindergarten places are managed in a manner that maximises access and participation for every child in our community.

5. Relevant legislative and policy setting documents

This document has been developed to ensure that the Banyule KCRS complies with the following legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Victoria)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Victoria)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Information Privacy Act 2000 (Victoria)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Victoria)

This policy procedures document aligns with the following Banyule and state frameworks, plans, guidelines and policy agendas:

- Banyule Community Vision 2041
- Council Plan 2021-2025 (including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- Inclusive Banyule
- Banyule Privacy Policy
- Victorian Government Kindergarten Funding Guide
- Victorian Government CRES Practice Guide
- Victorian Government early childhood reform called Best Start Best Life (including the operational policy setting which will apply from 2026)
- Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022
- Victorian Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

6. Definitions

Banyule Kindergarten Centralised Registration Service (Banyule KCRS)	Term used for the Banyule City Council Kindergarten Centralised Registration System for 26 kindergarten services in the municipality.
Kindergarten (also called preschool or kinder)	An education program for children aged between three and five years provided by a qualified early childhood teacher and funded by the Victorian Government. Children attend three- and four-year-old kindergarten in the two years before they commence primary school (<i>see section 7 Kindergarten Eligibility</i>).
Banyule Kindergarten	A standalone kindergarten services within Banyule operated by a volunteer Committee of Management or Early Years Management (EYM) organisation that participates in the Banyule KCRS.

Applicant	A parent or guardian who has completed an online registration for 3- or 4-year-old kindergarten through the Banyule KCRS.
Registration	An online form for families to register for either 3 or 4 year old kindergarten in the following year. Completed forms submitted to the Banyule KCRS are confirmed in an “Acknowledgement of Registration” email sent to the applicant.
Date of registration	The date of receipt of a completed registration and confirmed in an “Acknowledgement of Registration” email sent to the applicant.
Department of Education (DE)	The department authorised by the Victorian Government to oversee the provision of kindergarten services and funding.
Deferral	Option available for a child whose birthday falls at the latter end of the DE age eligibility (1 January – 30 April) to delay the commencement of kindergarten by 1 year.
Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)	Early Start Kindergarten gives eligible children 15 hours of free kindergarten a week for 2 years before starting school. A child eligible for Early Start Kindergarten is a child who is aged three by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten, and who has been identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander has had contact with child protection, in out of home care or is from an asylum seeker/refugee background.
Early Years Management (EYM)	Local government or not for profit community-based organisations that provide professional leadership and centralised management of three or more funded kindergarten services.
Kindergarten Volunteer Committee of Management	A volunteer group of people who oversee the management of a not-for-profit funded kindergarten service that operates under an Incorporated Association business model.
Allocations	The process of allocating a registered child to a kindergarten service.
Offers	Communication (via a “Kindergarten Placement Offer” email) advising the applicant a child has been allocated to a kindergarten and requesting that the applicant accept, decline or defer the offer.
CALD Outreach Worker	Support worker for migrant and refugee children and families to engage with and access funded kindergarten services. The Early Years Engagement Officer encompasses this role at Banyule Council.

7. Kindergarten Registration Eligibility

The Banyule Kindergarten Registration Service is available for families whose children are eligible by their age to attend funded 3- or 4-year-old kindergarten in the year for which the child is seeking to register.

The Victorian Government Kindergarten Funding Guide requires that children receive one year of funded three-year-old kindergarten and one year of four-year-old kindergarten.

Some children may also be eligible for a second year of funded three-year-old kindergarten or four-year-old kindergarten. *For more information about second year of funded kindergarten refer to Section 13 on page 8.*

When can a child attend Kindergarten?	
3-Year-Old Kindergarten	<p>Children who are three years of age on 1 January or who will turn 3 years of age by 30th April in the year they are attending three-year-old kindergarten.</p> <p>Children who are eligible for a second year of funded three-year-old kindergarten (from 2026).</p>
4-Year-Old Kindergarten	<p>Children who are four years of age as of 1 January or who will turn four years of age by 30th April in the year, they are attending four-year-old kindergarten.</p> <p>Children who are eligible for a second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten.</p>

Kindergarten eligibility is published on Banyule City Council's website and can be confirmed using the [starting age calculator](#) on the Victorian Government DE website.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Early Years Managers/Kindergarten Volunteer Committee of Management

- Adhere to the Kindergarten Registration timelines set out by Council annually.
- Determine their 3- and 4-year-old Kindergarten program, session times and the hours of attendance on an annual basis through consultation and agreement with Banyule City Council.
- Inform the Banyule City Council by the end of second term:
- Number of places to be held for second year of funded kindergarten' number of places in the three-year-old program and in the four-year-old program for the following year.
 - Total number of places available for three-year-old and four-year-old kindergarten and details of indicative program and sessions times.
 - Any variations to the information relating to the kindergarten service to be updated on the kindergarten registration database and Banyule City Council's website.
- Participate in the annual Kindergarten Open Day, which occurs on the last Saturday in February.
- Appoint a Kindergarten Enrolment Officer.
- Enrol a child who has accepted a place with a kindergarten service through the Banyule Kindergarten Registration Service and allocate the child to a session or program in accordance with the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide and Education and Care National Law and Regulations.
- Establish a professional relationship with families of children who have registered and provide them with detailed information about sessions times, educational philosophy and program, policies and day to day service procedures.
- Adhere to the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide, its early childhood education services priority of access criteria and the service's own policies when allocating children to session times and programs.
- Maintain a current enrolment policy and provide this policy to families and Council upon request.

Banyule Kindergarten Registration Service

- Promote through the Banyule City Council website and other community development, communication and marketing initiative, the benefits for children and families lifelong learning and wellbeing in participating at kindergarten/preschool.
- Publish information about kindergarten services in Banyule, registrations process, contact details and other relevant information on the Banyule City Council website.
- Maintain and operate Kindergarten Central Registration database and software platform that adheres to the selection criteria and allocation and offers process outlined in this policy.
- Accept registrations through Council's website, by phone or other methods for eligible children and allocate children to kindergarten services and maintain a waitlist in line with the provisions outlined in this policy and procedures document.
- Communicate with families about the status of their registration in a timely manner.

- Set an annual timetable for the Banyule Kindergarten Registration Services in relation to registration opening date and allocations.
- Support kindergarten services to set capacities in response to community demand and DE kindergarten funding guide requirements and initiatives.
- Where a child has accepted a place at a kindergarten, provide children's registration information to that kindergarten services in a timely manner.
- Collect and handle the required information to process family and children's registration in a manner that is compliant with Victorian Information Privacy Law and ensures kindergarten services are provided with the required information to facilitate children's enrolments at their service.
- Adhere to the DE Kindergarten Funding Guide, its early childhood education services priority of access criteria and the service's own policies when allocating children to session times and programs.

9. Kindergarten service program and session times

Programs, session times and hours are determined by individual kindergarten services and in consultation with Banyule City Council and DE. They are informed by multiple factors such as:

- Local demand and number of registrations received by the Banyule KCRS.
- Victorian Government Best Start Best Life Reform (including the operational policy setting which will apply from 2026).
- Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations (2011).
- DE Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- Consultation with kindergarten service current and prospective users.
- Financial viability of the service.
- Other unique local circumstances that may impact on a kindergarten service's capacity.

As the factors outlined above are fluid and subject to change, kindergarten services and Banyule Council may, prior to the kindergarten year commencing, alter and adjust programs, session times and hours of attendance to ensure the kindergarten services' viability and/or are responding to community need.

10. Registration Procedure

Kindergarten registrations for the following year will open 1 March (or where the 1 March falls on a weekend, the Monday following) at 8:30am.

Families can register using the online form on the Banyule City Council website - www.banyule.vic.gov.au Application forms can also be requested to be emailed or posted out by contacting the kindergarten support officer on 9490 4222.

Eligible children should be registered in the name identified on the birth certificate or passport for Australian-born children, or on the passport or travel documents for children born overseas.

A separate online kindergarten registration application must be submitted for each eligible child.

Children registered for three-year-old kindergarten at a participating kindergarten must register for four-year-old kindergarten in the following year through the Banyule KCRS.

Families and guardians can select up to three Banyule kindergarten services in order of preference.

Information collected on the registration form is required to ensure allocations and waitlists are processed in accordance with DE Kindergarten Funding Guide and the Banyule Kindergarten Registration Services local criteria outline in section 16 on pages 9 and 10.

A Council Officer will audit registration information provided by families and contact families from time to time to validate and confirm and/or update information provided for the purposes of processing a registration and/or kindergarten places and managing the waitlist in accordance with this policy and procedure document.

Once a registration has been submitted applicants will receive confirmation via email.

11. Changing Kindergarten Preferences

Kindergarten preferences can be changed anytime up until 30 June to be included in the first rounds of allocations and offers.

Preferences can be changed by:

- Emailing kindergartens@banyule.vic.gov.au.
- Updating a registration using the buttons located in the registration acknowledgement email.
- Phoning 9490 4222.

Changes made to any preferences after the 30 June will be included in future allocations and offers.

Changes to preferences received once an allocation process has commenced but is not complete will be included in the proceeding allocation round.

Changes made to a first preference are considered a new registration and the date of variation is updated to the new registration date.

Changes to a second or third preferences will not impact the original date of registration.

12. Deferring a Registration

Some children whose date of birth falls at the latter end of DE age eligibility criteria (1 January – 30 April) have the option to attend three- or four-year-old kindergarten in the year they turn three or four, or in the following year.

Where a child has the option of the year they attend, and they accept a position in the year they turn three or four, the position at a kindergarten can be deferred to the following year.

Deferments for children who have commenced a funded 3- or 4-year-old program is usually made by the end of February of their initial year of attendance. The application will retain its original date of registration.

Deferring a registration, only applies to the program the child is originally registered for. Registration of a three-year-old place cannot be deferred to a four-year-old place in the following year.

Parents and guardians can defer a kindergarten place by emailing kindergartens@banyule.vic.gov.au or by clicking on the 'Defer Kindergarten Start' link provided in the 'Kindergarten Placement Offer' email sent to families when a child is allocated to a kindergarten service.

13. Second Year of Funded Kindergarten

A small number of children will be recommended by a kindergarten teacher for a second year of funded three-year-old or four-year-old kindergarten. The DE Kindergarten Funding Guide states that, a second year of funded kindergarten may be considered when a child shows delays in learning and development and when:

- The kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning setting for the child; and
- The child will achieve better learning outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.

The DE Best Start Best Life Reform policy setting allows for eligible children to access either second year of three-year-old funded kindergarten or a second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten, but not both.

Families do not need to submit a new registration when children are eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten. Positions are secured by kindergarten services prior to the Allocations and Offers Process commencing.

Where a child eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten would like to transfer to a different Banyule Kindergarten service or from outside the Banyule Kindergarten Registration Service, it is allowed. To facilitate this, the family should contact the Kindergarten Support Officer by emailing kindergartens@banyule.vic.gov.au or by phoning 9490 4222 to facilitate a registration at their preferred kindergarten service for the following year.

14.Late Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registrations do not have a closing date; therefore, applications may be submitted after they open in March the year before the kindergarten programs commences and throughout the remainder of the year before and can also be submitted in the year of attendance.

Kindergarten applications received after the allocation process has commenced will be positioned on the waiting list in accordance with the Kindergarten Allocation and Offer Procedure (section 16).

15.Unfunded places

Unfunded places are where children attend kindergarten and are not eligible for kindergarten funding because they have already received the funding in a previous year or are currently receiving funding at another service.

Banyule Kindergarten Registration Service does not currently provide access to unfunded kindergarten places. However, Council may consider negotiating access to unfunded kindergarten places with local kindergarten service providers, where there is proven community need and benefit, and where provisions are in place to ensure that:

- A child receiving an unfunded place does not take the place of a child eligible for kindergarten funding at any point in time during the kindergarten year.
- Families with children eligible for kindergarten funding are not disadvantaged.

16.Kindergarten Allocation and Offers Procedure

16.1 Selection Criteria

All applications for 3- and 4-year-old are processed according to DE Kindergarten Funding Guide requirements (Priority 1), followed by Banyule City Council local area allocation priority groups and order.

Victorian Kindergarten Funding Guide- Priority for Access for Early Childhood services		Criteria for processing or verifying
Priority 1	Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in out-of-home care	<p>The child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eligible for ESK, and/or. • family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to Child Protection or in out-of-home care, and/or. • referred by one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Protection ○ Child and family services (family services referral and support team, ○ Child FIRST/integrated family services/ Services Connect case worker) ○ Maternal and Child Health nurse ○ Out-of-home care provider.
	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	On the registration, the families have the option to confirm that they identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
	Asylum seeker and refugee children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or family holds a visa or supporting documentation and information, including an ImmiCard, identifying the child and/or parents,

		<p>carers or legal guardians as a refugee or asylum seeker, and/or.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD Outreach Worker.
	<p>Children with additional needs, defined as children who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are diagnosed with an identified specific disability or developmental delay require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program require a combination of services which are individually planned 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, and/or has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program, and/or has been referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the National Disability Insurance Scheme Early Childhood Intervention Services Preschool Field Officer Maternal and Child Health nurse, or Is assessed as having delays in 2 or more areas and is confirmed eligible for a second year of funded Three or Four-Year-Old Kindergarten by a qualified kindergarten teacher.

Banyule City Council local area allocation priorities		Criteria for processing or verifying
Priority 2	Deferral	Children whose birthdate falls between 1 January and 30 April who were offered a position, accepted the position and then chose to defer their place from the previous year.
Priority 3	Children and families who qualify for continuity of kindergarten service.	<p>Children who attended the 3-year-old kindergarten program at a nominated kindergarten and register to attend the 4-year-old kindergarten program at the same kindergarten.</p> <p>Children who have a sibling that is already allocated to the kindergarten, and they will be attending in the same year.</p>
Priority 4	Banyule City Council Residents (and date of registration)	The address provided is located in the City of Banyule and the child resides at this address.
Priority 5	Non-Residents with a link to Council (and date of registration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children whose carers reside in the municipality Children with a parent or guardian who works within the Banyule municipality.
Priority 6	All other applications including non-residents (and date of registration)	All other eligible children.

16.2 Kindergarten Allocation and Offer Process

The Kindergarten Registration Services will process bulk allocations and offers from July to August over three rounds. After the third bulk allocation and offers round, waitlists and new registrations will be processed weekly and as required.

Each applicant will be offered a kindergarten place at one of three preferences listed on the registration form. A second preference kindergarten will be offered to an applicant only after all places at the kindergarten service listed as a first preference have been filled. A third preference kindergarten will be offered to an applicant only after all places at the kindergarten service listed as a first and second preference have been filled. Where there are no vacancies for first, second or third preference kindergartens, the applicant is placed on the waiting list and notified accordingly.

Details of registered children who have accepted an offer of a kindergarten place will be forwarded onto kindergarten enrolment officer after the third round of offers have been completed.

The Selection Criteria will be adhered to for kindergarten allocations and placement offers at all times.

Priority groups 4, 5 and 6 are processed in order of date of application received. When there are more registrations received than positions available at a preferred kindergarten and where registrations are equal in priority and registration date, the kindergarten registration software platform allocates positions randomly using a ballot algorithm.

The Kindergarten Support Officer will notify each applicant of their allocated kindergarten via SMS, and email. Families have one week to respond to an offer of a kindergarten place.

Council holds places at kindergartens to ensure that access is available for families who meet the Priority 1 selection criteria and will release a hold once it is confirmed a place is no longer be required.

The Banyule Kindergarten Registration Service may cancel/withdraw any application if a response is not received within the required timeline (7 days).

16.3 Acceptance/Refusal of Offers

Upon receipt of an offer the applicant can respond using the link provided in the email, or by directly emailing or phoning the Kindergarten Support team.

Options include:

- Acceptance of the offer
- Deferral to the following year only after an offer has been accepted (option for children born between 1 January – 30 April)
- Cancel/withdrawal of the application
- Waiting list for first preference kindergarten

16.4 Changes of Kindergarten Preferences after accepting a Kindergarten offer

Any changes of preferences received by email after accepting an offer will be considered a new registration and the date of variation will be recorded as the new date of registration.

17. Waiting List

At each round of bulk kindergarten allocations and offers the Kindergarten Support Officer will notify applicants who have not been allocated a place at any of their preferred kindergartens. Applicants may choose to add additional preferences to increase their chance of getting an offer in a subsequent processing round which will not affect their original date of registration.

Where families decline or change their first preference, the date of application will be updated to the date of variation in first preference.

If a family declines a second or third preference, the date of application does not change.

Once a kindergarten offer has been accepted by the applicant, they are not eligible to be on the waiting list for an alternative kindergarten service.

The waiting list priority is managed in accordance with the Selection Criteria and Kindergarten Offer Process with further placement offers being made as vacancies arise.

18.Complaints and Grievances

Complaints, grievances and appeals in relation to the kindergarten registration or kindergarten offer allocation process can be made to the Banyule City Council's Early Childhood Services Community Liaison Officer (03) 9457 9954.

Feedback can also be directed through Banyule City Council's:

- Website
- Customer service centres located at:
 - 1 Flintoff Street, Greensborough, 3088; and
 - Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, 275 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe, 3079
- Main phone line 9490 4222

Banyule City Council's Customer Complaints Management Policy is available on the website and upon request.

19.Assessment of individual circumstances

Final decisions about the assessment to assist individual circumstances not set out as part of this policy will be forwarded to Banyule City Council's Early Childhood Services Coordinator.