



Admissions, Enrolment and Orientation

Children's Services Policy No 1.1

Date issued: April 2015

Replaces issue: Admissions Policy 2006, Children's Services Staff – Child Placement

Date effective: 10 November 2015

Date revised and updated: January 2019, October 2020, February 2022 and December 2022

Aim:

- To ensure that all available education and care places are allocated to families in an equitable and reasonable manner.
- To enable the service to support families through the placement of siblings within the same service.
- To manage the risks and conflicts associated with the placement of children directly within the work environment of a Willoughby City Council parent/carer/staff member.

Background Information:

Council operated education and care services receive Federal funding in the form of the Child Care Subsidy.

Relevant Legislation:

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
- [Public Health Amendment \(Review\) Act 2017](#)
- [NSW Public Health Regulation 2012](#), (Part 7, Division 2, Sections 42-44A)
- [Children \(Education and Care Services National Law Application\) Act 2010](#)
- [NSW Public Health Act 2010](#), (Part 5, Division 4, Sections 85-88)
- [A New Tax System \(Family Assistance\) Act 1999](#)

Resources:

- [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) – Australian Government Department of Education
- [Early Childhood Education](#) - NSW Department of Education
- [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority - National Quality Standard](#)
 - **Quality Area 6:**
 - Standard 6.1 - Element 6.1.1; Element 6.1.2; and Element 6.1.3

Note: In this policy "staff" and "educators" refers to staff employed within Children's Services by Willoughby City Council.

Practices: When a vacancy exists in an education and care services, the following practices will apply:

1. Children already attending the service will have priority of placement over potential new enrolments.
2. Siblings of children currently enrolled, who are on the waiting list for the service, will have priority over other families on the waiting list (this is to promote family grouping and to alleviate problems families encounter with the use of multiple education and care services). However, the service does not guarantee that a sibling will be offered

a place at the service. Due to the high demand for education and care, especially for children under 2 years of age, we recommend that families allow for alternative education and care arrangements in case a place is not available at the preferred service.

3. Where a Council staff member who is a parent/carer applies for and is provided care at a service where they do not work they are to follow the policies, procedures and practices of that service.

These practices will also apply to Children and Youth Services staff who are parents/carers and wish to access Council's education and care services.

Long Day Care staff

Given the developmental age of children attending Long Day Care and the distress they may experience as a result of being cared for in the same environment where their parent/carer/staff member also works, placement will not be permitted at any time. This decision has been made by reason of the following:

1. What is in the best interests of the child;
2. The difficulty for a parent/carer/staff member to dissociate as a parent/carer when their child is within their work environment impairing their ability to appropriately care for other children;
3. On balance of argument where the inability to appropriately manage all possible conflict that can arise outweighs the care needs of the parent/carer/staff member; and
4. The negative impact that can occur on the quality of service provision.

It is strongly advised that staff affected by the above practice consider the current level of demand for education and care and make the earliest possible enquiries to place their children on the waiting list for an alternative education and care service that they deem appropriate.

OOSH Services staff

Given the developmental age and understanding of school aged children, OOSH services staff may enrol their child in the service where they work. However, in circumstances whereby the OOSH Service's Nominated Supervisor, Children and Youth Services Team Leader and Community Life Manager determine that a staff's education and care arrangement is negatively impacting on the service, Council retains the right, with adequate notice, to discontinue the placement.

Administration, Management and staff

If Children and Youth Services administration, management and parent/carer/staff members do not share the same work environment as their child they may enrol them in their chosen service.

Federal Government Priority of Access Guidelines

Previous Priority of Access Guidelines no longer apply, these were abolished in July 2018

Enrolment Procedure Children & Youth Services staff

Where a staff member is requesting placement for their child in an OOSH service or the centre where they work, the following procedures will apply:

1. Staff members are required to place their child's name on the waiting list and will be subject to the same guidelines as other applicants.
2. Prior to placement, each individual case situation will be discussed with the parent/carer/staff member and the service's Nominated Supervisor to ensure the placement will be workable for all involved.

3. Following placement at the service, the Nominated Supervisor and parent/carer/staff member will continuously monitor the arrangement to ensure no conflict arises.
4. Whilst at the service, and under the care of staff other than the parent/carer/staff member, the same policies will apply to the child as applies to all others attending the service.
5. Where a parent/carer/staff member's child becomes unwell while attending the service, policy may dictate that their child be accompanied from the premises and possibly excluded until deemed well. At this time as with any other parent it is the parent/carer/staff member's responsibility to negotiate time off with their direct Supervisor or arrange for the collection and care of their child.

At all times consideration should be given to the following prior to approving placement:

- What is in the best interests of the child/children.
- How the parent/carer/staff member and other staff will have any concerns addressed.
- Parent/staff member has actively given thought to enrolling their child in another comparable service.
- Confidentiality issues.

Service Approvals

Long Day Care and OOSH Services are approved services under the Education and Care Services National Regulations. The approval to operate an Education and Care Service stipulates the age and total number of the children that are able to attend the service. These vary between services.

Long Day Care

As part of the enrolment process parents are asked to:

- Complete the child's enrolment information through the My Family Lounge tab on Council's website under [Enrol Your Child](#) prior to the child's commencement date.
- Provide a duly certified copy of a birth certificate, Australian Citizenship or passport within 6 weeks of commencement of care or let the Nominated Supervisor sight originals.
- Provide proof of their child's immunisation status.
** **As of January 2018**, children **cannot** attend Long Day Care if they are not immunised.
- Make an appointment with the Nominated Supervisor to review the enrolment information. (We encourage parents to bring their child/ren to this appointment).
- Book in orientation visits for their child/ren prior to the commencement date. Parents are required to remain with the child/ren at all orientation visits.
- Allow sufficient time on the child's first day to settle the child into the service

Out of School Hours Services (OOSH)

The out of school hours and vacation care services at Artarmon OOSH and Chatswood OOSH provide care for children aged between 5 and 12 years of age.

The ability of these services to provide care to a child who has turned 12 years of age during the child's 12th year is based on the following:

1. The child is still in primary school. Children who turn 12 years of age and are still in primary school are able to continue their enrolment for the remainder of the primary school year.
2. If the child is in their 12th year and has not attended their first day of high school the child may attend the Christmas Holiday Vacation Care program,
3. Children who have turned 13 years of age prior to commencing grade 6 are not able to attend OOSH services.

As part of the enrolment process for all Out of School Hours Services parents are asked to:

- Complete the child's enrolment information through the My Family Lounge tab on Council's website under Enrol Your Child prior to the child's commencement date.
- Visit the centre with your child/children prior to the commencement date. Parents are required to remain with the child/ren during this visit.

Required notification Periods for withdrawing/reducing days of enrolment for Long Day Care Centres and OOSH

Parents are required to provide the service with **4 weeks' written notice** of their intent to withdraw their child or reduce their child's enrolment at the centre. If a family cancels or adjusts their child's enrolment without the required 4 week notice period, fees will be charged and due for payment.

Where the service is able to offer the place to another family during this time the vacating family will not be charged the fees.

- **Please note that during December or January the 4 weeks' notification period does not apply.**
- **Where a family has a confirmed booking for December and January the service will not accept any cancellation or changes to the booking pattern and the family is liable for all fees incurred.**
- **No refunds will be given should a family decide to leave the centre early, take a holiday, or access other services, such as Vacation Care prior to their child starting school.**

Vacation Care Enrolment

Enrolment in vacation care opens 2 weeks prior to gazetted school holidays. Parents can enrol and [book](#) their child into vacation care online.

**** Parents are not guaranteed a place in the vacation care program.**

Individual Needs of children – All Services

All children that attend an education and care service have individual needs. The enrolment process is designed to identify and address these needs prior to the child's first day to ensure that the staff/educators are able to effectively settle children in at the centre.

Individual needs may include:

- Special dietary considerations
- Allergies
- Medication requirements
- Learning Difficulties
- Physical/emotional/intellectual difficulties
- Nurturing requirements, such as settling techniques
- Non English Speaking strategies
- Any other concern the family identifies.

Parents are asked to identify any of these individual needs when completing the enrolment information online.

If the child is receiving assistance from other organisations, such as speech therapy, then permission will be sought to contact that service to discuss the child's progress, current program and any specific strategies that the service may need to follow. This will assist the educators to begin programming for the child at the appropriate level.

The centre will aim to work with other agencies to ensure that the individual child's needs are being met and maintained.

Where the child has been identified as having an ongoing high support need as defined by the Federal Government in relation to the Child Care Inclusion Support Program, the Nominated Supervisor will investigate the availability of funding for the child. This process **cannot** occur until the child has attended the centre.

Families must understand that the availability of funding is subject to Federal Government guidelines, including diagnosis, level of disability and availability of funds.

Whilst the centre will assist the family to complete the application process the centre is not involved in the decision of how much funding may be provided, or if funding will be provided at all by the Federal Government.

Other Special Needs agencies will be contacted to assist where possible in the inclusion of children with high support needs.

Orientation Process For Under School Age

Orientation is a vital component to settling children into education and care.

For many children, commencing education and care may be their first experience of being separated from a parent. Most children will experience some anxiety leaving their parents and it is therefore essential that educators and parents work together to establish a successful orientation process for each child. Children who have experienced education and care before may still require a lot of support when they start at a new service.

Parents are encouraged to help their child to settle into the service by organising several visits prior to the child's first day of being left at the service.

These visits may only be for up to a half hour or hour at a time and at different periods of the day to allow the child to become familiar with various routines. Parents are required to remain at the service with their child during these visits.

We appreciate at times that parents may find it difficult to make attend orientation visits. If this is the case, we ask parents to consider if there is a friend or relative who may be able to bring the children along to these visits.

During the orientation visits, the child and parent(s) will be introduced to the educator(s) who will be working with the child. Educator(s) will talk to the parent(s) about their values and expectations in relation to the child's learning, as well as encouraging parents to share their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs (interests to be incorporated within the program).

Once enrolment has commenced we ask parents to consider only leaving the child for short half day visits for the first week. This will assist the child to settle even further. A full 8 or 10 hour day can be very distressing and long for a child who is experiencing separation anxiety.

Strategies that may assist parents:

- Be confident yourself, if you are anxious this will negatively influence the way your child feels.
- Ensure your child has a security object, such as a teddy, blanket or something that belongs to you/them from home.
- Always tell your child when you are going and when you will be back. It is best to first warn the child and his/her primary caregiver you will be leaving soon. Then when it is

time, tell the child you will be back after lunch, afternoon tea etc., say a quick goodbye and leave the child's room promptly. Your child's primary caregiver will support your child to join the program.

- Parents are encouraged to phone the service at any time to discuss the progress of their child.
- You will be given information about how your child is settling when you arrive to collect him/her at the end of the day.

Orientation process for School Age Children

Whilst children in school aged services may be less likely to experience separation issues, they may still experience anxiety and fear of being in an unfamiliar environment.

Kindergarten children especially are in the process of change as they commence formal schooling and may be anxious about OOSH.

Parents are encouraged to bring their child to the service prior to their first formal OOSH session. This provides an opportunity for the staff and children to meet, and also allows for the child to be shown around the venue.

Where additional support is required for children who are finding it difficult to settle, the Nominated Supervisor will discuss alternative strategies with the parents.

Re-enrolment in the service for the following year

A re-enrolment process will occur during the last quarter of each year for the following year.

- Parents will be asked to specify care requirements for the following year when completing the enrolment information online.
- For children who will be starting school at the end of January parents are asked to select their required days of education and care up to and including the last day of care required before the child starts school.
- Once the family has received confirmation of their attendance for the following year the service will not accept any changes to this enrolment pattern during December or January. This requirement overrides the 4 weeks' written notification period throughout December and January of each year.
- Where a family has a confirmed booking for December and January the family is liable for fees incurred. No refunds will be given should a family decide to leave the centre early, take a holiday, or access other services, such as Vacation Care prior to their child starting school.