

FREE KINDERGARTEN INITIATIVE GUIDELINES



Child, Youth & Family

1. Purpose and Intent

This guideline outlines the responsibilities of the City of Casey when participating in the Department of Education's Free Kindergarten Initiative.

2. Scope

This guideline will apply to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents, children and others kindergarten services managed by the City of Casey.

3. Definitions

Key Term	Definition
Approved Provider	An individual or organisation, such as City of Casey, that has completed an application form and been approved by the Regulatory Authority as fit and proper (in accordance with Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the National Law) to operate one or more education and care services.
Department of Education	The State Government Department responsible for ensuring services comply with the Kindergarten Priority of Access, Kindergarten Funding Guide and the Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme Funding Requirements.
Kindergarten Funding Guide	The Kindergarten Funding Guide is developed by DE and provides operational guidance relating to policies, access, and inclusion and eligibility criteria.
Nominated Supervisor	A person who is the Responsible Person in Day-to-Day Charge and has been nominated by the Approved Provider (City of Casey) of the service under Part 3 of the Act to be the Nominated Supervisor of that service, and who has consented to that nomination. The Nominated Supervisor has day-to-day responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor.
Person with Management and Control	Individuals responsible for managing the delivery of a service or those who have significant influence over its activities. PMCs have specific legal obligations for ensuring compliance within early childhood education and care providers.



4. Background

As part of the State Government’s Best Start, Best Life Reform, free kindergarten is available for Victorian 3- and 4-year-old children at participating services. Families do not need to have a Health Care Card or Pension card, Australian citizenship, or proof of address to be eligible to access.

The City of Casey has opted in to the Victorian Government Free Kinder initiative. To be eligible, children can only receive Free Kinder at one service at a time. If a child attends more than one service that offers a funded kindergarten program (e.g. a sessional service for some days and a long day care service on other days), the family must nominate for the City of Casey service to be the Free Kinder service.

The City of Casey adheres to the Kindergarten Funding Guide as set out by the Department of Education, whereby a child must have commenced at the kindergarten to be eligible to claim kindergarten funding and access the free kindergarten program.

5. Responsibilities for this guideline

<p>Child Youth and Family Management, Person with Management or Control or the Approved Provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strong leadership that supports a culture of child safety in the everyday practice of City of Casey employees. • Provide educators with clear guidelines, policies and procedures. • Ensure compliance with the Kindergarten Funding Guide. • Ensure that the Child’s Enrolment Record complies with National Regulations. • Ensure that any surplus funding is used in line with acceptable uses of kindergarten funding, including promoting increased participation and/or enhance program quality.
<p>Kindergarten Enrolment and Planning Team (KEP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise families about program funding and government support options. • Collect all relevant information and maintain records. • Collect data on kindergarten commencement and participation. • Comply with the Privacy and Confidentiality guidelines.
<p>Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise families, including potential families, about program funding and government support options. • Contact all new families to determine a commencement date within two operational business days of being notified of a new family being placed at the service. • Ensure the Child’s Enrolment Record is completed prior to the child’s commencement at the service. • Follow up with families if a child has not commenced at a service or is absent for a period. • Notify the Kindergarten Enrolment and Planning team via email if a child does not commence at a service for two weeks.
<p>Parents/Families and service users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Child’s Enrolment Record prior to the child commencing the service. • Provide a signed acceptance letter confirming their child is accessing funding from only one service and return to the service prior to the child commencing kindergarten. • Notify the service of any changes as they occur. • Notify the service regarding any delays to commence kindergarten and/or any leave of absence.

6. Associated documents and attachments

This guideline should be read in conjunction with:

- Enrolment and Orientation guidelines
- Privacy and Confidentiality guidelines
- CRES and Priority of Access guidelines
- Late Commencement and Participation guidelines
- Complaints guidelines

7. Relevant legislation

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Kindergarten Funding Guide
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic), as amended 2011
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2012
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

8. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children or young people who attend services, programs, and events delivered by, and spaces owned or managed by the City of Casey, have the right to feel and be safe. The wellbeing and safety of children and young people in our care will always be our priority.

Council has zero-tolerance of child abuse and is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation where all children and young people are valued and protected from abuse, harm and neglect.

The City of Casey is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children and young people from abuse, harm and neglect is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of Council, its employees, contractors and volunteers.

9. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The City of Casey will ensure:

- Regular monitoring of the implementation of this guideline and its associated documents including training and compliance.
- This guideline and its associated documents are kept up to date with current legislation, policy and best practice.
- Review and evaluation of this guideline and its associated documents as part of the service’s review cycle, or as required.

Reviewed by:	CYF Policy Officer in conjunction with Kindergarten Programs and Early Years and Partnerships
Approved by:	Director – Community Life
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Responsible Department and Team:	CYF Policy Officer Kindergarten Enrolment and Planning Team		

10. Document History

Date changed	Change Type

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