KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

**Purpose**

This policy will provide guidelines for reviewing submissions from families who believe they have exceptional circumstances and need to attend a particular kindergarten and/or group.

**Scope**

This policy applies to the Coordinator of Early Education and Care, Area Leader of Operations and Administration, Community Support & Enrolment Team members and parents/guardians.

**Policy Statement**

Wyndham City is committed to the implementation of an effective registration process to manage all 3-year-old kindergarten and 4-year-old kindergarten registrations in Wyndham City’s Central Registration Scheme.

Wyndham City recognises that at times, there may be exceptional circumstances that require a family to attend a particular kindergarten centre and/or kindergarten group. For this reason, a family may apply under exceptional circumstances to have their registration reviewed by the Central Registration Review Panel.

**Definitions**

***3-Year-Old Kindergarten:*** A program that is provided to three-year-old children that is planned and delivered by a degree qualified Early Childhood Educator.

Three-year-old programs that are delivered by a degree qualified or diploma qualified Early Childhood Educator in a kindergarten setting will be part of Wyndham City’s Central Registration Scheme.

***4-Year-Old Kindergarten:*** A universal early childhood program, funded by the Victorian State Government, for children in the year prior to commencing primary school. Children attending a kindergarten program receive a developmentally appropriate program, planned and delivered by a qualified Early Childhood Educator, which furthers the child’s social, emotional, cognitive, physical and language development. A funded kindergarten program complies with all the requirements of the Victorian Kindergarten Guide 2015.

***Exceptional Circumstance:*** Are events or problems which you did not expect, and which stop you being able to perform to the best of your abilities. Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

* Child and/or parent with a life threatening or debilitating illness or disease;
* Parent with a disability;
* Parent or child with a diagnosed mental illness;
* Court orders that limit choices for kindergartens;
* A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;
* Homelessness;
  + When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:
    - Is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
    - Has no tenure; or
    - If their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
    - Does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

*(Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011)*

* Drug and alcohol misuse;
* Family violence;
* Other situations verifiable by a child/family support service.

***Supporting Documentation:***

* Child and or parent with a life threatening or debilitating illness or disease;
  + Copy of a signed letter from a General Practitioner
* Parent with a disability;
  + Copy of a signed letter from a General Practitioner.
  + Copy of a signed letter from a disability support agency.
  + Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from the Department of Human Services stating that parent/legal guardian has a disability.
* Parent or child with a diagnosed mental illness;
  + Copy of signed letter from a case worker/manager from a mental health or other relevant agency or mental health practitioner stating that the child or parent has a mental illness.
  + Copy of signed letter from a General Practitioner, stating that the child or parent has a mental illness and has a Mental Health Treatment Plan.
* Court orders that limit choices for kindergartens;
  + Copy of related court order.
* A child at risk or serious abuse or neglect;
  + Copy of a referral to a case worker/manager from the Department of Human Services stating that the child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
  + Copy of a referral to a case worker/manager to a Child FIRST program or family support agency, stating that the child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
* Homelessness;
  + Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from a housing support or support agency, stating that the child is homeless or in insecure accommodation as per the homeless definition in this policy and procedure.
* Drug and alcohol misuse;
  + Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager/health professional from a drug and alcohol or support agency, stating that the child’s family has misused drugs and or alcohol.
* Family violence;
  + Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from a family violence or family support agency, stating that the child is at risk due to family violence.
* Other situations verifiable by a child/family support service.
  + Copy of a signed letter from a case worker/manager from a family support agency, stating that the child is at risk.

***Central Registration Review Panel:***

The panel will consist of; The coordinator of Early Education and Care Services and the Area Leader of Operations and Administration.

**Procedures**

**UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES**

* When an application for exceptional circumstances is received at Council, the Community Support & Enrolment Team will:
* Write the date and child’s application number on the request form *(Appendix 1)* under the office use only section.
* Scan and save the request form against the child’s record on the kindergarten central registration system.
* Ensure all details are completed and the appropriate supporting documentation is attached.
* If any details or supporting documentation is missing, they will contact the parent / legal guardian requesting further information by calling the family. If they are unable to reach them by telephone, the will send the family an email.
* When a completed request form is received, they will forward the request form to the Area Leader of Operations and Administration.
* When the Area Leader of Operations and Administration receives the completed request form from the Community Support & Enrolment Team, they will set a meeting with the review panel members to assess the application form.

**REVIEW PANEL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

* The members of the review panel will look over the exceptional circumstances request form and all supporting documentation attached to ensure that the request:
* Relates to one of the exceptional circumstances listed in the definition in this policy;
* Evidence that supports the exceptional circumstance has been attached;
* That the registration cannot be accommodated at another suitable service
* Once all information has been assessed, the panel will decide to either approve the request or decline it.
* Following the Panel’s findings, families will be advised of the outcome in writing as follows:
* If the Exceptional Circumstance is granted, families will be provided with advice on the placement offer.
* If the Exceptional Circumstance is not granted, families will be provided with the reason for the decision, in addition to providing the families with information pertaining to other kindergarten vacancies for consideration.
* The review panel make an informed decision within 15 business days.

**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

* Ensure that a Kindergarten Registration Exceptional Circumstances Request Form is fully completed.
* Ensure that all supporting documentations is attached to the request form as outlined in the policy.

**Appendices**

* Quality Area 6 – Appendix 14 – Kindergarten Registration Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

**Related Policies and Procedures**

* Quality Area 6; Enrolment

**Version Control**

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| **Version** | **Objective ID** | **Action** | **Date** | **Endorsement date** | **Next Review Date** |
| 1 |  | New policy and procedure |  | KK 18/03/2019 | 2020 |