

POLICY STATEMENT Children Services Unit ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

AUTHORISATION

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| POLICY TYPE: | Operational |
| POLICY LOCATION: | Corporate |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: | Children Service Coordinator |
| AUTHORISED BY: | Director Corporate and Community Services |
| DATE ADOPTED: | 17 June 2014 |
| ADOPTED BY: | Manex |
| MINUTE NO: <i>(If required)</i> | |
| REVIEW DUE DATE: | August 2024 |
| REVISION NUMBER: | |
| RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN | This Policy supports Council's Delivery Program Strategy 4.2: Provide quality, accredited and affordable Education and Care Services within Bland Shire and surrounds (Bland Preschool, Family Day Care, Mobile Resource Unit, Vacation Care and Toy Library services). |

DOCUMENT HISTORY

| VERSION NO. | DATE | DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS <i>Include names of former policies that this policy will replace if applicable</i> | AMENDED BY <i>(Where required)</i> |
|--------------------|--------------|---|--|
| 0 | May 2009 | | CSU Coordinator |
| 1 | July 2012 | | CSU Coordinator |
| 2 | June 2014 | | CSU Coordinator |
| 3 | October 2016 | | CSU Coordinator |
| 4 | May 2018 | | CSU Coordinator |
| 5 | August 2020 | | CSU Coordinator |
| 6 | August 2022 | | CSU Coordinator |

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Policy will be reviewed within two (2) years from the date of adoption or as required in the event of legislative changes. The Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendment that are to the advantage that Council and in the spirit of this Policy. Any amendment to the Policy must

be by way of a Council Resolution for all policies categorised as “Council” policies or the approval of the General Manager for all policies categorised as “Operational” policies.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to guide staff and families through the Enrolment and Orientation process to meet the needs of the child, family, service, regulation compliance and to ensure a fair outcome for all stakeholders.

2. Scope:

This policy document applies to all staff, educators and families seeking enrolment within a Bland Shire Children Services Unit service.

3. Outcomes:

To provide a successful enrolment of children into an early childhood environment. Working with the families, and within regulations to match the needs of the child, family and the service to provide the best outcome for all parties.

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will-

- Ensure the prescribed documentation in regards to a child’s enrolment is accurate, stored accordingly and as per the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Documents are available to the parent of their enrolled child at the service upon request.

The Service will-

- Provide the family with relevant/specific information as required.
- Collaborate with families an orientation plan to provide the best possible start for the child at the service.
- Invite the family to accept or refuse a position within an agreed timeframe with the service.
- Collect all required documentation prior to the commencement of care allowing adequate time for system entries and processing (MRU Placement Agreement).
- Seek information and/or request a meeting with families where there are current family court orders/parent plans in place for an enrolled child.
- Endeavour to provide a translator during the enrolment process if required.
- Encourage families to share information, concerns, anxieties and doubts through the “All About Me” form when enrolling at the service.
- Provide a Family Handbook to all enrolling families.
- Provide access to Harmony Web – Electronic PIN/Signature (MRU & FDC Services only) has been distributed to parents /guardians and nominated authorised persons.
- Upon a successful enrolment the service will encourage ALL families to advise by phone or text message if their child will not be attending their service that day for any reason. If the service does not hear from the parent/family to explain an absence a text message will be sent to the primary parent to confirm their child’s absence. Should the parent not reply a follow up phone call will be made to those families that use the School Bus Services to account for their whereabouts.

The Educators will-

- Participate and interact with children during the orientation process (without compromising ratios and active supervision of other children).
- Become familiar with enrolling children through the enrolment and “About My Child” forms prior to the child commencing. Ensuring any medical conditions are noted, Medical Management Plans are in place and Buddy bags are correct and stored appropriately.

- On the child's first day educators will welcome families and provide a space for the child's belongings. Educators will reassure families, help with separation and communicate with families throughout the day if children are unsettled.

The Families will-

- Be responsible for informing the Nominated Supervisor of any custody and access arrangements at the time of enrolment and at any time an arrangement is changed.
- Provide a current "Up to Date" Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register prior to the commencement of care.
- Remain onsite with their child during any Orientation visit.
- Be responsible for informing the service (via phone or text message) when their child is absent from the service for any reason.

The right of the individual to view their personal information-

The parent that provided information about their enrolled child in the service may request to view the documentation to provide changes to the information by request to the Nominated Supervisor. Parents will only view their own documentation and will not be given access to any other person's information.

Enrolment Form

It is required that all families complete an enrolment form for each child prior to commencing care. A separate enrolment is required for each service.

Families are encouraged to provide further information about their child which will support continuity of care between home and the service (medical conditions, allergies, developmental concerns). The service will, where possible provide a translator for families that are not fluent in English to assist in communication.

Each child's enrolment form will include the following information:

- Full name, date of birth and address of the child.
- Name, address and contact details of each known parent of the child.
- Name, address and contact details of any emergency contact, authorised nominee, any person authorised to consent to medical treatment or administration on medication, any person authorised to give permission to the educator to take the child off the premises and any person permitted to authorise the service to transport the child or arrange transportation of the child.
- Details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans
- Immunisation status of the child
- Gender of child
- Language used in the home environment
- Cultural background of the child and their parents
- Any special considerations for the child – cultural, dietary, religious or additional needs
- Authorisation for the service to seek medical treatment and/or ambulance transportation of the child
- Authorisation for the service to take the child on regular outings
- Name, address and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service
- Child's Medicare number (if available)
- Specific healthcare needs of the child including any medical conditions or dietary restrictions
- Details of any allergies or anaphylaxis/asthma/diabetic management or risk minimisation plan

Change of details forms are available for all enrolled families to ensure correct and current information is captured and maintained. Families are to advise the service immediately if any of the previously documented information changes.

Enrolment Pack

At a minimum an Enrolment pack will include:

- An enrolment form (to be thoroughly completed and returned)
- “All About Me” form
- Service information booklet, inclusive of the service philosophy, exclusion guidelines, ECA Code of Ethic, National Quality Framework and National Quality Standards information and service specific curriculum of Early Years Framework and/or My Time, Our Place.
- Current fee structure and payment information
- Information about Child Care Subsidy (if applicable)
- Information to access policies, including but not limited to, those required under Regulation 168

Waiting List

Waiting lists are available for all Bland Shire Children Services. Please note that Access guidelines are followed when allocating places from the waiting list, and there is no guarantee that your child will be placed into care if on the waiting list.

The Bland Preschool waiting list for the following year will be open as of enrolment week. Names will not be added prior to this time, and families are advised to contact Bland Preschool during Enrolment week.

Access guidelines

Family Day Care, Mobile Resource Unit and Vacation Care

Priority of enrolment will be given to children who are:

- At risk of serious abuse or neglect
- A child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy the activity test through paid employment
- MRU – West Wyalong – Children that have turned 3 years old prior to the commencement of term 1 in the enrolling year

Bland Preschool – Start Strong guideline for Community Preschools requires Bland Preschool to give equal priority of access to:

- Children who are at least 4 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school
- Children with English language needs
- Children with a disability and additional needs
- Children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective)

Priority must be given to the groups outlined above before any other groups. There is no order of priority assigned to the list of points above.

Service specific information, in addition to the above requirements

Family Day Care

Families may make a request for care through the Coordination Unit or directly through an Educator. Where a request for care is placed through the Coordination Unit, staff will record information including family and child details, care required and contact details. This will then

be communicated with Family Day Care Educators with possible vacancies. If a suitable Educator is not available, the Coordination Unit will offer to place the family on the waiting list.

Family Day Care Educators with vacancies will then contact the family to request a pre-enrolment interview.

The Coordination Unit, or Educator if more convenient for the family, will provide the family with an Enrolment Pack prior to the pre-enrolment interview.

Information provided during the pre-enrolment interview may include Educator specific information including:

- Approaches to documentation, curriculum and planning
- The physical environment
- Administrative matters, cost, and fee payment methods
- Suitable food options
- Behaviour guidance
- Availability and placement agreement
- An individual process of orientation in collaboration between Educator and family

Bland Preschool

Children eligible for funded preschool places will be:

- At least 4 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year in the year before they attend school and not in compulsory schooling, and
- Enrolled for a minimum of 15 hours per week (2 days per week)

Preschools with spare capacity can continue to enrol and charge fees for children who aren't eligible for a funded place, but will not receive government funding to reduce fees for these children, therefore full fees as outlined on the fee schedule will be charged.

Mobile Resource Unit and Bland Preschool

The Mobile Resource Unit (MRU – 3 year old class in West Wyalong and Ungarie Preschool) and Bland Preschool hold an enrolment fortnight in the last two weeks of term 3 for the following year's enrolments. Enrolment packs are distributed to all families seeking to enrol their children, and an enrolment close date will be appointed, allowing the coordinator and service leaders to allocate children into classes (where all application requests will be considered however, the Coordinator and Service leaders will have the final decision on classroom placements). Any late enrolment applications (received after the enrolment close date) will be placed on the waiting list and allocated as per the vacancy availability and priority of access guidelines.

Families are welcome to arrange a suitable time to visit the service where they can meet educators, view the classrooms and ask questions.

On successful enrolment, an information letter will be sent to the family offering a place and providing the following information:

- Room name
- Days enrolled
- Things to bring
- Subsidy information (if applicable)

On the child's first day of attendance, Educators will welcome the family and child, and familiarise them with the following:

- Locker for belongings
- Fruit buckets

- Child's individual box for notes and artwork
- Bathrooms
- Sign in/out procedure and location
- Medication procedure (if applicable)

A parent information presentation will be sent electronically to families' week two of term 1.

Information may include, but not limited to:

- Introduction of teaching staff
- Preschool information booklet
- Program/curriculum
- Settling in
- Suitable food options
- Sun safety
- Bus travel – An agreement between the School Bus Service and Family
- Communication between families and staff
- Behaviour guidance
- Parent committee
- Fees and payments

5. Definitions:

In this policy 'staff and educators' refers to staff/educators employed by Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit and educators registered with the Bland/Temora Family Day Care Scheme. Families and children refers to all those enrolled with a Bland Shire Children's Service.

6. Legislation and Supporting Documents:

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 168(2) (k), 160, 161, 162,177, 183.

National Quality Standard: 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 7.1.

7. Attachments:

NIL