

Kensington Neighbourhood House

MORNING CHILD CARE ACCESS AND ALLOCATION POLICY

PREAMBLE:

The Kensington Neighbourhood House offers a Morning Child Care Service. This Policy refers to the Child Care Service's Application Pool system and the process of allocating child care places. We have given it the name of Application Pool as there are a number of provisos and priorities for the allocation of places that means that a strict wait turn allocation from a waiting list is not feasible.

This service is funded through parent's fees as well as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) through the Adult & Community Further Education (ACFE) Child Care Program.

The funding from DEECD is an historical amount which does not fund all of our sessions of Child Care. This funding is tied to child care places for parents or guardians who are undertaking ACFE and Skills Victoria funded classes at the Neighbourhood House i.e. English as a Second Language, Computers and Certificate III in Children's Services.

The service currently accepts 14 children per session. Child Care Regulations require certain staff/children ratios. In line with these regulations we therefore do not have more than 10 children per session who are under the age of 3.

As the child care here is delivered from a single room with a mixed range of age children and with a small number of staff we can only take children once they are able to walk and feed themselves. This is for the safety of all children concerned.

The service does not wish to exclude any child from the service. There are a number of children at the service who have special needs and these children are welcomed along with all other children. Our play and activities with children do not discriminate but from time to time certain children may need additional attention. However, because our service is funded by a State Government department it is not eligible for funds from the Federal Government which provides for additional support staff for children with special or developmental needs. We will not exclude children but have placed a cap of no more than one child with special needs per session. This hopefully will ensure that all children receive quality attention and care while here.

The service has placed a cap on the number of times per week that a child can attend. Children that are enrolled and currently attending four-year old kindergarten are only able to enroll in one session per week. All other children can access a maximum of two sessions per week.

This Child Care Service, along with many others operating from Neighbourhood Houses, has a limited hours licence and operates for short hours only with small mixed age groups and with care in a single room in an informal setting. This can provide an intimate and cosy atmosphere for children but restricts our capacity to some extent. The following Access and Allocation Policy sets the parameters for that capacity.

Allocation of child care places

When filling vacant places, a service must fill them according to the following priorities:

Priority 1 - Adult & Community Further Education Funds (ACFE)

A certain number of child care places are subsidised by ACFE and these are allocated to children of parents who are attending English as a Second Language classes, the Certificate III in Children's Service's Course, English Conversation or other ACFE funded courses.

Priority 2 - Staff/child ratio and age

Child Care Regulations require that the staff/child ratio is 1:5 for children under 3 years of age and 1:15 for children over 3 years of age. For this service with 14 children in each session, only 10 can be under the age of 3 years. All children, upon entry to a child care place, must be able to walk and feed themselves.

Priority 3 - Any other child

In addition to the priority categories outlined above the Committee of Management has the discretion to prioritise places for children with special needs. This discretion will be used on a case by case basis. Consideration will be given to:

- Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Families which include a disabled person
- Children with a disability
- Socially isolated families

It should be noted though that our service is not eligible for Inclusion Support Program funding for additional support staff. Since we wish the time at our child care service to be a rewarding experience for all children involved we have restricted the number of children in each session who might need additional assistance to no more than one child per session requiring additional support.

Approved by Committee of Management: January 2013

Proposed Review Date: January 2015