

K – ENROLMENT, CHILD PLACEMENT AND ORIENTATION

Effective from: 6 December 2018
Contact officer: Coordinator of Children's Services
Next review date: 2 – 4 years as required
File Reference: 1825/29.5
Related Policies/Local Laws/Legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations Cl 168, 177
- National Quality Standards. QA 6 & 7

Related Documents:

- ACECQA – Guide to the National Quality Framework – updated 2018
- Wingecarribee Shire Councils Children's Services Philosophy
- Wingecarribee Children's Services Policy and Procedures

PURPOSE

Enrolment, child placement and orientation procedures form the foundation for strong relationships between families and Wingecarribee Shire Council's Children's Services.

Our Services are committed to:

- Providing an efficient and clear enrolment process and orientation process.
- Ensuring families are provided with consistent information in regards to the service operation which is applied consistently across all Services
- Obtaining authorisations which ensure a safe and secure environment for each child enrolled in our Services and meet with regulatory compliance.
- Requesting and collecting information which will support each child's individual orientation into the Service and ongoing needs.
- Maintaining information in a confidential manner.

In addition, our Family Day Care Service is committed to:

- ensuring children are placed where a suitable vacancy occurs and where there is a match between the needs of the child, family expectations and the educator's ability and willingness to meet the individual needs of the child.



- assisting, resourcing and supporting the role of the educator in providing a developmentally sound and educational program for children in care which caters to the needs and interests of the individual child.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

Wingecarribee Children's Services Staff employed by Wingecarribee Shire Council

Wingecarribee Family Day Care Educators as Agents of the Approved Provider –
Wingecarribee Shire Council

All children and families accessing care with Council's Children's Services

All volunteers and students engaged with Wingecarribee Children's Services.

DEFINITIONS

Wingecarribee Children Services Types

Wingecarribee Shire Council provides the following two Service types within our local government area:

1. **Wingecarribee Family Day Care** – Home Based Care from a Registered and Approved Family Day Care Educator Residence for children between the age of 6 weeks to 12 years (or the end of primary school) in accordance with Regulation 124 of the Education and Care National Regulations.
<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.4/div3/reg.124>
2. **Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Care** – Centre Based Care, within licensed numbers, for primary school aged children. (up until the end of term 4 of year 6)

Note: Children may enroll in Vacation Care programs in the January prior to commencing Kindergarten as long as they have an active enrolment with a primary school.

Authorised Nominee – Are persons who the enrolling and or custodial parent has listed on the enrolment form as authorised to be able to do any or all of the following:

- Collect/Deliver their child/ren to and from the Service
- Give permission for excursions out of the Service
- Consent to Medical treatment/authorise the administration of medication
- Sign Illness, Injury, Trauma and Incident Reports for your children.

PROCEDURE



1. **Priority of Access Guidelines – All Service Types**

1.1 As vacancies in a service arise priority is 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 (with the family assistance office) through paid employment

This reflects the Australian Governments intention to help families who are most in need, and support the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.

Taken from Australian Government Child Care provider Handbook. Accessed 6 September 2018.

1.2 **Out of School Hours Specific**

Subject to complying with 1.1 their may be occasions where priority of access may be given to:

- Children attending Mittagong Public School; or
- Siblings (enrolled for Kindergarten) of children attending Mittagong Public School

This is in compliance with the Out of School Hours Licencing Agreement with the Department of Education Asset and Management Directorate. This decision will be made in consultation with Mittagong Public School Principal.

2. **Pre- enrolment orientation**

2.1 Wingecarribee Shire Council's Children's Services welcomes visits from prospective families and children. The Nominated Supervisor or delegated authority may provide the visiting family with a tour of the service environment and provide information in regards to:

- service philosophy and curriculum;
- approaches to documentation, curriculum and planning;
- introduction to educators and staff;
- the physical environment;
- administrative matters, cost, and fee payment methods;
- how to provide feedback.

3. **Family Day Care Specific**

3.1 All applications for child care must be made through the Coordination Unit. It is understood that the placement is with Wingecarribee Family Day Care (WFDC) Service not the individual Educator.

3.2 Registration on the Service Waiting List does not guarantee that care will become available.



- 3.3** To provide a fair and equitable Service, all enquiries and placements are made through the Coordination Unit from the waitlist, in accordance with this Procedure. It is the Coordination Units role and responsibility to place children with the most suitable Educator.
- 3.4** WFDC values and recognises the benefits of having siblings in the same care environment and with the one Educator. Families are strongly encouraged to put their unborn child or young children on the Service waitlist early to provide the best possible chance of the Service being able to meet this request. Siblings of existing children do not automatically receive a placement. All permanent placements are made through the Coordination Unit from the waitlist, in accordance with 1.1 and the other considerations highlighted in 3.5.
- 3.5** Considerations in regards to placement include:
- Age of child, days, hours and location of care required
 - Suitability of vacancies
 - Position on the waiting list
 - Consultation with Educator
 - Parent/guardian requests
- 3.6** The waiting list is reviewed regularly to ensure that:
- Families have access to care as soon as possible
 - Educators vacancies are filled as soon as practically possible
 - The Service is operating at capacity.
- 3.7 Existing Children – additional permanent days.** Subject to 1.1 additional days will be offered to existing children when a vacancy becomes available, where families have made a request to their Educator, before filling the place from the waitlist.

Process for permanent placement of a child from the waitlist

- 3.8** Initial enquiry taken - Information and contact details of child and family documented, including email for follow up purposes.
- 3.9** When a place becomes available staff at the Coordination Unit consider the points in 1.1 and 3.5 and consult with the Educator who has the vacancy. The next suited child/family on the waitlist is contacted regarding the position.
- The Parent/guardian is requested to make contact with the relevant Educators within 24hrs to arrange a visit and interview at the Educators premise.
 - Where the Coordination Staff do not speak directly with the family regarding a position they will leave a message on an answering machine requesting a return call. Staff, in most circumstances, allow 24 hours for the family to return the call before making a file note and archiving the family.
 - Where the Coordination Staff cannot make contact with a family from the waitlist a file note will be made and the family archived.



- Where a family fails to contact the Educator within 24 hours it is the Educators responsibility to inform the Coordination Staff. A file note will be made and the family archived. Educators may also attempt to contact the family during this time.
- 3.10** After the family interview/orientation with the Educator the parent/guardian is requested, by the educator, to contact the Coordination Staff within 24 hours to accept or not accept the position. It will be assumed that families who do not contact the coordination unit to accept or not accept the position will be considered as not accepting the position. They will be archived from the system.
- 3.11** Educators are required to contact the Coordination Staff as soon as practically possible after an interview to confirm their commitment to the care.
- 3.12** Families taking a placement are required to complete an enrolment package at the Coordination Unit. Care will not commence until **all required** paperwork, Child Care Subsidy requirements and any relevant documentation has been completed and/or provided, including documentation related to medical conditions. (See Medical Conditions procedure and Inclusion Procedure.)
- 3.13** If either the parent/guardian or Educator does not wish to proceed, the parent/guardian will be offered a place with another Educator (if available) or their details will be retained until there is another suitable vacancy, should the parent wish to remain on the waitlist.

Casual placement in Family Day Care

- 3.14** Casual care is considered non regular care and can only be provided to children who are enrolled with Wingecarribee Family Day Care, when a vacancy occurs.
- 3.15** At the discretion of the Educator, Casual Care can also provide additional hours of care to a permanent placement on a normally booked day provided sufficient notice is given.
- 3.16** Casual enrolments do not automatically receive permanent placement with Wingecarribee Family Day Care when a permanent placement becomes available. All permanent placements are made through the Coordination Unit from the waitlist subject to 1.1 and other factors highlighted in 3.5.
- 3.17** Casual positions are conditional upon the permanent booking not requiring the place. If the permanent booking requires this position back and reasonable notice is provided (12 hours) the casual booking must relinquish this place for the permanent position. No fee will apply.

End of year procedure in Family Day Care

- 3.18** The Coordination Unit monitors, updates and maintains the waitlist regularly to ensure the information is up to date.
- 3.19** In September each year:
- all current families are requested, by their Educator, to indicate their care requirements for the following year.



- Educators are requested to indicate their intended days/hours of work for the following year and intended period of closure for Christmas break and coming year if known.
- 3.20** Every effort is made to accommodate enrolled children who may be requiring a different pattern of care in the following year.
- 3.21** Existing returning families will be required to update their details, sign new authorisations and where applicable sign new Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)
- 3.22** Once existing children have been placed, vacancies will be filled from the waitlist following the Service Procedure.

Placement in care when an Educator resigns or is on extended leave

- 3.23** When an Educator resigns or is unable to care for children for extended periods of time the Coordination Unit will attempt to place these children with an alternate Educator. This is limited to vacancies available in the Service at the time.

4 Centre based Out of School Hours

Before and After School Care Bookings

- 4.1** Families are encouraged to contact the Coordination Office to determine whether there is a suitable vacancy. Depending on availability and subject to 1.1 and 1.2 children may be enrolled at any time throughout the year.
- 4.2** Re enrolment for Before and After School Care is required at the end of each school year for the following year. All positions become vacant. All existing families will receive a re enrolment package however available positions will be determined subject to 1.1 and 1.2 plus the family's ability to return the completed package and pay the bond, to confirm their child/rens position.
- 4.3** A waitlist may be initiated if the care requirements exceed the places available or for new kindergarten families wishing to commence care with the Service in the following year.
- 4.4** Families taking a place are required to complete an enrolment package, preferably, at the Coordination Unit. Care will not commence until **all required** paperwork, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) requirements and any relevant documentation has been completed and/or provided, including documentation and consultation on medical/ behavioural conditions.

Vacation Care Bookings

- 4.5** Places for Vacation Care are limited and bookings are taken on and after the advertised day. Generally, 4 weeks prior to the end of the school term.
- 4.6** The Vacation Care booking date is promoted immediately prior to each Vacation Care period on the Council website.
- 4.7** An email may be sent to all current families in the Service advising them of the date the Vacation Care bookings open.



- 4.8 Families taking a place are required to complete **all required** paperwork, Child Care Subsidy requirements and any relevant documentation, including documentation related to behavioural/medical conditions, (See Medical Conditions Procedure and Inclusion Procedure) prior to care commencing or a place being confirmed.
5. **Coordination Unit Enrolment & Orientation Interviews – All Service Types**
- 5.1 This is an important interview as it provides the opportunity for the Coordination Staff to convey important information to the enrolling family, initiate a relationship with the family and answer any questions or enquiries.
- 5.2 No child can commence care in any of Wingecarribee Shire Councils Children's Services unless **ALL** the relevant paperwork and requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Prospective children must not attend without an active enrolment and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian on all visits prior to enrolment process being finalised.
- 5.3 Where practically possible, all new family enrolments will be conducted at the Coordination Unit in East Bowral.
- 5.4 Existing families enrolling a new child are also encouraged to complete the paperwork at the Coordination Unit Office to ensure all information is received.
- 5.5 Exceptions to 5.3 and 5.4 will be made in extenuating circumstances. The Coordination Staff will work with enrolling families in these situations to support the family to successfully complete the process.
- 5.6 Parent/guardians are provided with a list of enrolment information and requirements to be brought to the enrolment interview. This includes an enrolment fee per child upon enrolment & thereafter upon re-enrolment at the beginning of each calendar year.
- 5.7 Parents/guardians must provide proof that a child is up to date with their vaccinations. This includes one or more of the following documents:
- To access **Family Day Care** parents/guardians must provide one or more of the following:
- an AIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations or
 - an AIR Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule (temporary for 6 months only) or
 - an AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form which has been certified by a GP.
- 5.8 Unvaccinated children are exempt from Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if enrolling in **Wingecarribee Out of School Hours**.
- Required Enrolment Information**
- 5.9 Families enrolling in one of our Services are emailed or provided with a copy of "**Information Required for Enrolment**". Included:



- Link to the Children's Services Handbook (hard copy can be provided if people don't have access to internet)
- Link to Service Policy and Procedures (Hard copies available at Each Family Day Care Educators, OOSH Service and Coordination Unit Office)
- Immunisation Requirements and how to access
- Information requirements for completing the enrolment package. Eg: birth certificate, Doctor details etc.
- Custody documents required if applicable
- Enrolment Fee
- Bond requirements – Before and After School Care – Centre Based Care
- Information on Child Care Subsidy (CCS)
- Banking details for Wingecarribee Shire Council – Centre Based Care
- Service location

Parents/guardian responsibilities

5.10 Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Completing all documentation accurately and updating as changes occur.
- Registering for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) with the Department of Human Services or through the MyGov website
- Ensuring that the Wingecarribee Children's Services is provided with the relevant and correct Customer Reference Numbers (CRN) and birth dates for the registered parent/guardian and the enrolling child.
- Updating immunisation information
- Reading the Children's Services Handbook and Policy and procedures and any associated documentation. In the case of Family Day Care, this includes information provided to the family by the Educator.

Wingecarribee Children's Services Responsibilities

5.11 The Coordination Unit is responsible for:

- Providing information to the family on the Service.
- Entering child/family details into the software system and linking with the Child Care Subsidy System (CCS).
- Ensuring all required information and documentation is received prior to a child commencing care.
- Ensuring the relevant information is available to the Staff/Educator at the service the child will be attending prior to the child attending

5.12 Educator/Staff Responsibilities:

- Ensure they are in receipt of all the information pertaining to the children prior to them commencing care.
- Be familiar and implement appropriate procedures in regard to information contained in the Child's enrolment file. In particular, goals the family may have for



their child/ren, any medical or behavioural conditions, photography requirements, authorised nominees and their capacity and parent's authorisations and consents.

- **Family Day care Educators** are to ensure that they have conducted an enrolment interview with the family, provided their service handbook and independent fee schedule and payment method details to families.



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