

Consultation Plan – Priority of Access Policy 2018

Yarra Council is reviewing its existing Priority of Access policy and we want to hear from you.

What is a Priority of Access Policy?

The Priority of Access policy is used to guide the allocation of places for long day care, occasional care, casual care, out of school hours care and kindergarten.

Council has applied a Priority of Access policy for over ten years and it is now time to reassess the policy and make sure it is a helpful tool that reflects the needs of the community.

Why do we have a Priority of Access Policy?

The policy is applied to make sure that places for these services are allocated to families in a fair and equitable way and considers the needs of the community.

This policy will apply to:

- Council managed centre-based children's services.
- Service operating from a City of Yarra building
- Services whom hold an agreement with the City of Yarra to participate in the Central Registration Scheme

How will we be consulting?

We will be seeking your feedback on the draft Priority of Access policy over a four week period.

We will be providing a number of different opportunities for you to tell us what you think before we finalise the policy.

As part of the consultation we will:

- Provide an online survey (Have Your Say) for parents and guardians who are waiting for a child care place and to families who are already using a children's service.
- Conduct two information sessions for parents and guardians who are unable to access the online survey or who may need assistance with interpreters
- Talk to the Family Partnerships Committee that is made up of parents/guardians of children currently using Council's Children's services
- Speak with Early Childhood providers who operate their service out of Council buildings.
- Promote the draft policy on Yarra's public website and other types of social media to encourage feedback.

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What will we be talking to you about?

We want to hear what you think about the Priorities of Access that are included in the draft policy.

Do you think the Priorities of Access are relevant for Yarra communities?

Is there anything you would change?

The priorities have been outlined below for your consideration and after they have been finalised, will be included in the Priority of Access policy.

DRAFT POLICY

At Yarra we are guided by the following Priorities of Access:

- ❖ The priority of access that is applied for enrolment in long day, occasional, casual and out of school hour's care is as follows:
 1. A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect including those in receipt of additional childcare benefit.
 2. A child in need of priority care due to sudden change of circumstances (e.g. death of an immediate family member, loss of accommodation due to fire/natural disaster)
 3. A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of both parents who satisfy, the Child Care Subsidy activity test through work, training, volunteer and/or study.
 4. Any other child.

Within each category, priority will be given to:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
 - Children with additional needs, defined as children who: require additional assistance in order to fully participate in kindergarten; require a combination of services which are individually planned; have an identified specific disability or developmental delay
 - Families that include a person with a disability diagnosis.
 - Families that include a person who has a diagnosis of a chronic or serious health issue.
 - Children of single parents
 - Families on low incomes as defined by the Child Care Subsidy highest subsidy threshold
 - Asylum seeker and refugee children
 - Children whose family resides in Yarra
 - Siblings of children enrolled in the same Children's Service.
- ❖ The priority of access that is applied for enrolment in a kindergarten is as follows:
 - Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in out of home care
 - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
 - Asylum seeker and refugee children
 - Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

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- Children with additional needs, defined as children who: require additional assistance in order to fully participate in kindergarten; require a combination of services which are individually planned; have an identified specific disability or developmental delay

Having satisfied the requirements of the above priorities, remaining places will be allocated applying the following Yarra City Council Priority of Access guidelines:

- Siblings of children enrolled in the same Yarra Children's Service
- Children whose family resides in Yarra.

What will happen next?

Your comments and feedback will be considered before we update and finalise the Priority of Access policy. The finalised Priority of Access policy will be discussed by Council before it is adopted and widely implemented.