

# Waiting List & Priority of Access Policy

## Brunswick East Primary School Out of School Hours Care Policy

### Rationale

The Brunswick East Primary School (BEPS) Out of School Hours Care Service (Service) demand has significantly increased over the last few years and programs have been highly booked. As a result, the Service has implemented the Government Priority of Access Guidelines and waiting list process.

To ensure the system is fair, the Federal Government has *Priority of Access Guidelines* for allocating places in these circumstances. The guidelines only apply to Child Care Benefit approved child care. They are used when there is a waiting list for a child care service or when a number of parents are applying for a limited number of vacant places (Department of Education).

### Aims

- To ensure a fair, equitable and transparent process for maintaining a waiting list and determining Priority of Access Status, in accordance with Federal guidelines.
- To have a clear process in place for allocating limited places equitably.

### Priority of Access Guidelines

In determining priority of access, the Service is bound by and will adhere to the Federal Government guidelines. The guidelines outline the following priority groups:

**Priority 1** – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

**Priority 2** – a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the work, training, study test under section 14 of the *A New Tax System* (Family Assistance Act 1999)

**Priority 3** - any other child

**Within these main categories priority should also be given to the following children:**

- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- Children in families which include a disabled person
- Children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold or who or whose partner are on income support
- Children in families with a non-English speaking background
- Children in socially isolated families
- Children of single parents

When there are no vacancies, a child who is in a lower priority may be required to leave the Service, or to have days altered in order to provide a place for a child in a higher priority (as required by Department of Education legislation).

A family will be given at least 14 days' notice that their place of the requirement for the child to leave that Service or alter days of care.

### **Implementation**

All families when enrolling into the Service will receive a Priority of Access Status form to fill in and return to the Service. Status cannot be assessed unless this form and supporting documentation is returned by the due dates. This form requires families to identify and provide evidence of their Priority of Access status as outlined by the guidelines set down by Department of Education. Families may be required to provide further evidence of their status.

The Service will document all families' details; Priority of Access status, together with time and date of receipt of enrolment forms, and/or Acceptance letters if applicable. This information will be used to determine placement within the Service.

Families will receive notification if they do or do not get a place at the Service.

### **Waiting List Guidelines**

The Service will maintain a waiting list. Waiting Lists will be maintained for permanent places when the program has reached daily maximum capacity and there is demand for places throughout the year. If, after following the Department of Education policy, demand exceeds supply and more than one family fall into the same priority the Service will give priority to children who have a sibling enrolled at the Service

### **Waiting List Implementation**

Families will be placed on a waiting list for each day they have requested (if they have chosen this option), when the programs have reached daily maximum bookings for permanent places.

Families will receive notification that they have been placed on a waiting list. Families will be contacted when places become available.

### **Principles**

This policy applies to all families enrolling and re-enrolling their child in the Service. When permanent places become available throughout the year, families on the waiting list are contacted and an offer of the place is made. The Family has 48hrs to accept or decline the offer. If no response is received, the offer will be deemed as declined. The place will then be offered to the next family on the waiting list. The family will lose their place on the waiting list for that day, going to the bottom of the list. If the family declines the offer but still wishes to stay on the list, they will go to the bottom of the waiting list.

Families wishing to accept the offer, but are unable to attend the booking until a later date, will have to pay for the place to secure the booking, unless the place can be re-sold in the interim.

Waiting Lists are for the duration of the year. Families on the waiting list for particular days will be contacted via email at the end of each term to review if they still wish to remain on the waiting list.

If families do not respond by the start of the next term, they will be removed from the waiting list.

Families who have remained on the waiting list, and did not receive a place for the current year, can be carried over into the next year's waiting list if they still require the place for the next year, but have been unsuccessful during the round offers.

Vacancies may become available on a casual basis, however these are managed as casual bookings, and families may book into these if they wish to utilize a these places (see BEPS OSHC Enrolment Policy).

### **Internal Control and Reporting**

The Service Sub-Committee will ensure that the Waiting List and Priority of Access Guidelines are adhered to.

All matters will be dealt with in a private and confidential matter (see BEPS OSHC Privacy & Confidentiality Policy).

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed by the Service Sub-Committee in consultation with School Council as part of the Service's annual review cycle, and the changing needs of the Service.

### **References**

See [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au) for details on:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2010
- Education & Care Services National Law 2010
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010

See Department of Education, [www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au) for details on:

- Childcare Services Handbook 2012-13
- Priority of Access Guidelines
- Childcare Benefit

Privacy Act 1988, [www.comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.gov.au)

### **This policy should be read in conjunction with the following BEPS documents:**

Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

Enrolment Procedure and Policy

Fee Policy

Childcare Benefit Policy

Grievance Policy

This policy was ratified by School Council on: 26 August 2014

This policy is to be reviewed by School Council: May 2015