



PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE

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PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE (PHWMCC) ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Introduction

Enrolment and orientation procedures form the foundation for strong relationships between families and early education and care settings and promote a quality experience of education and care for children.

Good procedures include consistent information around service operation and authorisations, promoting compliance and a safe and secure environment for children and families.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that all children in New South Wales can participate in 600 hours of quality preschool education in the year before school, no matter where they live or what their circumstances are.

Aim

Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre will implement a process to ensure enrolment and orientation processes are planned and implemented to meet the needs of the child and family as well as ensuring all legislative requirements, including the NSW Department of Education (DoE) *Start Strong Funding Priority of Access Guidelines*, are adhered to.

We will ensure:

- Children are provided with support and comfort to settle into the preschool and establish new friendships and relationships;
- A thoughtful process is planned in consultation with families, to assist in separating from their child;
- Educators are provided with a clearly explained enrolment process; time to get to know families before children start; strategies to support families in introducing children to our preschool; time to develop close professional relationships with families; support from referral agencies; and information about custodial arrangements;
- Home language, cultural background and family priorities are considered at all times during the process; and
- That all children enrolled at PHWMCC in the year before attending formal schooling are able to attend preschool for 600 hours.

Procedure

This Enrolment and Orientation Policy includes:

- Priority of Access (under DoE Start Strong Funding Guidelines) and Eligibility to Attend
- Pre enrolment Visit
- Waiting List Procedure
- Enrolment Procedures
- Enrolment Form
- Session Determination
- Orientation Procedures
- Confidentiality

Priority of Access and Eligibility to Attend

Enrolments will be accepted according to the DoE Priority of Access Guidelines as defined in our Start Strong Funding Agreement.

The DoE requires PHWMCC to give equal priority of access to:

- Children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school;
- Children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July and from low income and aboriginal families;
- Children with disabilities and additional needs;
- Children with English language needs;
- Children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective).

Once the above criteria have been met, PHWMCC also gives priority of access to siblings of children who have previously attended the preschool. This access will be at the discretion of the Director.

Three-year-old partially funded children may be offered preschool positions when our Waiting List of 4 year olds has been exhausted. This access will be based on the date of going on the waiting list, and subject to the needs of our community.

An employee of the preschool with a child / children of preschool age will be eligible for placement on the days they are employed, subject to Management Committee approval.

Pre-enrolment Visit

PHWMCC 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 information that may include:

- 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.

Following a pre-enrolment orientation, a family may wish to place their child's name on the waiting list.

Waiting List Procedure

The preschool maintains an electronic Waiting List with hard copy application forms kept on file at PHWMCC until the parents accept, defer or cancel the child's position on the Waiting List.

Children can be registered on the Waiting List from birth.

A non-refundable Waiting List fee, the amount of which is determined by the Management Committee, is charged and receipted at the time of application for enrolment.

Children are placed on the Waiting List according to the date of the receipt of the Waiting List Fee payment. This date determines the intake order for any particular year, taking into account the Priority of Access guidelines.

If a family moves into the area from interstate or overseas and wishes to go onto our waiting list, the date of their application to attend their previous childcare / preschool will be taken into consideration when positioning them on our waiting list.

Enrolment Procedures

All children currently attending PHWMCC are given priority for positions for the following year. Parents of returning children will be asked to indicate their preferences for positions prior to all new offers to children on the Waiting List.

An email will be sent to all families on the Waiting List whose children are turning 4 before 31st July in the year before they are eligible for formal school, asking them to advise us if they wish to continue with the enrolment process. Any 3 year old children from a low income or Aboriginal family, and 3 year old children with a disability or additional needs will also be contacted at this stage and will be required to provide supporting documentation / evidence of their equity status (e.g. low income health care card, reports from health professionals) prior to places being allocated.

An email of position offer, in accordance with priority of access, as outlined in this policy, will be sent to families. This position offer letter will specify a date for acceptance and payment of a deposit. The amount of this fee will be determined by the Management Committee. Half the deposit will be refunded if the family cancels the position by the advised date, which is set by the preschool. Cancellation after this date will mean forfeiting the full amount of the deposit.

If a position is declined or the payment of the deposit is not paid by the due date, or the family does not contact the preschool in writing by the due date, the child's position will be forfeited and the child's name will be put back on the Waiting List.

The position can be deferred in writing for a position for the following year and the child maintains their original position on the Waiting List.

If it is uncertain if a child who is already enrolled at the preschool will be attending school or returning to preschool in the following year, families must inform the preschool of their decision by the last day of the current preschool year, otherwise their position will be forfeited.

Children who are not eligible to attend formal school the following year are offered positions in the order of the date of registration on the PHWMCC Waiting List, and as per the Priority of Access section of this policy. Consideration *may* be given to children who turn three during Term 1. Fees in lieu of attendance will be required to be paid until the child turns three, as the child cannot start preschool until they are 3 years of age.

Positions that fall vacant during term time will be offered to any child that is eligible for formal school the following year or to the next child on the Waiting List providing that they have turned 3 years of age.

Following the acceptance of an offer, families will be sent an enrolment form.

Enrolment Form

The enrolment form must be completed by each enrolling family. On this form there will be opportunity for parents to provide any further information about their child that will support continuity of care between home and the preschool.

The enrolment form will include the following information for each child:

- Full name, date of birth and address of the child.

- Name, address and contact details of each parent of the child; any emergency contacts; any person nominated by the parents to collect the child from the Preschool; any person authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication to the child; any person authorised to give approval for an educator to take the child out of the service.
- Details of any court orders, parenting orders or plans. Any custody and access arrangements must be accompanied by legal documentation.
- Gender of the child.
- Language used in the child's home.
- Cultural background of the child and the child's parents.
- Any special considerations for the child (eg cultural, religious, dietary requirements or additional needs).
- Authorisations for PHWMCC to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service, and transportation of the child by an ambulance service.
- Authorisation for the child to be relocated in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Authorisation for the service to take the child on regular outings.
- Authorisations for the children to be relocated in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Name, address and phone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service.
- Child's Medicare number.
- Details of any specific health care needs of the child including any medical condition.
- Details of any allergies or anaphylaxis diagnoses.
- Any Medical Management Plans – anaphylaxis / allergy / asthma / diabetes / epilepsy / other medical condition, or risk minimisation plan.
- Details of dietary restrictions for the child.
- Evidence of immunisation status (Australian Immunisation History Statement) which is also used to verify the child's date of birth.
- Authorisations for the sharing of information between families at the preschool.
- Authorisations for the sharing of information with other groups eg observations by University or TAFE students, and Facebook.
- Any other authorisations as determined by the preschool.
- Authorisations to share information with the Department of Education.

This information will be kept at the PHWMCC premises in accordance with service policies and the *NSW Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (National Regulation).

Enrolment forms will be updated annually or when a family's circumstances change, to ensure information is current and correct.

Custody Arrangements

The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 requires our service to have details of all custodial and access arrangements.

- Enrolling family members are responsible for informing the Nominated Supervisor of custody and access arrangements on enrolment, and must advise the Nominated Supervisor immediately of any subsequent alterations to these arrangements.
- All relevant legal documentation is to be shown to the Nominated Supervisor and a copy will be maintained in the child's enrolment record.

Session Determination

Parent preferences of class sessions are sought on enrolment to reflect their needs, and all effort is made to accommodate these, however at times a family's first preference may not be available. The Nominated Supervisor has absolute discretion in children's session and class allocation.

PHWMCC offers two day or three day classes, so that all children are able to have access to 600 hours of early childhood education and care in the year before school.

The Nominated Supervisor advises parents as soon as is practicable, once the allocations have been made.

Orientation Procedures

The orientation and settling in period will consider and respect the needs of both families and children. We will always consider the feelings and time constraints that families may have in regard to participating in orientation processes and aim to make the experience a positive and welcoming introduction to the service.

A process of orientation will be planned to provide the best possible start for the child at the service. The Nominated Supervisor should consider the language and cultural needs of the family.

An Orientation Evening will be held in November for parents to attend and hear information regarding the preschool. The Director and educators will share information about:

- How the preschool is managed;
- How parents can be involved;
- How children learn;
- How we engage with children;
- What to expect from a day at preschool;
- What to bring to preschool;
- The Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards; and
- Any other relevant information

During the orientation process, families are provided with comprehensive information about PHWMCC which will include the preschool philosophy, information about The Early Years Learning Framework, a parent information booklet, a children's social story, a range of policies and procedures, and information on how to be involved in the preschool. This information remains accessible by families for future reference.

Following the Orientation Night presentation by the Director, each class will break off into their class groups to meet one another and their educators for next year. This is an opportunity to share more practical day to day information and ask questions.

Over the following weeks, children and their families will be invited to attend an Orientation morning so that they can spend time with their new class mates and educators, and spend time enjoying and becoming familiar with the preschool.

Any other visits prior to commencing preschool are welcome and done on an as needs basis in consultation with families.

The orientation process will be flexible, and will ensure families have the opportunity to have any questions or concerns answered.

Prior to formally commencing at Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre

- Prior to the child's first day, educators and staff will familiarise themselves with information about the child from the enrolment information provided. They will ensure they are aware of any medical conditions and how to manage them if required.
- The Nominated Supervisor will inform the educators and staff of the intended time for any orientation visits.
- A family member or designated carer will remain on the premises during these orientation visits. This person must sign the visitors' book/register on arrival and when they leave. The child cannot be left at the service until they have formally commenced at the service.
- During the orientation process, educators and staff will interact with the child and actively encourage them to engage in the service program and activities. They will also be available to the family to answer any questions they may have, whilst ensuring they are not compromising the supervision of other children or required ratios.
- Children who have a diagnosed medical condition will be given copies of the Medical Conditions Policy and be involved in forming a Medical Management and Communication Plan for the preschool.

Upon Commencement

On the child's first day of attendance, educators and staff will welcome the family and the child, ensuring that there is a space ready for the child's belongings. Educators will reassure the family and assist with separation if required. Throughout the day, educators will contact the family to let them know how their child is settling if necessary.

The Nominated Supervisor will undertake a final check of enrolment details, authorisations and information updates prior to the family departing the service.

Confidentiality

The information on the Waiting List and Enrolment Form is confidential and personal details of families are not disclosed to parties not rightly entitled to access the information.

All families will receive a Privacy Statement in their orientation information.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law) and *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.
- Provide opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and staff) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program.
- Ensure that enrolment forms comply with the requirements of National Regulations 160, 161, 162.
- Ensure that enrolment records are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (National Regulation 183).

- Ensure that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or staff under the National Law, or if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor reasonably believes that permitting the parent's entry would contravene a court order (National Regulation 157).

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Provide enrolment application forms.
- Maintain a waiting list.
- Maintain an immunisation register.
- Collect and receipt fees.
- Offer places in line with this policy and criteria for priority of access, and provide relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy.
- Provide a monthly report to the approved provider regarding the status of enrolments.
- Store completed enrolment application forms in a lockable or protected file as soon as practicable, including court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans.

Early Childhood Educators and staff will:

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- Respond to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and refer families to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required.
- Ensure that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service.
- Ensure that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or staff under the National Law (Regulation 157).
- Be aware of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans.
- Develop strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into the service;
 - become familiar with service policies and procedures;
 - develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child.
- Provide comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members.
- Share information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling into the service.

Families will:

- Read and comply with this policy

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the preschool will review this policy every three years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the preschool will ensure that families of children at the preschool are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the preschool; a family's ability to utilise the preschool; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Definitions

Regulatory Authority:	Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
Approved Provider:	Pennant Hills War Memorial Children’s Centre Management Committee
Nominated Supervisor:	Director of Pennant Hills War Memorial Children’s Centre
Responsible Person:	Nominated Supervisor or an Educator who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the Preschool
Early Childhood Educators /staff:	Teachers, Child Care Workers and administrative staff

Related Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 160, 167,170, 176
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 102, 102(D),160,161,162,168(2)(k), 172, 177, 183
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Public Health Act 2010 No 127: Part 5 Division 4, Section 87
Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002(NSW)
Family Assistance Law

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children – Standard 5.1, 5.2
National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standard 6.1
National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership– Standard 7.1
Department of Education Start Strong Funding Guidelines

Sources

Community Early Learning Australia – Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Relevant Documents

PHWMCC Fees Policy
PHWMCC Medical Conditions Policy
PHWMCC Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
PHWMCC Confidentiality and Privacy Policy
PHWMCC Waiting List Form
PHWMCC Enrolment Form

Policy Reviewed: Sept 2023

Next Review Date: Sept 2026