



Enrolment & Orientation Policy

Background

The Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) is an approved childcare provider and offers sessions of Occasional Care for children of various ages. BNC is committed to meeting the needs of the local community and supporting families by providing equal access for all eligible children to enrol in our licensed children's services.

An enrolment and orientation policy ensures all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into our service.

Purpose

The aims of this policy are to:

- outline the criteria for enrolment in Occasional Care at BNC.
- summarise the process to be followed when enrolling a child.
- provide information and procedures for the orientation of new families and children.
- maintain confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment.
- meet legislative requirements.

Policy Statements

Criteria

Children must be aged over 18 months to attend childcare sessions at BNC. There is no limit on the number of hours that children can be educated and cared for. Children of primary school age (under 13) may attend, but the program and equipment at the service is age appropriate up to about 7 years.

Sessions run during Victorian school terms, as advertised in the Centre Program, subject to a minimum number of children being enrolled. Additional holiday sessions of Occasional Care will be offered during the term breaks.

The service is licensed to provide up to 21 places, subject to required staff ratios which are:

- For children aged between 18 months and 36 months: one educator per four children (1:4)
- For over 36 months to pre-school age: one educator per eleven children (1:11)
- For children over pre-school age: one educator per fifteen children (1:15)

50% of the staff in each session must hold a diploma level qualification or equivalent.

Pre-enrolment

Our Centre welcomes enquiries and visits from prospective families and children. The Children's Room Coordinator can offer a tour of the Children's Room and discuss family's individual questions and requirements. Information can be provided by staff over the phone, by email or in person and may include:

- service philosophy and programming
- introduction to educators and staff
- the physical environment
- administrative matters, cost, and fee payment methods

A family member will remain on the premises during any orientation visits with their child. The family must sign the visitors' book at reception on arrival and sign out when they leave. The child cannot be left until they have formally commenced at the Centre and are therefore not included in the ratios for a session in progress.

The Children's Room Coordinator should consider the language, cultural or other special needs of the family. A translator may be required or other relevant resources to best assist the family.

Pre-enrolment for the following year's programs begins with expressions of interest taken for each planned session. Existing families using the service will be extended the opportunity to register from the last week of Term 2 and then the lists will be open to all others from the beginning of Term 3.

On the first Monday of September, those registered are required to pay a \$20 non-refundable deposit for Occasional Care per child, per session to secure each place/s. The deposit will be deducted from fees charged for attendance when Term 1 commences. If the deposit is not paid at this time, a place cannot be guaranteed, and expressions of interest will be moved to a waiting list once a session is filled with confirmed bookings. See the Fees Policy for additional information.

Families are encouraged to make a claim for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) with Centrelink prior to enrolment. A CCS claim can stay active for 26 weeks without any sessions of care being reported for the child.

Enrolment

BNC uses an approved pre-printed enrolment form to ensure that all information required by the regulations is collected and authorisations and refusals of authority are completed. It is important that families complete all fields of the form for each child enrolling in the service.

For each calendar year, pre-enrolments for the following year will be finalised before the end of Term 4. All current users of the service are required to register their intentions of returning or not by following the pre-enrolment procedure detailed above. If no communication is received, it will be assumed that a place in the service is no longer required for the following year. Reminder text messages will be sent, but it is the family's responsibility to ensure they register for their preferred sessions. A new enrolment form must be completed each calendar year for returning children.

For other interest during the year, following an agreeable pre-enrolment orientation, a family notifies the Centre of their wish to proceed with enrolment. Staff will check availability in the preferred session/s and if there is a place, the next steps to finalise enrolment will commence immediately. A deposit is not required but failing to attend the first session as agreed, without appropriate communication, will forfeit the place.

Unless otherwise discussed, accepting a place is considered to be a weekly commitment during school terms for the calendar year. Once confirmed enrolments for a session reach the maximum number of available places, a waiting list is created. Children will be added to the waiting list in order of date of enquiry and families will be notified if a place becomes available. This includes existing enrolments wishing to add days. There is no obligation to take up an offered place and if declined, the place will be offered to the next waiting family.

At times a vacancy may exist in a full session due to illness or planned absences. The Children's Room staff will maintain a register of families who wish to be notified of an available place for casual

or emergency care. A message will be texted to these families with as much notice as practicable and the place assigned on a first come, first served basis.

Enrolments each term will be taken based on the following criteria:

- Existing enrolments wanting same days (assumed per calendar year unless otherwise notified).
- Existing enrolments wanting to swap days.
- Casual or emergency care on a needs basis (subject to place availability and permanent weekly enrolments will be prioritised over casual bookings).
- Children on waiting list of an eligible age for places available.
- Siblings will not receive automatic placement; however, they may be added to the waiting list before they are 18 months.

Next Step

An enrolment package will be given which includes:

- An enrolment form
- BNC Children's Room Policies and Procedures Handbook
(Online copy: www.bncinc.org.au/forms/ under Children heading)
- BNC Membership Form
- Current BNC Term Program (includes session times and corresponding fees)
- Direct Debit Form

Families will return the following, prior to the agreed start date for the child:

- Completed Enrolment Form including authorisations and current contact information for parents and emergency contacts
- Child Birth Certificate, Passport or other identification
- Current Centrelink Immunisation Statement
- Completed Direct Debit Form
- Completed Membership Form
- Information on children's additional needs (including medical conditions, health and developmental concerns).

Any matters that are sensitive of nature, such as a child's medical or learning needs, Court Orders, parenting plans or parenting orders, will be discussed privately with the Children's Room Coordinator. The enrolling parent/guardian is responsible for informing of any custody and access arrangements upon enrolment and must advise the Children's Room Coordinator immediately of any subsequent alterations to these arrangements. Families will be required to bring any corresponding documents in relation to court orders, learning support requirements, medical needs or plans.

Written authorisations from parents or authorised nominees help to ensure that the health, safety, wellbeing and best interests of all children are met. Through the authorisation process, parents are informed of risks associated with a matter, and can make an informed choice whether or not to proceed.

This information will be kept at the Centre's premises in accordance with service policies. The Children's Room Coordinator will undertake a final check of enrolment details, authorisations and information updates prior to the family commencing at the service.

Prior to formal commencement, educators 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.

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. Reminders about the Food Policy, SunSmart Policy and other procedures will be offered. 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.

Holiday Sessions

During term breaks, sessions of Occasional Care will be offered based on a combination of community need and staff availability and advertised in the Term Program. Sessions will only run if minimum required numbers are met. Existing enrolments are prioritised for sessions running on their usual days, but places can be filled with any eligible children. The enrolment process must be completed prior to attendance and pre-bookings are essential.

Roles and Responsibilities

Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain service approval and associated obligations• Monitor policies to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.
Staff/Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide enrolment pack to parents/guardians of an enrolling child.• Check all sections of enrolment form are complete and associated documents are submitted.• Liaise with families to ensure a familiarity with all children attending sessions.• Ensure any new information is attached to the child's Enrolment Form throughout the year.
Parents/Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete enrolment form and provide all associated information.• Read Children's Room Policies and Procedures Handbook and be aware of Centre policies and expectations of families. Clarify any uncertainty with staff.• Provide staff with updates whenever information changes.

Related Documents

Children's Services Regulations 2020: *Regulation 112 (k)*

Children's Room Policy and Procedures Handbook (contains all relevant policies)

Enrolment Form

Membership Form

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Information Sheet

Direct Debit Form

Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

Document History

Version	Title	Author	Authorised	Date	Changes to Previous
1	Enrolment & Orientation Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Sep 2021	Original
2	Enrolment & Orientation Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Aug 2022	Review and update
3	Enrolment & Orientation Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Aug 2024	Review & update