Enrolment & Orientation Procedures – Policy

Rationale:

To ensure the enrolment procedure remains equitable and consistent for all families.
To ensure staff are supported and informed of the procedure.
Families will be orientated to the service before their children attend.
The Orientation process is a time for educators to share information with families about how the service operates and a time for families to share information about their child and their expectations of the service.

Definitions:

Service Provision: - Before and After School Care and Vacation Care
Stakeholders: Child, Family, Staff, Educators, Other Children, Volunteers & the Centre.
Further Assistance/Support: Training, Funding Application, Information and support from Parent / School / Practitioner
High Support Needs: Diagnosed Medical Condition / Disability and or Behavioural Issues as well as diagnosis under assessment (behavioral Support)
Additional Support Needs: Cultural, Ethnic or Religious requirements

Information in Relation to Care: Newsletters, Invitations, Term Overviews
Dual Enrolment: refers to other parties involved in the Enrolment
Educator: any person who works directly with children and is included in the 'educator-to-child' ratio
RPIC: Responsible Person in Charge
Staff: adults who are not included in the educator to child ratios and/or perform another primary function in the education and care service.
Nominated Supervisor: a person who has consented to be the primary supervisor of the day-to-day operation of an early childhood education and care service.
CCS: Child Care Subsidy – to reduce families fees
CWA: Complying Written Agreement – to be signed electronically through the Xplor software program

When responding to an enrolment enquiry, staff/educators will provide all relevant information to ensure the family is properly informed of services and programs provided by Port Macquarie Neighbourhood Centre Children's Services and availability of places.

Arrangements will be made to provide the family with an Enrolment link to the Xplor online enrolment form, additional forms and Parent Handbook will be provided. An orientation meeting is encouraged where possible and is highly recommended. The orientation meeting will provide Families the opportunity to provide staff/educators with information about their child/children that will support continuity of care between home and the service. Also, to complete additional paperwork and to set up login details for the Xplor website and Centre HUB for electronic sign in and out.

Needs a reference to authorizations and permission in regard to safe transportation policy.

At the time of the orientation appointment Team Leaders will discuss all necessary information and ensure all documentation has been provided, and that they understand their responsibilities to the Centre, and Centrelink. Families will be encouraged to bring their children along to the appointment where possible. Families will be taken on a tour of the venue, introduced to other educators / staff, children and families at the service and discuss the orientation processes that will be put into place for their child's first day. Families are encouraged to share information about their child and any concerns, expectations or questions they may have regarding enrolling their child at the service

The enrolling parent (the person completing and signing the enrolment form) will be the only person authorised to amend the enrolment form. Any amendments / changes will need to be made through the Xplor software system, families will be required to provide the information in writing or via email to the Centre for records to be updated.

A Registration Fee is payable annually to secure a place in Before and/or After School Care and Vacation Care.

In Term 4 –OOSH existing families will be required to re-enrol for the following year by completing a re- enrolment form. Staff will review and evaluate enrolment forms each year prior to re-enrolment to assess the suitability of the current forms.

Enrolment forms and paperwork will be uploaded to the Xplor website to the child's Xplor profile and kept in a confidential file. Access to this information is available only to the educators, nominated supervisor, parent / guardian and authorised Government Officers.

Where demand of care exceeds the Centre's number of approved places, the children's names will be placed on a Waiting List and parents will be contacted as places become available.

Families with Custody arrangements

Families must provide information in relation to Custody arrangements or disputes. Staff/Educators can only refuse a parent access to a child, **IF** details on Children's Services Enrolment profile have been completed and documentation of guardianship and / or access arrangements are on file preferably with a photo of any person that does not have access to the child.

Where a copy of appropriate paperwork, i.e. a Family Court Order or Injunction Orders have been supplied, the non-custodial parent will be requested to leave the premises and, failing this, the Team Leader/RPIC will talk with the parent in a situation that is as far removed from the children as possible. Other educators will contact the Guardian and /or the Police.

A Parent/Legal Guardian cannot be refused access if there is no Court Order applicable to the child.

Families of children with High Support Needs

In the event of a family enrolling a child/children with high support needs, staff will require additional information to be provided in relation to the child/children.
A Risk Assessment will be completed to determine what level of care the Centre is able to provide. The outcome of the risk assessment will determine if the child is able to be offered a place immediately or placed on a waiting list until further support can be sourced.

If funding is sought and obtained for a child with High Support needs, families need to be aware that funding is not recurrent. An application needs to be lodged annually. Prior to this application being made an annual Risk Assessment will be completed in consultation with families and Coordinator & Team Leader to ensure all stakeholders' needs are met. Placement for the child will be offered based on the outcome of the Action Plan devised from the Risk Assessment and approval of funding if sought.

Families with Additional Support Needs:

The centre will make every effort to meet the cultural, ethnical and / or religious requirements of all children attending for inclusion

Families with English as their Second Language.

In the event of a family with English as their second language enrolling at the Centre, staff will seek assistance from relevant agencies to best progress the child's enrolment.
The Team Leader will seek support to implement an orientation procedure for the child and family.

Waiting List

In the event of a child being placed on the Waiting List staff will adhere to the Priority of Access Guidelines as determined by the Australian Government as follows: -

Priority of Access

Priority 1: a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
Priority 2: a child of a single parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
Priority 3: any other child.

Within each category mentioned above, the following children are given priority:

- Children in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families
- Children in families which include a disabled person
- Children in families on lower incomes
- Children in families with a non-English speaking background
- Children in socially isolated families
- Children of single parents

There are some circumstances in which a child who is already in a childcare service may be required to leave the service

Any childcare service that has no vacant place and is providing care for a Priority 3 child may require that child to leave the service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child.

Eligibility of Care

The Centre policy is that children must be enrolled and have commenced in Primary school to attend care. Children who have completed Primary school – Year 6 in December may attend the January Vacation Care program prior to them commencing High School in February the following year.
A Limited Kinder Program may be available in January Vacation Care prior to commencement of primary school.

OOSH Permanent Bookings and Casual / Extra Care requirements

Permanent bookings are made on a term basis – the same days each week and require a signed CWA agreement on commencement. All fees are payable for the entire term regardless of your attendance. Changes to bookings must be made in writing or on appropriate Centre paperwork and will be implemented at the start of the next fortnight.

OOSH bookings (Before & After School Care) carry over from Term to Term

unless families advise in writing that they wish to change / cancel their bookings.

Cancellation of a Permanent booking must be completed in writing or on appropriate Centre paperwork. The family must give 2 weeks notice if they wish to cancel a child's booking. To maintain CCS payments for this notice the child must attend care on the final day of the booking or the family will not be eligible for Child Care Subsidy and will be charged full fees.

Definition from the Department of Education & Training Child Care Provider Handbook:-

"*A child care service is taken to have permanently ceased providing care for a child on the day the child last physically attends a session of care. This means that Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for absences submitted after a child last physically attends a session of care.*

If a family has confirmed their child's last day at a service, but that child does not attend their last booked sessions of care, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any days after the child's last physical attendance at the service.

If a provider continues to charge fees for sessions on days after a child has left the service because the family did not give the agreed period of notice, Child Care subsidy will not be payable for these sessions of care. If absences are reported in the above circumstances and Child Care Subsidy is incorrectly paid, these amounts will be recovered from the service."

Casual / Extra Care is only available when there are vacancies, and families have a current signed CWA in place. Families can ring or email the Centre to enquire if care is available and we can place their children. Once the children have been placed for the day the booking cannot be cancelled. Casual bookings can be made for up to 2 weeks from the current date.

Vacation Care Bookings requirements

Vacation Care bookings are completed separately each school holiday period. OOSH families have priority bookings for Vacation Care and are provided with the Vacation Care package 2 weeks before it is released to the general public, to complete their bookings. All days and excursions booked must be paid for.

Cancellation or change to Vacation Care booking must be completed in writing or on appropriate Centre paperwork. Cancellations or changes will only be accepted if received 2 weeks prior to the commencement of the Vacation Care program. Families can submit their cancellation / change of booking paperwork after this date and if we can replace their bookings from children on the Waiting List we will do so.

Families who only use Vacation Care will be required to sign a new CWA each time the child is booked into Vacation Care. CWA's are cancelled for Vacation Care only families at the end of each program.

As with permanent bookings (see above) if a child who only uses Vacation Care during school holidays, does not attend on their last booked session they will be charged full fees as no CCS entitlement will be paid for this absence.

Pupil Free Day Care Bookings requirements

Pupil Free Day bookings are made prior to each Pupil Free Day – for State Schools they will be the first day back Term 1, 2 & 3 and the last 2 days of Term 4, these days are included in the Vacation Care Package. Catholic and Independent schools set their own Pupil Free Days, to offer care on these days we need a minimum of 25 children per day.

No Cancellations or changes are available for Pupil Free Days – Days booked must be paid for.

Child's attendance once enrolled

The Centre's responsibility for the child begins when the child is placed in the educator's care by the parent / guardian or when they are collected from the school from OOSH / bus lines, for the afternoon session.

If a child will be absent on a day they are booked into care, the family must notify the Centre of the absence. The rules for Allowable Absences under CCS system will be followed in relation to all absences.

Re-Enrolment for the New Year.

1. OOSH bookings (Before & After School Care) are all stopped at the end of Term 4 each year. Families are required to complete new paperwork to booking back into care for the following year – NO BOOKINGS ARE CARRIED OVER.

2. If the child does not attend the last booked session and does not return to care the following year they will be charged full fees (as above). Centrelink will recoup the CCS paid to the Centre and the amount will be added to families accounts – this adjustment will be made once Centrelink identifies the absence and will appear on the families statement even after they have paid their final account to the service. We have no control over these adjustments or the timeframe of when they will occur – Families are required to pay these final account adjustments once they are notified.

3. OOSH families have priority bookings – they are provided with the enrolment paperwork prior to the general public and have a due date to make their bookings before places are offered to others. If families do not re-enrol, they will be placed on the Waiting List if numbers have exceeded our approved places. Kinder siblings of current families will

have preference over new families being enrolled in the service.

4. Family fees will be based on the booking information provided in Term 4 for the commencement of Term 1. Fees will be charged as per this booking from Week 1. Cancellation or change of booking must be completed in writing or on appropriate Centre paperwork 2 week prior to the commencement of Term, by the due date allocated. Commencing Term 1, a registration/admin fee and equipment fee is charged per child annually.

Kinder Enrolments

Bookings will commence from the start date of individual schools Kindergarten year. Fees will be charged as of this date. If the child does not commence care as of this date they will be charged full fee rate until the child commences care.

Definition from the Department of Education & Training Child Care Provider Handbook:-

"If a family is booked in to start at a service on a particular date, and does not start on that day, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid until the child physically attends a session of care."

Related Regulations and References:

National Education and Care Regulations	
157	Access for parents
168 **-2: k**	Education and care service must have policies and procedures enrolment and orientation
170 **171** **172**	Polices and procedures to be followed Policies and procedures to be kept available Notification of change to policies or procedures
173 **174** **175**	Prescibed information to be displayed – education and care service other than a family day care Time to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authority Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by the provider
181	Confidentiality of records kept by the provider
183	Storage of records and other documents

National Quality Standard (NQS)		
Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements		
4.2	**Professionalism**	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical
4.2.2	**Professional Standards**	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities		

6.1	**Supportive relationships with families**	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.1	**Engagement with the service**	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership		
7.1	**Governance**	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	**Management systems**	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

Related Centre Policies & Procedures

- Parent Handbook
- Privacy & Confidentiality Policy & Procedures
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
- Payment, Handling and Debt Collection of Fees Policy

References

- Child Care Services Handbook 2017 – 2018 https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/child-care-service-handbook
- Priority of Access Guidelines https://www.education.gov.au/priority-filling-child-care-places
- Network of Community Activities
- PSCA Policies in Practice
- Child Care Provider Handbook - Department of Education, Australian Government April 2025

Enrolment Procedures – Staff Procedure

Before & After School and Vacation Care

When the Centre is approached by a family to enroll their child / children the following procedure will be implemented.

1. *Educators will provide the family with appropriate enrolment links, paperwork and Child Care Subsidy information. An appointment time with the Team Leader/RPIC will be established to go through Enrolment Checklist and finalise the enrolment*

2. *Care requirements for the child/children will be discussed with the Responsible Person in Charge (RPIC) or Coordinator. If the child / children have High Support Needs further information will be collected.*

3. *For children with High Support Needs staff will complete a Risk Assessment Form to determine the child's inclusion requirements in the nominated program/s. The child's inclusion requirements will be considered in relation to -*
   - *All areas of service provision & stakeholders*
   - *WH&S issues for staff, educators & peers attending*
   - *Available resources.*

   Based on the outcome of the Risk Assessment -
   - *A place will be offered to the family or*
   - *The family will be placed on a Waiting List until further assistance is sourced.*

   A situation may arise whereby the family is notified that the Centre is unable to provide care at the present time. The family will be provided with a copy of the Risk Assessment Report and given opportunity to discuss the outcomes.

4. *If placement is not available at the time of enrolment - the child/children will be placed on a Waiting List. Future care will be determined by availability of appropriate places and priority of access guidelines.*

5. *If the child / children can be placed at the time of enrolment, educators will commence preparations for an orientation procedure to be in place on the first day of care.*

Dual Enrolments

1. *In situations of dual enrolment or subsequent disagreement between parents -a joint list or people authorised to collect the child/children will be developed in consultation with the Coordinator.*

   If a consensus cannot be reached, only the parents will be authorised to collect the children. If the families do not agree to this the child/children will not be able to attend.

   Considering WH&S and safety matters for all staff/educators -
   The staff/educators of PMNC Children's Services are not to be brought into areas of family conflict.

   If no Court orders are in place staff/educators cannot go against a parent's request.
   If a written parenting agreement or order has been developed, this takes priority over a Court order. (Copy to be kept on file at the Centre).

2. *Information in relation to care will be provided to both parents upon request. Information in relation to fees and payments will only be provided to the Enrolling parent.*

3. *In the situation where families share care arrangements, bookings must be consistent days each week of the alternative weeks of the care arrangement.*

Custody Disputes

Custody Disputes are when parents are disputing Guardianship or access of their children, it is a legal process and without appropriate Legal Documentation i.e. Court Orders or AVO's (Apprehended Violence Orders) in place no parent can be refused access to their child.

1. *Make sure appropriate documentation is on file and that you are aware of any Custody arrangements that are in place. This is Confidential Information and must be treated with the utmost of confidentiality.*

   Generally Custodial parents who have concerns that their child / children may be at risk because the non-custodial parent is around will notify the Centre.

2. *If a non-custodial parent arrives to collect the child / children and a Court Order is in place it is important to refer the matter to the Team Leader / Coordinator immediately who will deal with the parent in a situation that is as far removed from the children as possible.*

3. *You must then assess whether to contact the custodial parent or the Police first (if the non-custodial parent is becoming angry or abusive ring police first as an Emergency Situation) If you are unsure of what to do inform another staff member immediately. Time is of great importance in this situation.*

4. *Always call the Police even if the situation does not appear to be violent or abusive as they can act as mediation between parents.*

5. *All children's safety and wellbeing is priority, therefore it is important that if the parents won't be removed from the situation where children are playing, then all children must be removed from the situation where the dispute is happening.*

6. *A detailed report of the Incident must be completed as soon as possible.*

7. *This Issue is to be treated with strict Confidentiality and not to be discussed outside of the Centre, staff will be given the opportunity for debriefing amongst themselves.*

<u>Casual Care bookings.</u>

This procedure will be implemented for families who have opted on their Enrolment Form to Casual Care. The procedure is also to be implemented for any change in Permanent Booking or Extra Days of Care.

1. *The staff member/educator managing Xplor bookings to check availability including bus seats*

2. *Enter booking into the Xplor master roll*

3. *Advise family.*

Waiting List procedures for Before & After School Care bookings. Maximum number of children at the Centre for After School Care should not exceed 80, maximum number of children for Before School Care should not exceed 30 based on Educator: Child ratios, however places available in ASC & BSC may also be dependent on the number seats available on the OOSH Bus. If places are not available children are to be placed on the OOSH Waiting List.

1. *Priority of Access as set by the Department of Education and Training will always be implemented.*

2. *Current enrolled OOSH families have priority over new families enrolling providing they meet the Priority of Access guidelines.*

3. *If a child cannot be placed in care because numbers exceed maximum placements the child will be placed on the Waiting List.*

4. *The Waiting List will be checked each time a notification comes through of a change in Permanent Booking, or Termination of Booking, by the Co Ordinator or Team Leader managing Xplor bookings. If a child can be offered a place, the Team Leader/RPIC is to be notified and they will then organise for the family to be contacted to offer care.*

5. *Once the family has confirmed that they still require care the child can be made active in the Xplor master roll and taken off the Waiting List.*

6. *The Waiting List is to be reviewed regularly by the Team Leader, and parents contacted to ensure that they still require care and wish to remain on the Waiting List for placement.*