

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

Kindergarten Central Registration Guidelines



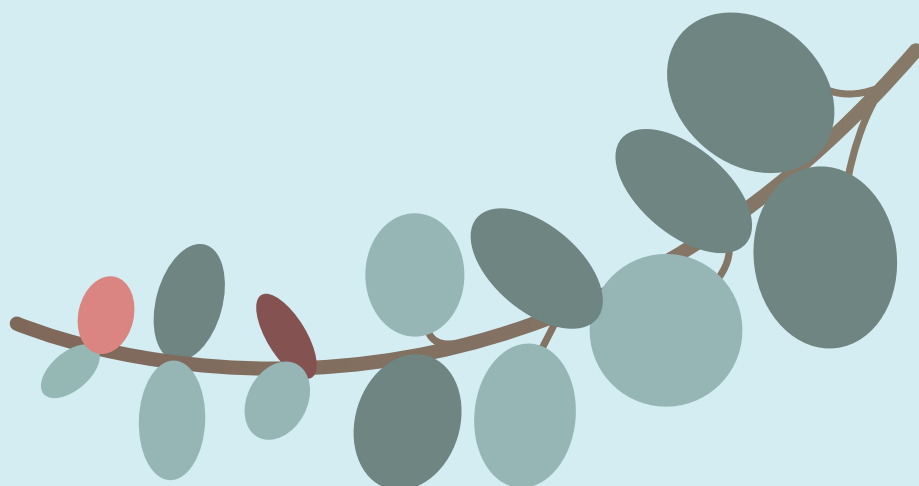
South Gippsland
Shire Council

Contents

Objective	3
Scope	4
Eligibility	5
Birth Dates Between 1 January and 30 April	5
Children Eligible for a Second Year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten	6
Children Who Turn Six during the Kindergarten Year	6
Registration Process	7
Additional Assistance	7
Registration Offer and Timelines	7
Allocation and Offers	8
Priority of Access	8
Allocation of Kindergarten Places	9
Kindergarten Offers	9
Appeals Process	10
Enrolment	11
Associated Documents and Legislation	11

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Bunurong and Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of South Gippsland and pay respect to their Elders, past, present, and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.



Objective

South Gippsland Shire Council recognises that supporting the healthy development of children has significant long-term benefits for building strong, resilient communities. Access to quality play-based early learning is a powerful way to support children's development with benefits lasting into the school years and beyond.

South Gippsland Shire Council provides a [Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme](#) on behalf of participating kindergarten service providers within the municipality.

The objectives of these Guidelines are to:

- Ensure vulnerable (priority) children in the municipality can access free, quality kindergarten.
- Equitable and fair processes are applied to all families seeking funded kindergarten places, in line with the [Department of Education Priority of Access](#) guidelines and South Gippsland Shire Council local priorities.
- Ensure access to reliable data about kindergarten registrations, placements and enrolments in the municipality to help Council and providers plan to meet future demand.
- Ensure optimal placement of children into kindergarten programs so that all eligible children have access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation.



Scope

These Guidelines apply to:

- Council officers.
- Participating kindergarten service providers in Committees of Management, Early Years Managers and private providers and their staff.
- Parents and guardians wishing to register their child for kindergarten at participating kindergarten services.

South Gippsland Shire Council coordinates the Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme to provide a service that is efficient, convenient and transparent for families registering their children in a [funded kindergarten program](#).

The kindergarten services participating in the Scheme are:

- Karmai Community Children's Centre Inc.
- Leongatha Children's Centre Inc.
 - > Leongatha Children's Centre.
 - > Leongatha Early Learning Centre.
- Leongatha Community Preschool Centres Inc.
 - > Allora Kindergarten.
 - > Hassett Street Kindergarten.
- Loch and District Preschool Inc.
- Meeniyah Preschool Inc.
- Mirboo North Kindergarten – Y Ballarat.
- Poowong Kindergarten – Uniting Care Gippsland.
- Prom Coast Centres for Children who operate:
 - > Fish Creek Kindergarten.
 - > Foster Early Learning.
 - > Toora Kindergarten.
 - > Welshpool Kindergarten.

The Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme is subject to ongoing Department of Education funding.

Eligibility

The Victorian Government provides funding to support children to access a high-quality kindergarten program in the two years before they start school.

Children can only be funded for a kindergarten place at one service at any one time.

You can register your child for kindergarten if:

- Your child turns three or four by 30 April the year they attend.
- You, and the Early Childhood Teacher, believe that your child needs a second year of four-year-old kindergarten and a second year funding application has been completed by the Early Childhood Teacher and approved by the Department of Education.
- Your child is either:
 - > Up to date with immunisations;
 - > On an immunisation catch-up schedule; or
 - > Has a medical condition preventing them from being immunised.

The below table sets out birth dates and eligibility for kindergarten.

Child's Date of Birth	Eligible Year for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten	Eligible Year for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten
1 May 2020 to 30 April 2021	2024	2025
1 May 2021 to 30 April 2022	2025	2026
1 May 2022 to 30 April 2023	2026	2027
1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024	2027	2028

Birth Dates Between 1 January and 30 April

Parents of children born [between 1 January and 30 April](#) can choose which year to start three-year-old kindergarten. These children can start in the same year they turn three, or the year they turn four.

In most services, children will not be able to attend a funded kindergarten program until they are three years old. This is due to the National Quality Framework regulations of a minimum educator-to-child ratio for children under three years old, which is 1:4. Most services will not have the required staff to support this.

Below are factors to consider if your child's birth date is between 1 January and 30 April:

- Your child can only access one year in a three-year-old kindergarten program and one year in a four-year-old kindergarten program (although some children may be eligible for an additional year in four-year-old kindergarten).
- The year that your child starts kindergarten will directly impact the age they will start school.

Refer to our Kindergarten Information Kit for more information on making this decision.

Children Eligible for a Second Year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

Some children will be eligible to attend a [second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten](#). Eligibility for this is determined by an Early Childhood Teacher and approved by the Department of Education. They must declare that:

- The child is observed as having delays in at least two key outcome areas of learning and development, as detailed in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.
- There is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes if they attend a second year of kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development skills in these key outcome areas and better facilitate the transition to school in the following year.

Children Who Turn Six during the Kindergarten Year

A child who turns six at any time during the kindergarten year must be exempted from attending school.

Parents are required to apply for an exemption before their child starts kindergarten by submitting an ['Exemption from School Due to Attendance in Kindergarten Program' form](#) to the appropriate Department of Education regional office by 1 November in the year prior to the child turning six.

It is at the discretion of the Department of Education whether permission is granted for delayed school entry.

A copy of the approved exemption letter must be provided to the kindergarten on enrolment.



Registration Process

Children can be registered for kindergarten in the year before they start kindergarten. Registrations can be completed using the following options:

- [Online registration form](#).
- Calling 5662 9200 or emailing kinder@southgippsland.vic.gov.au for help completing the registration form.

You will receive email confirmation of your child's registration once the registration form has been received.

It is free to register your child for kindergarten.

Throughout the registration and allocation process, correspondence will be sent by email. You may also be contacted by phone and/or text message.

Additional Assistance

Additional assistance to complete the registration form is available by contacting the Kindergarten Registration team on 5662 9200.

Parents that cannot access the online registration, or who do not have access to an email account, can request help to complete the form and correspondence can be sent by post.

An interpreter can also be arranged to support the registration process if required.

Kindergarten information is available in other languages on the [Victorian Government's website](#).

Registration Offer and Timelines

Stage	Date	Offers*
First Round	1 May to 30 June.	Early August.
Second Round	1 July to 31 August.	Early October.
Third Round	Processed on a weekly basis following acceptance of second round offers.	

*Families have 14 days to accept or decline their offer.

Allocation and Offers

Priority of Access

Children will be prioritised for their first preference kindergarten in line with the [Department of Education's Priority of Access](#), as well as South Gippsland Shire Council's local priorities.

High Priority set by Department of Education

Priority One Applies to all children meeting the criteria below regardless of residency:

- Children / family member known to Child Protection / Child FIRST.
- Asylum seeker and refugee children.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

Priority Two Applies to all children meeting the criteria below and live in the South Gippsland Shire:

- Child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, or Veteran Affairs Card.
- Multi-birth children (triplets or more).
- Children with additional needs who:
 - > Require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program.
 - > Require a combination of services which are individually planned.
 - > Have an identified specific disability or developmental delay.

Local Priorities set by South Gippsland Shire Council

The Department of Education [Find My School](#) or [Find A Kinder Program](#) zoning may also be applied along with the priorities list below. Children may be prioritised for a place at the kindergarten in the same town as their zoned Government School, except where that town does not have a kindergarten service, such as Tarwin Lower and Nyora.

Priority Three South Gippsland Shire residents who are an existing family.
South Gippsland Shire residents whose sibling attended the service in the last three years.

Priority Four All other South Gippsland Shire residents.

Registrations for children that are not South Gippsland residents will be processed from third round using the following priorities, unless the closest kindergarten to their place of residence is in the South Gippsland Shire.

Priority Five Out-of-shire residents that meet Priority Two requirements.

Priority Six Out-of-shire residents who are an existing family.
Out-of-shire residents whose sibling attended the service in the last three years.

Priority Seven All other out-of-shire residents.

Families may apply for special consideration where they can show that the child can only attend one specific kindergarten service. The special considerations section of the registration form should be completed to be considered in this process.

Allocation of Kindergarten Places

Kindergarten places are allocated using computer software that allocates places to the highest preferred kindergarten (as listed on the child's registration) based on a set of weighting points in line with the Priority of Access and local priorities.

Randomised selection is used for all children who attract the same level of weighting points. Every effort will be made to place children at the same service for three- and four-year-old kindergarten. Unfortunately, this is not guaranteed due to the Victorian Government regulatory space and ratio requirements for kindergartens.

Kindergarten registrations received by 30 June will receive first round offers. Registrations received from 1 July will be processed in subsequent rounds.

Kindergarten Offers

Offers are sent by email and families need to respond to the offer within 14 days by:

- Accepting – confirm the child will attend the kindergarten they were offered.
- Accepting and waitlist – accept the offer and remain on the waitlist for a higher preference offer.
- Declining – child is removed from the registration list and will not receive any further offers.
- Deferring – current registration is moved to the registration list for the following year. Family will be contacted when registrations open again to update preferences.

If no response is received and efforts to contact the family are unsuccessful, the application will be cancelled and no further offers will be made.

Parents are notified at the end of each round if they did not receive an offer in the current round and are encouraged to add more kindergartens to their preferred list. Children can remain on the waitlist until a place becomes available at their preferred kindergarten.

The waitlist is maintained until the beginning of Term One. Families will be advised by email prior to removing the waitlist and given an option to continue to stay on the waitlist if they are still wanting to change services.



Appeals Process

Families that are dissatisfied with the place offered, can appeal the decision. Appeals must be lodged by email to kinder@southgippsland.vic.gov.au and be received within 14 days after the closing date for acceptance offers.

Applications will be heard by the Appeal Panel, made up of Coordinator Children and Family Services (or delegate) and two independent members. Members will be appointed by South Gippsland Shire Council officers and must demonstrate no bias, prejudice or advantage to be gained by themselves, or any personal or business associates by being a member of the Appeal Panel.

Applicants can provide written information, speak directly to the panel or have somebody speak on their behalf.

On the consideration of the material presented, the Appeal Panel may:

- Dismiss the appeal.
- Offer a place at a kindergarten other than the placements against which the appeal has been lodged, if available.
- Place the child's name on a waiting list at a kindergarten other than the centre offered to the applicant, without the child forfeiting the original placement offered.

The applicant will receive written notification of the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of the panel meeting.

The decision of the Panel is final.



Enrolment

Once a kindergarten offer has been accepted, families must complete the kindergarten enrolment process with their allocated kindergarten.

The kindergarten enrolment process is managed by each individual kindergarten. Families will be contacted by their allocated kindergarten provider with instructions on how to complete their child's enrolment.

The enrolment process collects additional information to form part of your child's Enrolment Record such as:

- Proof of birth.
- Copies of concession cards.
- Evidence of immunisation status.
- Allergies or medical conditions.
- Additional information about your child such as their interests and hobbies.
- Any additional needs of your child.
- Emergency contacts.
- Details of any parenting orders or legal matters to do with the care or safety of your child.

Associated Documents and Legislation

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.*
- Kindergarten Funding Guide – Department of Education.
- Privacy and Confidentiality.
- Immunisation and Infectious Diseases.
- No Jab, No Play legislation – *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010.*
- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.*

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

9 Smith Street (Private Bag 4) Leongatha VIC 3953

Phone: 5662 9200 Fax: 5662 3754

Email: council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au

Website: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/southgippslandshirecouncil



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Shire Council