

FEES POLICY

QUALITY AREA 7 – VERSION 1.3



PURPOSE

This policy provides clear guidance on how Denzil Don Kindergarten meets the requirements of the Free Kinder funding program.

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child guide all decisions, actions and practices of Denzil Don Kindergarten staff.

VALUES

Denzil Don Kindergarten is committed to:

- Supporting the Victorian Government's Free Kinder initiative
- Increasing access to high-quality kindergarten programs for all Victorian children
- Ensuring there are no financial barriers for families wishing to access a kindergarten program for their child.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/carers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, all service staff (educational and non-educational), students, volunteers, parents/carers, and others attending the programs and activities of Denzil Don Kindergarten.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities Under This Policy:
Ensure that Denzil Don Kindergarten is nominated as the recipient of your child's kindergarten funding
Understand that your child's enrolment at Denzil Don Kindergarten cannot proceed unless funding is allocated to Denzil Don Kindergarten
Read and sign the After Kinder Care (AKC) Terms and Conditions, and pay AKC fees as required, if applicable
Understand that After Kinder Care (AKC) is not part of Free Kinder and that fees must be paid in-line with the Terms & Conditions of attendance
Understand that late collection from your child's regular kinder program will result in your child being signed into AKC for which you will be invoiced at a minimum of one hour (\$26)
Read, understand and follow the service Code of Conduct at all times
Adhere to this policy and all other service policies at all times

Responsibilities: R indicates legislation requirement	Approved provider & persons with management or control	Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day-to-Day Charge	All service staff (educational & non-educational)	Contractors, Volunteers & Students
Implement and review this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, in line with DE Free Kinder requirements	R	✓	✓	
Ensure policies and procedures for fee payment (if applicable) are in place (Regulation 168) and follow them (Regulation 170)	R	✓		
Ensure this policy is readily accessible (Regulation 171), and that parents/carers and stakeholders know that they can find all policies on the service website, and in the Policy Folder in the kindergarten office	R	✓		
Refer parent/carers questions about this policy to the Centre Coordinator		✓	✓	

Inform families of operating hours, term dates, planned closures, and additional hours	R	√		
Inform families of the total annual fee amount and additional hours	R	√		
Provide families with information about Free Kinder	R	√		
Ensure no compulsory out-of-pocket levies or maintenance fees apply (voluntary contributions permitted)	R	√		
Charge families only for special events outside the normal program	R	√	√	
Ensure voluntary payments or donations receive written agreement and a receipt	R	√		
Enrol non-funded places in accordance with Kindergarten Funding Guidelines	R	√		
Provide information about access to one funded 3-year-old and one 4-year-old program	R	√		
Ensure families attending sessional kindergarten and long day care nominate where funded kindergarten is accessed	R	√		
Enrol eligible children under Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning and record this correctly	R	√	√	
Collect and record concession entitlement information in Arrival	R	√	√	
Use surplus funding only in accordance with approved purposes, including increasing participation and improving program quality	R	√		
Comply with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	R	√	√	
After Kinder Care Program – optional, extension of hours (not part of Free Kinder)				
Advise families that enrolment beyond 15 hours is optional and that 15 hours are free	R	√		
Provide a statement of After Kinder Care (AKC) hours fees and charges on enrolment, where applicable	R	√		
Provide an After Kinder Care Fee Payment Agreement where applicable	R	√		
Inform families of actions taken if After Kinder Care fees are not paid	R	√		
Notify families at least 14 days prior to any changes to additional hours fees or fee collection methods (<i>Regulation 172(2)</i>), with one term's notice where possible	R	√		
Charge fees for optional hours beyond the funded 15 hours - After Kinder Care (AKC)	R	√		
Ensure additional hours fees are collected and receipted	R	√		

BACKGROUND & LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

The *Best Start, Best Life* reform supports all Victorian children to reach their full potential through increased access to quality early childhood education and care. A key component of this reform is *Free Kinder*, which supports access to two years of high-quality kindergarten for all Victorian children. All families with a child enrolled in a funded kindergarten program are eligible for Free Kinder, including both 3-and-4-year-old kindergarten programs.

Free Kinder at Denzil Don Kindergarten provides a free 15-hour program for both 3-year-old and 4-year-old children enrolled at the service.

Research shows that play-based learning is a powerful way to support children's learning and development. Access to two years of early learning is a critical part of a child's educational journey, with benefits that extend into the school years and beyond.

Regulation 168(2)(n) of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* requires Denzil Don Kindergarten to have a Fees Policy which must be available to families. Any voluntary parent donations and/or fundraising must comply with the Free Kinder subsidy guidelines and respond to the Kinders community context.

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

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- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms, see the Definitions File located online: <https://denzildonkindergarten.org.au/policies/> OR in the Policies Folder in the kindergarten office.

After Kinder Care (AKC): extended care available beyond the free kindergarten program. AKC is not funded by the Victorian Government and is not part of the Child Care Subsidy.

AKC Fees: a charge for attendance at After Kinder Care (AKC) – the kindergarten’s wrap around care program.

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): a funding program that provides eligible children 15 hours of free kindergarten each week for two years before starting school. To be eligible a child must be 3 by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten and be from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or the family has had contact with child protection. If a child is eligible for ESK, they should be enrolled in ESK, even where Free Kinder and/or 15 hours per week of funded 3-year old kindergarten is offered.

Free Kinder: A Victorian Government Best Start, Best Life initiative providing Free Kinder programs for four-year-old and three-year-old children in funded services, that have opted into the initiative.

More hours of 4-Year-Old Kinder (Pre-Prep): 4-year-old kindergarten will gradually transition to 30 hours a week. By 2036, children across Victoria will have access to 1,800 hours of funded kindergarten before school, comprising 600 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and 1,200 hours of Pre-Prep.

Pre-Prep priority cohort: from 2026, between 16 and 25 hours of 4-year-Old will be available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, children who have had contact with Child Protection, children who were supported by Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) or Access to Early Learning (AEL) in their 3-Year-Old Kindergarten year.

Waitlist Registration Fee: a fee for when families to register their child on the kindergarten’s waitlist for a kindergarten place. The fee is payable for both 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs, including for currently attending 3’s moving to the 4-year-old program the following year. It is a non-refundable administration fee.

SOURCES & RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Best Start Best Life: <https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life>
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education): www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide
- Resources for Funded Kindergartens: <https://www.vic.gov.au/resources-funded-kindergartens>
- The constitution of Denzil Don Kindergarten.

RELATED POLICIES

- Complaints
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions and Service Events
- Governance and Management of the Service
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

EVALUATION

To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, we will:

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- seek feedback from all parties affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before any significant change is made to the policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

PROCEDURES

- NIL

ATTACHMENTS

- NIL

AUTHORISATIONS

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 20/06/2026.

REVIEW DATE: **20 June 2028**

ATTACHMENT 1: FREE KINDER INFORMATION

Kindergarten programs for 3-year-old and 3-year-old children in Victorian Government funded services are provided free as part of the *Best Start, Best Life* reform.

Free Kinder provides a free program in sessional services.

The Department of Education (DE) also provides additional funding to support access for:

- Eligible 3-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Children known to Child Protection

1. What Free Kinder Means at Our Service

Kindergarten is FREE at Denzil Don Kindergarten. This includes:

- **Free 15-hour program** for 3-year-old children
- **Free 15-hour program** for 4-year-old children

Kindergarten is FREE at Denzil Don Kindergarten.

2. Late Pick up Fee for Sessional Kinder:

Children collected more than five minutes after the end of their kindergarten session will:

- Be signed into After Kinder Care (AKC)
- Be charged a minimum of 1 hour at the casual rate (\$26 per hour)

3. After Kinder Care

After Kinder Care is available for families who require care beyond sessional kindergarten hours. Participation is optional.

AKC operates after every kindergarten session. The latest pick-up time is 5:30 pm SHARP.

After Kinder Care Fees

AKC bookings are available as:

- **Permanent Bookings** (term-based):
 - \$20 per hour
 - Must be paid in full prior to the first session of the term
- **Casual Bookings** (ad hoc):
 - \$26 per hour

After Kinder Care Terms

- Permanent bookings are non-refundable and non-transferable, including absences due to illness, holidays, or personal choice
- Invoices:
 - Permanent bookings: issued before the end of term and must be paid in full before the first attendance.
 - Casual bookings: invoiced the Monday or Tuesday following attendance and must be paid within 3 days.
- Invoices can be paid via direct deposit or credit card (Square – 2.2% merchant fee applies)
- Unpaid AKC fees may result in cancellation of AKC access

Late Collection Charges for After Kinder Care:

- Children collected outside their booked permanent time will incur a minimum 1-hour charge at the casual rate (\$26)
- Families must accurately sign children out; staff will correct times if necessary
- Late collection (after 5:30 pm) will result in a late fee of \$20 per 10 minutes (or part thereof)
- Ongoing late collections may result in cancellation of AKC bookings

4. Fundraising and Voluntary Contributions

Participation in fundraising activities is voluntary. However, family support is encouraged as these activities build community connections and help to support the purchase of items that the kinder may not otherwise be able to purchase.

5. Notification of After Kinder Care Fee Changes

AKC fees are set for the year and are only reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/carers will be notified one term in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.