



## PRIORITY OF ACCESS POLICY

|                    |              |                       |          |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Policy number      | 5.7          | Version               | 1        |
| Drafted by         | Nicole Crook | Approved by Board on  | Feb 2018 |
| Responsible person | Nicole Crook | Scheduled review date | Feb 2019 |

### INTRODUCTION

Patersonia understands that for families, enrolling their child into care can be an important priority. However the demand for Patersonia Early Learning sometimes exceeds the number of places our service is approved for and there may be a waiting list to manage family demands. When this happens, our service will comply with the Australian Government 'Priority of Access Guidelines' to ensure places are allocated to families with the greatest need for child care support. These Guidelines will be strictly adhered to and failure to meet these Guidelines is a breach of the conditions of continued approval for receiving Child Care Benefit and State Government funding.

The guidelines will be used during enrolment, when there is a waiting list for our service, or when a number of parents are applying for a limited number of vacant places.

### PURPOSE

This policy outlines the legislated steps that must be followed when prioritising bookings within our service when waiting lists need to be applied.

### POLICY

#### The Priority of Access Guidelines

Families will be advised about the Priority of Access Guidelines when they enroll their children in our service. Families will also have access to a copy of this policy.

The Priorities are:

- **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 'A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999'.
- **Priority 3:** any other child.

Within the three categories described above, priority will be given to children from:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

- Families which include a person with a disability
- Families on lower incomes
- Families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Socially isolated families
- Single parent families

When the service has no vacant places and is providing care for a child who is Priority 3 under the Guidelines, the service may require that child to leave the service in order to make room for a child with a higher priority. However, this can only happen if our service:

- Notified the family that our service follows the Priority of Access Guidelines and this Policy when their child first entered care at our service, and
- Gives the family at least 14 days' notice of the need for their child to vacate their place.
- When considering enrolments for the following year, the service will consider the physical space and accept enrolments ensuring compliance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law is maintained.
- If proposed enrolments exceed the current physical space, the service will investigate access to additional space. If suitable additional physical space cannot be secured, the service will place a cap on the number of enrolments and once that cap is reached a waiting list will be established. Families will be made aware of this process.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. The Board will:**

- Regularly review this policy in line with the Policy Review Schedule and any relevant change in legislation or standard practice.

### **2. The Business Manager will:**

- Ensure that the induction process includes training in this policy.
- Where appropriate, delegate responsibility for compliance to officers with responsibility for particular sections.
- Oversee the performance of subordinate officers in these matters.
- Review and report to the Board, as appropriate, on the effectiveness of the management systems.
- Analyse material breaches and identified compliance system weaknesses for systematic trends and ensure that any adverse trends are addressed.
- Promote a culture of effective policy compliance across the organisation.

### **3. All staff and volunteers at all levels will:**

- Ensure that they are aware of the organisation's policy and undertake actions consistent with it both on and off site.

- Where appropriate, suggest ways in which practices, systems and procedures could be improved so as to improve the policy.

## **PROCESSES**

The Business Manager will review and change the organisation's procedures to ensure that these are in accordance with the principles expressed in this policy.

Staff and volunteers will follow these procedures.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Education and Care Services National Law 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2010, 2014, 2017 Update (r108, 157)

National Quality Standard (6.1, 6.3, 7.3)

Parent Handbook

Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Grievances Policy

Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services Approval and Continued Approval)

Determination 2000.

[Family Assistance Act 1999.](#)