

# Intereach Children Services Waitlist Procedure



<b>Applies to</b>	Intereach Out of School Hours (OOSH)				
<b>Policy</b>	NQS Seven: Leadership, Service Management and Effective Administration Policy				
<b>Version</b>	1.1	<b>Date approved</b>	5/9/2022	<b>Next review date</b>	20/12/2024

## 1. Objective

The objective of this procedure is to provide a service specific procedure supporting the Children's Services Enrolment and Orientation Procedure.

This procedure applies to all families registering for enrolment or making a request to the service for reactivation of an expired registration/enrolment. In situations where the service does not have any vacancies, and after taking into consideration of the priority of access, the service will establish a waiting list to ensure a fair, equitable and transparent process is maintained in accordance with all government regulatory requirements and National Quality Framework.

Families will be provided with waiting list information at registration to the service when accessing the website online enrolment system. Waiting List information is also provided to families within the Family Handbook advising families of the Guidelines that may be put in place in accordance with this procedure.

The service aims to provide an efficient waiting list procedure that is clear and understandable to all in the local community whilst ensuring the confidentiality of families through the provision of secure recording and storing procedures.

## 2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor, OOSH assistant and Senior Management to:

- ensure compliance with the and Children Services Enrolment and Orientation Procedure;
- ensure the Priority of Access guidelines are followed when filling a vacant position at the service;
- fill vacancies according to the licensed numbers allocated by the NSW Department of Education and Communities;
- ensure families are informed of the Priority of Access guidelines when enquiring, enrolling and utilising the service;
- generate an e-mail informing that once the applications are processed, they will be informed if a place is available or given an option to be on the wait list when applications are received for enrolment;
- if determined that the families will be placed on waitlist, notify families via e-mail that they are on waiting list attaching relevant procedures along with a waitlist form to be filled and return within a set time frame. If the form is not returned on time, follow up with families via phone or a text message.
- where practical, use a consistent message to families that may be referred onto the waiting list via e-mail/ phone or text message while maintaining their privacy;
- when a placement is available contact parents to offer a place and arrange a time to complete the enrolment process before the commencement date;
- regularly review waiting lists in accordance with the guidelines and where appropriate reprioritise any changes in levels of need; and,

- contact families annually to update the waiting list.

It is the responsibility of the families to:

- fill the waiting list application form in full. Incomplete waiting list forms will not be accepted;
- contact the service directly on the mobile number if confirmation from the service is not received within two weeks of forwarding the application;
- keep the Service informed of any changes in family details including:
  - change of address;
  - change of telephone number;
  - change in need for part or full time care;
  - changes to Priority of Access status; and,
  - requests to be removed from the waitlist.

It is the responsibility of the person agreeing to the family detail going onto the waiting list to keep the service updated with relevant information and failure to provide updated details or not responding to requests from the service may result in families being removed from the waiting list.

### **3. Procedure**

The OOSH waiting list is maintained for permanent places when the programs demand for care exceeds the service's number of approved places and when there is demand for places throughout the year. Where demand for care exceeds the number of approved places, families will be placed on the service's waiting list.

#### **3.1. Enrolment Applications**

Families enroll into the Service via the online enrolment system and provide the service with relevant information to assess their application, including any special considerations in regard to their child/ren's enrolment. Status of the application cannot be assessed unless this information is received in full and supporting documentation is returned by the agreed due dates as requested from the service.

OOSH will record all families' details including priority status, together with time and date of enrolment forms, and/or acceptance if applicable in the *OOSH enrolment and exits summary list*. This information will be used to determine placement within the Service.

Once the online registration enrolments are reviewed, families who are allocated with a placement will receive notification from the service. If there is no availability of placement, the Nominated Supervisor will make contact with the family to discuss the waiting list process and alternative care for the child/ren.

#### **3.2. Administering waitlist**

If the service's demand for care exceeds the service's number of approved places, families will be requested to complete a waiting list form confirming families' needs and their priorities.

Upon return of the form families will receive notification that:

- they have been placed on a waiting list;
- no guarantee that a placement will be available when they require care; and,
- the service cannot provide an estimated time when a position will be offered.

Factors influencing the waiting list are:

- the days required;
- number of children leaving the service in a given period;

- individual family circumstances, flexibility of parents preferred days; and,
- priority of access guidelines.

Families are not required to contact the service regarding their position on the waiting list as the families will be notified when a position becomes available.

### **3.3. Process for filling vacant positions**

The service is required to fill places as soon as notification is received that a vacancy will occur. Vacant positions are offered following the *Enrolment and Orientation Procedure Priority Guidelines*, the days available, and the date a waitlist application is received by the centre.

The Nominated Supervisor or the responsible person will:

- confirm details of the family to ensure Priority of Access Guidelines are being met to ensure they are still the most eligible family for the vacant position prior to offering the place;
- contact families on the waiting list via phone to offer a place. If the phone call is not answered, ensure a voice message is left and follow up with a text message and an e-mail to confirm the offer is received;
- inform the families of the starting date for the position and that the service will not be able to hold positions for them unless contact is made within 48 hours;
- allow 48 hours for the family to accept or decline the offer as per regulation. If no response is received within 48 hours from the family, the offer will be deemed as declined and offered to the next family on the waiting list;
- if the placement is accepted an agreement between service and the family will be arranged through the Quick kids data base booking system to secure the placement; and,
- if the family declines the offer but still wishes to stay on the list, they will go to the bottom of the waiting list.

Refer to the *Children's Services Enrolment and Orientation Procedure* and the *Payment of Fees Procedure* for information regarding absences

Families who have remained on the waiting list and did not receive a place for the current year and have been unsuccessful during the initial offers, can be carried over into the next year's waiting list if they still require the place for the next year.

### **3.4. Siblings**

Siblings of children already enrolled at the service are required to fulfill the same criteria for the waitlist applications as above. The service will consider the needs of the whole family when offering to siblings as long as it is equitable and complies with the service regulatory responsibilities and meets the recommended *Australian Government Guidelines and the Department of Education Priority Guidelines*.

### **3.5. Annual update**

Waiting lists are for the duration of the school year and reviewed annually.

The waitlist is refreshed by sending e-mails to all families on the waitlist requesting them to update their current details, including address and contact numbers and to know if they want to be on the waitlist for the coming year. If the service does not receive an updated reply by email within two weeks, families will be removed from the list, as it is presumed the family is no longer requiring care.

### **3.6. Changes to permanent booking (if a higher priority child booking is necessary)**

There are some circumstances in which a child who is already attending the service may be required to leave the service. If no vacant places are available in accordance with this procedure the service may be required to ask that a child leave the service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child. Families who may be asked to vacate their position will be provided with a minimum two-weeks' notice.

The Nominated Supervisor will notify families of the need for removal from service by:

- contacting the person liable for childcare fees via phone and/or email to provide notification, including the date when the child's permanent booking will cease with the service to allocate a placing for an identified higher priority child;
- providing as much time as possible at least a minimum of 14 days' notice of the requirement for the change in their permanent booking; and,
- issuing a notification via email of removal including effective date and, if relevant, a "waiting list form" attached to the e-mail to be completed and returned.

While there is no government-mandated priority of access, the service will consider prioritising children in line with the following priorities and as reflected within the Children services Enrolment and Orientation Procedure and OOSH waiting List Procedure:

1. Already enrolled at the service;
2. Siblings of children enrolled at the service;
3. At risk of serious abuse or neglect; and,
4. A child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

Priorities 3 and 4 reflect the Australian Government's intention to help families who are most in need and support the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.

### **3.7. Linking to other services**

Where a family has been placed on a waitlist, refused an offer of place or had their permanent booking ceased, the Nominated Supervisor will, where possible, support the family to seek alternative care arrangements. This will occur with the provision of information advising of other options and/or services that may be available in the community and, where appropriate, will make a referral.

### **3.8. Other**

Casual vacancies may become available on a casual basis, however these are managed as casual bookings, and families may book into these using the *Casual Booking Calendar* on the My Family Lounge phone 'app' if they wish to utilise these places.

If a family request information about the age when a child/ren can be left home alone, refer them to [NSW Government Information Sheet on leaving children home alone](#).

<b>4. Context</b>	
<b>4.1. Standards or other external requirements</b>	<p>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017), National Quality Standards</p> <p>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017), Guide to the National Quality Framework</p> <p>Early Childhood Australia (2016). Code of Ethics</p> <p>Australian Government, Department of Education, Child Care Provider Handbook (Priority of access - prioritising vacancies), Accessed November 2019 from <a href="https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook/managing-child-care-places">https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook/managing-child-care-places</a></p> <p>Department of Education. Child Care Provider Handbook 2018 - 2019</p>
<b>4.2. Legislation or other requirements</b>	<p>Education and Care Services National Regulations consolidated 2017</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</p> <p>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)</p> <p>Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)</p> <p>NSW Privacy Laws, Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) and Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW). Accessed November 2019 from <a href="https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/privacy">https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/privacy</a></p>
<b>4.3. Reference Internal documents</b>	<p>Children's Services Enrolment and Orientation Procedure</p> <p>Children's Services Payment of Fees Procedure</p> <p>Intereach Children Services Waitlist form</p> <p>OOSH enrolment and exits summary list</p>

<b>5. Document control</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date approved</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Next review date</b>
1.0	20/12/2021	M.Tai – General Manager Operations	20/12/2024
1.1	5/9/2022	T. Mercer – Quality Manager (Minor change)	20/12/2024