



**WINTON SHIRE COUNCIL  
LITTLE SWAGGIES CHILD CARE CENTRE**

# **APPROVED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM POLICY & PROCEDURE**

# APPROVED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM – POLICY & PROCEDURE

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# APPROVED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM – POLICY & PROCEDURE

## POLICY STATEMENT

Winton Shire Council (WSC) Little Swaggies Child Care Centre is dedicated to providing the very best start to children's education and offers an Approved Kindergarten Program whenever possible for children in the year prior to starting school. It is essential that all parties are aware of their responsibilities in delivering the program and accessing funding.

The goal of this Policy is to provide a clear process for educators and Nominated Supervisors around the delivery and reporting for the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) which meets legislative requirements.

## SCOPE

This Winton Shire Council policy and procedure applies to all staff, parents, visitors, volunteers at Little Swaggies Child Care Centre.

Every child, regardless of circumstance, deserves the best start in life. Access to a quality kindergarten program supports that start. It lays the foundation for every child in Queensland to thrive and achieve life-long success.

An approved, quality kindergarten program is:

- For children in the year before Prep (i.e. children who are four by 30 June in the year they start)
- 15 hours a week for 40 weeks, or 600 hours a year
- Based on play and active inquiry learning
- Delivered by a qualified Early Childhood Teacher (ECT)
- Non-compulsory.

## Eligibility

*To become an approved KPP, a service must meet eligibility requirements including, these are outlined in the QKFS Funding Requirements Guide and include:*

- *Providing a transition statement using the online application in the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) Portal for each child's family in November of the Kindy year.*
- *Has a fee structure that is not a barrier to access by families.*
- *Must have a learning program using:*
  - *The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG), or*
  - *An alternative kindergarten learning guideline accredited by the QCAA*

## Application Assessment

*An application to become an approved KPP will be assessed and approved based on the eligibility criteria. KPP approvals will be issued at the end of April and October each year. QKFS funding will apply from the beginning of the next funding cycle. Services must register and report using QGrants – the Queensland Government grants management system.*

*To remain an approved KPP and remain eligible for QKFS subsidies, the service must continue to meet the national and Queensland eligibility requirements. The service must also meet program delivery requirements under five key areas:*

- *Enrolments*
- *The service*
- *Teachers*
- *Record keeping*
- *Delivery of a learning program*

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Visit the QKFS Funding Requirement Jan 2021 document for more information”<sup>1</sup>

Further information on the following can be found in the QKFS Funding Requirement Jan 2021 document:

- Use of kindy tick
- Display of information
- Prioritising access to kindergarten places
- Enrolment in multiple programs
- Identification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Children
- Governance practices
- Teacher qualifications including working towards options
- Teacher absences
- Record keeping

The *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline (QKLG)* provides advice for planning, interacting with children, monitoring and assessing, and sharing information in kindergarten contexts.

- Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline

The *Continua of learning and development* is a resource that helps teachers assess, reflect and make evidence-based judgments about children's learning progress.

- Continua of learning and development: Queensland kindergarten learning guideline companion (PDF, 1563 kB)

The QKLG and *Continua of learning and development*:

- are based on the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
- help services meet the criteria for an approved kindergarten program.

## Subsidies

*“Various subsidy payments are available to assist with the cost of delivering an approved kindergarten program to ensure cost is not a barrier for families. The four subsidy payments provided under QKFS are:*

- *Standard per child subsidy – see page 11 of QKFS Funding Requirements for details*
- *Remote Area Subsidy - see page 12 of QKFS Funding Requirements for details*
- *Low Socio-Economic Subsidy - see page 13 of QKFS Funding Requirements for details*
- *QKFS Plus Kindy Support (QKFS Plus) - see page 14 of QKFS Funding Requirements for details*

*Services must retain evidence of how the standard per child subsidy has been spent (including receipts, invoices and ECT employment contracts), a full list of requirements for each type of subsidy is outlined in the QKFS Funding Requirement document.<sup>2</sup>*

## Additional information about QKFS subsidies

- To be able to claim QKFS subsidies for a child, the child must meet all the eligibility criteria including age eligibility, and be enrolled to receive an approved kindergarten learning program that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, for 15 hours per week over 40 weeks.
- QKFS Plus can only be claimed once per child even where they meet multiple criteria outlined above.
- Non-immunised children are eligible to receive QKFS subsidies.

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<sup>1</sup> Jan 2021 “*Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Funding Requirements*” State of Queensland (Department of Education) 2021

<sup>2</sup> Jan 2021 “*Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Funding Requirements*”, Queensland Government (Department of Education) 2021

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- Claims under the QKFS Plus subsidy are individually assessed as they are based on the eligibility of individual families. Services must apply for the QKFS Plus subsidy separately.

## Changes to Inclusion Support Program (ISP)

On 30 March 2020, the Australian Government changed the eligibility requirements for the ISP to now allow services that provide an approved kindergarten program funded by the Queensland Government (e.g. QKFS) to apply to access Inclusion Agency Support and Inclusion Development Fund support for the hours of care that attract Child Care Subsidy support. For further information please refer to the ISP Guidelines.

## Claiming Funding Key Points:

- Zero enrolments must be reported for the week/s that services fail to fulfil any of the approved KPP eligibility requirements (e.g. unplanned or unexpected teacher absence greater than 10 days, planned teacher absence where the teacher is not replaced by another early childhood teacher, the teacher resigns and the service is unable to replace them with another early childhood teacher for a period of time).
- A subsidy is paid for each eligible child enrolled for 40 weeks in a calendar year, with pro-rata amounts paid for children enrolled for less than 40 weeks.
- Approved KPPs are required to deliver the kindergarten learning program for at least 15 hours per week for 40 weeks per calendar year, or 600 hours per calendar year for each child.
- Kindergarten learning program hours now include up to 1 hour per day which can be inclusive of the ECT's lunch break and/or programming time.
- Please refer to the activity table on page 28 of the QKFS Funding Requirement document.

## Transition Statements

The transition statement summarises a child's learning progress during the kindergarten year in the five learning and development areas of the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG), or other equivalent learning guideline accredited by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA). The ECT is required to write a transition statement for each child enrolled in their service in November, in preparation for moving from kindergarten to Prep. Transition statements are written in collaboration with parents/ carers to ensure they accurately reflect each child's strengths, challenges, motivations and achievements, and provide suggestions about ways to give each child a great start to school.

A transition statement should also be provided to families of children approved by the service for a second year of kindergarten, acknowledging their learning progress and strategies to support continuity of learning and transition into a new kindergarten group. Kindergarten services are required to use the kindergarten transition statement template accessible from the QCAA Portal at:

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/kindergarten/supporting-transition-school>

## Clear and transparent kindergarten enrolment processes

*Services must ensure their application and enrolment policies:*

- *promote fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs*
- *support all eligible children to access a kindergarten program, including those who face barriers to participation*
- *do not inadvertently present barriers to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.*

*In order to achieve these objectives, service providers must ensure their enrolment policies:*

- *comply with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Disability Standards for Education 2005, the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 and the Human Rights Act 2019*
- *support children who are experiencing disadvantage*
- *address issues of eligibility for funded places*

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- *outline how waiting lists will be prioritised*
- *are effectively communicated to families and the local community.”<sup>3</sup>*

## **Delayed Entry and Exit**

Refer to the Kindergarten Delayed Entry and Exit Policy.

## **Record Keeping**

The following documents must be kept in an organised way:

- Approval notice for funding
- Copies of attendance for each child for each week the program is delivered
- Copies of rosters clearly showing when ECT's are delivering the program (including their lunch break) and times when they are not delivering such as programming non-contact time
- Copies of birth certificates for all eligible children
- Copies of health care cards or other applicable documentation for all eligible children
- Copy of public liability insurance
- Copies of all claims submitted through QGrants
- List of eligible kindy children
- List of children eligible for Kindy Plus Subsidies and relevant documentation
- List of teacher details, qualifications and study progression for all teachers regardless of current employment

## **Ensure that the following documents are always displayed where clearly visible to families**

- Kindergarten Program Fees, including how SEIFA and/or QKFS Plus subsidy is passed onto families
- Learning Program hours are accurately displayed and reflect the delivery of the learning program (not the ECT rostered shifts)
- Clear information about how SEIFA and or QKFS plus kindy Support Subsidy will be applied
- Approval Certificate
- Name and qualification of the kindergarten teacher delivering the kindergarten program
- Information about the learning program
- Kindy tick to help families recognise the program is being delivered

## **Application of Fee Subsidies**

- Kindy Plus Support Funding should be applied weekly using the CCMS approved Software to reduce out of pocket expenses, where funding is in excess of out of pocket expenses the balance should be recorded and documented to show how applied to parent accounts or used for the delivery of the program as per the requirements.
- Where SEIFA funding applies the service must clearly outline to families how this is being used to reduce their out of pocket expenses.

## **Program Delivery and funding**

- In calculating the 15hrs minimum requirement per week, services must ensure that program hours do not include any of the following:
  - Hours where the program was not delivered by children were participating in a family grouping situation or with another educator
  - Non-contact time of the ECT unless then are replaced by another qualified ECT, including programming, educational leader time, administration, parent meetings etc

**Note:** The 15hrs can include up to 1hr per day for the ECT's lunch break and/or programming time.

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<sup>3</sup> Jan 2021 "Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Funding Requirements", Queensland Government (Department of Education) 2021

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- Where the ECT is ill or on unexpected leave and another ECT is unable to replace, the service may still deliver the program if they meet the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law (for example Diploma) for up to 10 consecutive working days if unplanned/unexpected.
- Unless another ECT replaces the teacher for a planned or extended absence, funding cannot be claimed.

## NOTE:

- Children who participate in extra-curricular activities at the service where the kindy group and kindy teacher remain together with the program such as sport, language, music, this time can be counted as delivery of the program and required hrs.
- Where children participate in extra-curricular activities that take them from the kindy program and kindy teacher, they are not having the program delivered to them and as such these hours cannot be claimed. A child who leaves the kindy group to participate in an optional program for any amount of time will have their total hours of program delivery reduced by this time.

## PROCEDURE

### Responsibilities of Leadership, Management, Nominated Supervisors and Responsible Persons:

- Positively and clearly communicate all aspects of the policy and take a zero-tolerance approach to compliance.
- Understand and comply with all aspects of this policy and related legislation and support team members to do the same.
- Lead a culture of reflection and regular review of policies, seeking feedback from educators, families, children and other community agencies and professionals as appropriate.
- Ensure all elements of the 2021 “*Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Funding Requirements*” are known and fulfilled, this includes, but is not limited to, eligibility, data forecasts, record keeping, submission and payments.
- Ensure records as required upon enrolment or transition to kindy room are maintained
- Ensure fees for eligible kindy children are no more than for other children at the service
- Employ a suitably qualified early childhood teacher ([www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)) and roster so that they are provided with the required delivery time with kindy children as per the agreements – 40wks for 15hrs per week or 600hrs per year.
- Ensure rostering is not a barrier to program delivery by avoiding shifts which are outside of the program delivery hours or situations where the ECT is responsible for other groups and not directly delivering the kindy program such as family grouping times.
- Allow children who are not of the eligible age to participate in the program where space allows but ensure that claims for these children are not made.
- Prioritise spaces in the kindy program for eligible kindy children in the year prior to them attending formal schooling.
- Ensure funds are expended as required under the funding scheme including those which are to reduce out of pocket expenses.
- Use a suitable software package to deliver weekly discounts for Kindy Plus families which are no more than their out of pocket expenses.
- Work in conjunction with the WSC Management to ensure SEIFA subsidies are delivered to families to reduce out of pocket expenses such as reducing daily fee for kindy eligible children.
- Support families when an early entry or delayed exit to Prep are sought (refer to Delayed Entry/Exit to Kindy Policy)
- Work with a range of external agencies and local schools to support continuity of children’s learning
- Gather information from families including their eligibility for Kindy Plus subsidies and their attendance at any other approved program.



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- Ensure that in the case where a child also attends another approved kindy program the family must nominate the service that claims the subsidy, this record must be kept in writing with the other relevant documents.
- Ensure that records about teacher employment are maintained at all times.
- Support and mentor teachers especially those who are still studying and coordinate and encourage teacher networks to support ECT.
- Process claims using QGrants within the required timeframe in an accurate and honest way and only where records are available to support claims
- Ensure families are aware of the program and kept informed about any study being undertaken by the ECT as part of their qualification requirements.
- Submit zero enrolments for the week/s that services fail to fulfil the KPP eligibility requirements (e.g. unplanned Teacher absence greater than 10 consecutive days or on any planned/expected leave where another ECT does not replace)
- Where the ECT is on any absence firstly try to replace with another suitably qualified ECT. In the event this cannot occur, the Nominated Supervisor must ensure that a Diploma Qualified Educator is delivering the program and that families are notified. Funding can only be claimed if the temporary absences is unplanned or unexpected. Where any leave is planned, funding cannot be claimed unless the program is delivered by another ECT.
- Develop and maintain a Workforce Plan that is reviewed at least annually and includes a range of strategies to attract and retain suitably qualified staff and to address planned and unplanned absences. Services must take reasonable steps to implement the Workforce Plan.
- Ensure the service has clear and transparent kindergarten enrolment processes and policies which:
  - promote fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs
  - support all eligible children to access a kindergarten program, including those who face barriers to participation
  - do not inadvertently present barriers to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
  - comply with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Disability Standards for Education 2005, the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 and the Human Rights Act 2019
  - support children who are experiencing disadvantage
  - address issues of eligibility for funded places
  - outline how waiting lists will be prioritised
  - are effectively communicated to families and the local community
- Claim only for children who meet the criteria:
  - Turn 4yrs by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June in the year they participate in the program
  - Participate/booked for at least 15hrs for week of delivered program time over 40wks per year or clearly document how 600hrs is achieved for each individual child.
  - not participating in any other approved program
  - have a documented early entry or delayed exit to kindy form as per the Kindergarten Delayed Entry and Exit Policy
  - Participated in play-based program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher
- Monitor the expiry date for any Kindy Plus eligible cards and adjust payment accordingly.
- Implement and ensure compliance with the Cyber Bulling Policy and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Undertake a self-assessment prior to each claim being submitted – refer to “*Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme – Claiming and Self-Assessment*” Queensland Government (Department of Education) Jan 2021
- Ensure the requirements for record keeping and display/availability of documents are maintained.
- Provide to families upon enrolment or transition into the kindy program, information on how the program operates, teacher details, operating times and how subsidies are delivered.



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## Responsibilities of Early Childhood Teachers:

- Be proactive in fulfilling the requirements of this service policy and related legislative requirements.
- Seek further guidance where required to fulfil your requirements.
- Report any concerns or non-compliance immediately to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Participate in the review of documents and provide constructive feedback to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Understand and comply with the QKFS Funding Requirements.
- Develop, document and deliver a learning program according to the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines (QKLG) and Continue of Learning and Development.
- Ensure that the requirements for Transition Statement as outlined in the 2021 Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Funding Requirements are met
- Communicate with families about the program and each child's progress.
- Take leave at appropriate times as mutually agreed upon by the service to ensure continuity of program delivery.
- Ensure learning environments are rich and support children's learning
- Ensure resources are provided to children in the Kindy program that supports their learning and development.
- Abide by the Principles outlined in the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines:
  - **High expectations and equity**
    - Children achieve when all partners hold high expectations and promote equity and success for all.
  - **Respect for and response to diversity**
    - Respecting and responding to diversity — including social and cultural experiences, geographic location, abilities and needs — promotes children's connectedness.
  - **Holistic learning**
    - Children's learning is holistic; that is, children learn and develop in interconnected ways.
  - **Respectful relationships**
    - Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
    - provide strong foundations for children's learning and development.
  - **Continuity in learning**
    - Continuity and connectedness between children's past, present and future are essential for smooth transitions and success in life and learning.
  - **Shared decision making**
    - Effective decision making involves active engagement with partners, including engaging children in making choices and parents, families and communities in sharing understandings, expectations, and priorities.
  - **Intentional teaching**
    - Intentional teaching extends children's thinking and builds deep understanding. Intentional teaching occurs in emergent and planned experiences.
  - **Reflective practice**
    - Engagement in ongoing reflective practice helps teachers to build understanding and examine assumptions and practices for improvement.
- Provide relevant records for approved ECT qualification and maintain any study enrolment information including transcripts. Maintain teacher registration where this is required for the approved ECT qualification.

## Responsibilities of Families:

- Fulfil responsibilities under this policy and related legislative requirements.

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- Understand that the service must take steps as required under legislative requirements and follow advice from recognised authorities.
- Participate in the review of documents and provide constructive feedback to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Discuss any questions with the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in charge.
- Provide the relevant documents as requested including birth certificates and health care cards and keep these up to date
- Keep the service updated on any change to their eligibility for the HCC entitlement.
- Advise the service of their child's participation in any other approved Kindergarten Program.
- Encourage and support their children's attendance during the hours of the program delivery.
- Share information about their child's experiences, interests, needs and learning
- Provide the Transition Statement to their child's prep teacher to support the continuity of their learning between Kindy and Prep.

## COMMUNICATION

- Educators and Families will have access to this policy at all times.
- Educators and families will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.
- Educators and families will be provided with information from this policy at the time of employment and orientation.
- Changes to this policy and procedure document will be shared with families and educators.

## ENFORCEMENT

The Failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to:

- Termination or modification of child enrolment
- Restriction of access to the service
- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination

## RELATED POLICIES AND FORMS

- Kindergarten Delayed Entry and Exit Policy
- Delayed Entry to and Delayed Exit from a Kindergarten Program Form
- Kindy Folder and Kindy Checklists
- Child Enrolment Forms
- QKFG documents and factsheets
- QGrant website and information
- Teacher Flow Chart – determination of qualifications for ECT (Queensland Government) Educator Induction Policy

## LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES

The following documents were considered in the development of the Policy:

- Queensland Government Business and Industry Portal website: "Requirements for Providing an Approved Kindergarten Program" <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/service-industries/child-care/approved-kindergarten-programs/requirements>
- Jan 2021 "Queensland Kindergarten Funding scheme: Funding Requirements" Queensland Government (Department of Education) 2021
- "Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme – Kindergarten Learning Program and Required Hours" Queensland Government (Department of Education) Jan 2021
- "Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme – Kindergarten Learning Program and Required Hours" Queensland Government (Department of education) Jan 2021
- "Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme – Claiming and Self-Assessment" Queensland Government (Department of Education) Jan 2021
- National Quality Standards

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- QA1 Educational Program and Practice
- QA4 Staffing Arrangement
- QA6 Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- QA7 Governance and Leadership

## CEO DISCRETION

Where applicable, the CEO can apply his discretion as to the enforcement of the procedures outlined in this policy.

## REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy remains in force until amended or repealed by resolution of Council. This document will be review biannually or as required.

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS and ADOPTIONS			
DATE	REVISION NO	REASON FOR AMENDMENT	ADOPTED BY COUNCIL
October 2021	V1.0	Preparation for Council Adoption	Month YYYY