

# Kindergartens on School Sites Report 2019

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Purpose of report:

1. To provide information on the systems and structures that support the operation of kindergartens on school sites
2. To present principles for a successful partnership between a co-located early childhood service and school

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## Introduction and summary

In recent years there has been an increasing focus on the importance of the early years of learning for children's success in life, and this is recognised through significant investments by the Victorian Government to improve the quality of, access to and participation in early childhood education. In order to meet growing demand and to support the rollout of kindergarten for three-year-old children, the State Government is building many new early childhood facilities, most of which will be located on school sites.

There is a growing recognition that co-location of kindergartens and other early childhood services on school sites has a range of benefits for children, families, professionals and communities – particularly when it comes to supporting children's transition to school and continuity of learning. However, co-location alone does not ensure these benefits: It requires a significant amount of planning and effort on the part of all stakeholders to create a truly integrated system of education and support for children and families.

The aim of this Report is to provide school Principals with information on the benefits and requirements of having a kindergarten on a school site, to support their deliberations. It also provides recommendations for successful integration.

The Report was developed through consultation with Principals of schools with integrated kindergartens and informed by the direct experience of Principal and co-researcher Valerie Karaitiana.

## Background and policy context

### The Education State

In 2014, the Andrews Labor Government committed to making Victoria the Education State. The aim is for Victoria to be a global centre of excellence in learning and development and to ensure all Victorians, regardless of their starting point or postcode, have the skills, knowledge and attributes they need to shape their future in a changing world. This starts with a focus on the Early Years to ensure the right foundations are laid for all children to get the best start in life, with access to safe, quality early childhood services and support to learn, play and grow.

The Early Childhood Reform Plan is a key part of the Education State for early years and supports the Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children.

Key Reform Action	Summary	Funding
<b>Supporting higher quality services and reducing disadvantage in early education</b>		
School readiness funding	Providing additional resourcing to kindergartens based on children's level of need.	\$55.3 million
Delivering high-quality early education	Increasing support for all services with a kindergarten program to improve their quality.	\$22.8 million
Delivering more early childhood facilities	Building early childhood facilities co-located at government primary schools.	\$10 million
	Encouraging more non-government schools to offer kindergarten.	\$1.1 million

The stated vision of the Reform Plan is 'Victoria has a child and family focused early childhood system that is connected, flexible, accountable, and supports and shares best practice'. The Plan details the reforms that will be undertaken to create a higher quality, more equitable and inclusive early childhood system with a key focus being to create a more flexible and integrated service system that ensures children and families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage are supported to succeed. As part of the \$108.4million, investment funding will be provided to boost kindergarten services. This will ensure better support for children who need more help, provide additional early childhood facilities, and make services easier to access and more inclusive. This investment will focus on building a system that is flexible to children's needs, welcoming to children experiencing disadvantage, and will deliver quality services for all Victorian children and families.

### Increasing kindergartens on school sites

As part of the Reform Plan, \$10 million has been allocated to the development of early childhood facilities to be co-located at government primary schools. This is in addition to the \$60 million already allocated for early childhood infrastructure between 2015 and 2018. An additional \$1.1 million is being provided to non-government schools to provide incentive for more to offer a kindergarten program, particularly in low socioeconomic areas.

The Government has also committed to ensure every new Victorian primary school has a kindergarten on site, making it easier on parents and meeting increasing demand for kindergarten places. The Government will make sure all eight primary schools set to open in 2021 and all six opening in 2022 have a kindergarten on its grounds or right next door. They are also adding kindergartens to new schools under construction and due for completion in 2019 or 2020 where possible.

In order to deliver Victoria's biggest ever early education build, with almost 1,000 new and upgraded kindergartens across the state, the government is beginning to work with councils, communities and the Municipal Association of Victoria about the best way to deliver the new kindergartens. Other options being explored include creating integrated children's centres, which bring together a range of education, care, health and support services are also being undertaken.

The Government has also committed to ensure every Victorian child can access two years of kindergarten before they start school. They will invest almost \$5 billion over the next decade to deliver a full 15 hours of three-year-old kindergarten. A quarter of Victorian families will not be required to pay any costs and the government will cover 65 per cent of the costs for families not eligible for the full subsidy.

The 2018 AEDC found that 21.7% of Australian children are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain. Whilst there has been a small improvement in these results, there is still work to be done to ensure all children have the best possible start in life. Research shows that children who have a stimulating, supportive and healthy start to life are more likely to do well later in life, while children who attend kindergarten score between 10 and 20 points higher on NAPLAN tests.

A high-quality kindergarten experience is the gateway to a life full of learning. Kindergarten builds on the foundations laid at home and in other early learning services and helps children to take the next step along their education journey. It sets children up to be ready for school, and ready for life.

## The benefits of integrated Primary and Early Childhood Education

When early years services are co-located and effectively integrated with primary schools, there are a range of benefits for children, families, teachers, other professionals and the broader community. Co-location and integration can promote the importance of early learning, help to engage more families in early childhood education (and other support services) and can greatly enhance the transition to school experience.

Research into the early years continues to highlight the importance of, and profound impact that learning in this period has to the long-term success of a child. As such, considerable focus and funds are now being invested into the continuity of learning from the early years to formal primary school settings. The *Transition: A Positive Start to School* initiative highlights the importance of four key areas of focus: relationships to support transitions; equity and diversity; continuity of learning; and transition planning and evaluation, and provides a series of 'promising practices' to support effective transitions.

"From birth to eight years, children's developing brains undergo rapid change. This is when children have the greatest opportunities to develop neural pathways for learning and are also most vulnerable to negative experiences. Emphasis is placed on continuity of learning for young children as they move between various settings in the early years, including home, early childhood services and school. An informed understanding of the science of early learning and development guides adults on what children need to thrive and the systems that best support this." (VELDYF, 2016, p. 2).

Evidence tells that learning starts long before primary school. Rather, the foundation years in primary schools are regarded as a place to continue a child's learning journey; to utilise the transition phase to understand and assess what children already know, can do and understand, and build on these skills to strengthen the whole child as an active and important member in society.

Starting school is one of the major transitions that individuals make in their lives<sup>1</sup>. A positive transition is one that ensures children and families can clearly see the connection and relationship between the school and their place within it, and that focuses on supporting children's ongoing learning. Children that are valued for their knowledge, views and experiences, feel secure and confident as they enter the school setting, and then thrive within it. Negative transition experiences, on the other hand, can have a detrimental and lasting effect to the learning process, that if not addressed, continue to widen as they move through the education system.

Successful transition to school requires an interconnected and collaborative approach between early years services and the school community. Respectful partnerships between children, families and teaching professionals (in both the early years and primary sectors) need to be built on the strength of what each other brings to the relationship.

Twenty-nine Principals working within an existing 'kindergarten on school site model' in the North Western Region of Victoria were surveyed and asked to describe the value of a connected Early Years and Primary community. Responses from these surveys, as well as from recent research and practice evidence shows the number of benefits for children, families and professionals.

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<sup>1</sup> *Continuity of Learning*, Sue Dockett and Robert Perry, 2014

## Benefits for children

For children, a connected early years and primary community:

- supports children to start school ready to continue their learning and reduces the time needed to transition to a new environment, because it is already familiar to them
- enhances children's sense of belonging and connectedness to the school environment and the teaching team (as they are both familiar to children)
- enables reciprocal visits into the kindergarten and school settings demonstrating strong, interconnected relationships between teaching staff
- allows children to become familiar with school teachers, routines and environments in the years prior to school beginning
- empowers children to be leaders and active participants in the transition program (such as through buddy programs between school and kindergarten children)
- supports transition programs that begin up to two years prior to the start of the Foundation primary school year, resulting in increased confidence in children
- supports continuity of learning for children when they move into a foundation classroom where similar pedagogical principals are implemented, and the learning journey can be strengthened (e.g.: provision of familiar play-based learning curriculum in the school)
- ensures children get the timely support they need through the sharing of professional experts across both the early years and school settings
- establishes a sense of belonging for kindergarten children in the broader school community through shared resources, facilities, projects and events (such as assembly or incursions).

## Benefits for families

For families, a connected early years and primary community:

- makes it easier for families to access early childhood facilities (when older siblings attend the school) and support their child's transition to school
- provides families the opportunity to build trusting relationships with primary school teaching staff before entering the school system, through regular conversations and interactions
- provides enhanced opportunities for the school to support families in their parenting role and identify strategies for early intervention if needed
- enables consistency of educational practices across between the kindergarten and primary school, making it easier for families to understand the learning objectives and outcomes
- helps to build parenting skills, confidence and stronger connections with community
- improves access to allied health professionals within the school environment prior to starting school, supporting early intervention and effective transition to school
- ensures priority of access to the school, regardless of catchment area, because of the view that the children are already a part of the school community by being co-located
- ensures families can remain connected with trusted kindergarten teachers, especially in the transition to school period
- supports families' contact with the school prior to their child's attendance and enhances their understanding of how their child's school functions
- promotes families' engagement with other services through on-site community hubs, such as adult learning, Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and playgroups



- provides positive messages to families that the school values the early years as an important step in a child's educational journey.

### Benefits for professionals

For professionals, a connected early years and primary community:

- helps embed a shared language using the Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework (VEYLDF) and outcomes for learning
- supports the shared of high-quality, inclusive and contemporary, evidence-based practices
- enables shared professional learning and skill development
- promotes shared responsibility for children K to 6
- provides structures and processes that support effective day-to-day collaboration
- builds the abilities and skills of professionals to support children and families as they transition from one setting to another through shared understandings and expertise
- fosters the development of trusting professional relationships among early childhood educators and school teachers. These relationships offer opportunities to share information, understand local pedagogies and practices, and support strategies to enhance transitions
- enables teachers to work from Kindergarten to Year 6 where they have dual qualifications, and means you can pay teachers the same award (equity)
- promotes a diverse range of skills, knowledge and expertise of amongst staff (shared recruitment)
- enables the development of communities of practice for sharing expertise and ideas and developing a shared vision. This results in stronger relationships between professionals, children and families.
- supports the notion of a "one stop shop" for the community, with a range of services such as speech, play, psychology, pathology, MCH, allied health.
- enables alignment of the Quality Improvement Plan and Annual Improvement Plan to support shared goals and measurement of progress
- supports effective transition with identified staff member(s) responsible for developing, evaluating and modifying a range of transition to school processes and programs.

## Managing Early Childhood Education services on school sites

Managers of early childhood education services (such as kindergartens) have wide-ranging responsibilities in order to ensure the delivery of a quality educational program that meets the needs of children and families. These include governance and legal responsibilities, financial management, people management, operations, and ensuring the quality of the educational program.

The following list, though not exhaustive, is provided to give an indication of the extent and range of these responsibilities, which are outlined in more detail in the Education and Care Services National Law Act and Regulations (the Act and Regulations), the Kindergarten Funding Guide and the Early Years Management (EYM) Policy Framework.

### Governance and legal

- Establish and maintain an appropriate legal entity, including constitutional structures and consultative mechanisms such as term of reference for parent groups
- Fulfil all requirements under the National Quality Framework including:
  - Compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law Act and Regulations
  - Compliance with the National Quality Standards and participation in the Assessment and Rating process
  - Adherence to the approved learning frameworks: the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
- Enter into a service agreement with DET and adhere to funding requirements
- Comply with facility leases and ensure facilities are maintained
- Ensure equipment and playground maintenance, safety and compliance with standards, including indoor/outdoor safety checks
- Develop incident and emergency management in consultation with the school and relevant authorities, and ensure these are practised and implemented
- Ensure educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities as Mandatory Reporters to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect
- Ensure all employment contracts adhere to legislation (i.e. Fair Work Act 2009) and to the terms and conditions of the relevant awards
- Ensure Board, Company and Secretarial duties are completed including Annual General Meetings
- Ensure compliance with other relevant laws and Acts – including Child Safe Standards; Occupational Health and Safety; Food Safety; Privacy; Disability Discrimination; Work safe; Fair work

### People, learning and culture

- Develop, implement and regularly review organisational and service policies
- Undertake workforce planning and forecasting

- Undertake staff recruitment, including organising relief educators
- Manage annual employee performance reviews including the identification of professional development needs
- Support continuous learning and reflective practice for educators, including providing professional development, coaching and mentoring to strengthen workforce capabilities and quality outcomes for children
- Manage staff underperformance including disciplinary procedures
- Undertake workplace investigations for breaches of Code of Conduct and/or HR policies
- Monitor employee satisfaction and engagement
- Ensure effective leadership to build and promote a positive organisational culture and professional learning community
- Manage payroll, salary processes, maintenance of employee records, leave entitlements, ATO, WorkCover, superannuation in line with relevant award conditions
- Establish professional networks with other early childhood organisations.

#### Financial management

- Report on funding and enrolments to the Department of Education and Training
- Report on and complete Annual Financial Accountability forms for targeted programs such as School Readiness Funding and recurrent funding such as data collection and enrolment confirmation
- Develop, monitor and review annual budgets (operational, strategic)
- Undertake annual financial audits
- Ensure staff are employed in accordance with relevant awards
- Manage and administer payroll including PAYG, superannuation, workers compensation
- Manage all operational and fundraising bank accounts
- Manage financial IT financial systems providing effective and efficient reporting to ensure sustainable financial operations and reporting requirements
- Maintain appropriate cash reserves
- Set and collect service fees, taking into consideration accessibility to service (affordability, additional needs). Includes debtor management and where appropriate liaison with debt collection agencies.
- Develop grant applications and manage receipt of DET grant funds and allocation to project (including acquittal)
- Ensure appropriate insurance is in place, including building and contents, public liability
- Prepare and submit quarterly BAS returns

- Prepare and submit annual ACNC compliance documentation.
- Complete Annual Financial Statements

### Operational management

- Undertake strategic planning for long-term sustainability and effective operations
- Support the implementation of Government initiatives and changes to legislation, such as:
  - School readiness funding
  - Universal access to 15 hours of kindergarten for three-year-old children
- Develop and regularly review organisation and service philosophy and values
- Ensure the smooth day-to-day operation of the kindergarten service(s), including responding to parent complaints and feedback, responding to and reporting critical incidents, purchasing of resources
- Support ongoing improvement to the quality of the service against the National Quality Standard (2011) and consistent with contemporary practice
- Develop and manage the Quality Improvement Plan and School Readiness Plan in consultation with early years staff and school Principals, including data collection, analysis of service and community needs, identifying and planning of programs
- Formulate partnerships and positive relationships with relevant stakeholders, including Allied Health, Government, community services, universities and the community to enable integrated service delivery responsive to the needs of the community
- Manage enrolments and programming, ensuring timetables and processes are reflective of community needs
- Maintain a safe environment with effective illness and injury management, hygiene practices are promoted and implemented, safety and supervision of children
- Advocate for and promote the kindergarten(s) through multiple channels (website, open days etc.)
- Formulate, distribute and analyse surveys to assess effectiveness of practice and inform continual improvement (such as the Annual Family Survey)
- Ensure secure record keeping and storage of confidential information in accordance with the Privacy Act
- Establish a volunteer parent group (development of a 'terms of reference' and manual for operation, attendance at meetings, guidance for ethical operations), where relevant.

### Educational program and practice

- Provide educational leadership and pedagogical support to educators to implement a high-quality early years education program which complies with relevant regulations, quality standards and codes of practice in line with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

- Ensure the educational program enhances each child's learning and development and that educators are responsive in their teaching and scaffolding of learning
- Support educators to engage in intentional teaching and that they are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions
- Ensure each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection
- Develop approaches to support families in their parenting role
- Support the development of effective partnerships to support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

## Operational management models for Primary and Early Childhood Education Settings

Kindergartens located on school sites, can be operated via a range of management models, such as School Council (SC), Early Years Management (EYM), Committee of Management (CoM) and Local Council Area management (LGA). Given the range and complexity of responsibilities that come with managing a kindergarten, it is important to ensure the right model is in place.

The key features of each model are described at Appendix B.

### Choosing a management model

Given the breadth and complexity of responsibilities that a kindergarten manager must assume, it is important to choose a management model that will provide an ongoing, stable and supportive platform of support for the kindergarten to operate effectively into the future and meet the needs of children, families, kindergarten staff, school and broader community. It is also important to consider the alignment of the management model with the philosophy and values of the school community.

The following reflective questions are designed to assist with this decision-making process:

#### Capacity

- Taking on the role of approved provider (see definition below) takes considerable investment in time to ensure all legal, financial and professional responsibilities are maintained. Do members of the management team have the capacity to assume this position?
- What capacity does the management team have to support the successful transition of the kindergarten to their current service provision and management?
- What other responsibilities does the management model assume? How much time is allocated to the successful operation of the kindergarten operations?
- What processes are in place to ensure there is an ongoing connection and relationship between the management organisation, kindergarten and primary school?

### Expertise

- What are the qualifications, skills and expertise of the members of the management team?
- What management structure is in place to ensure good governance arrangements are in place?
- What models of operation already exist in the area and how do their models differ?
- How well does the management structure support compliance and quality service delivery? What are the assessment and rating outcomes of existing services?

### Responsibility

- Is the organisation able to financially invest funds back in the kindergarten, to ensure regulatory and quality standards?
- Are the members of the management model able to provide ongoing, regular and direct support to staff and families regarding the kindergarten?
- What is the existing and historical legal, industrial, financial and operational status of the management model?
- Does the management model have a history of being responsive to changing community needs?
- What formal, facility-use arrangements will be put in place (such as a lease) and do these arrangements support an integrated K-6 model? How often are these reviewed?

### Alignment

- Does the vision, culture and educational philosophy of the management model align with the primary school ethos?
- What is the strategic direction and ongoing priorities of the organisation?
- How will the partnership between the management model and the primary school operate? Are there clear roles and responsibilities in place to ensure clarity of responsibility (management, staffing, operations, quality and compliance, maintenance)?
- What processes are in place that enable family participation?

## Showcasing existing models – three sites share their connected story

### Dallas Brooks Primary School and the Northern Schools Early Years Cluster

#### *The Primary School*

Dallas Brooks Community Primary School is located in the suburb of Dallas, in the City of Hume. In 2019, Dallas Brooks Community Primary School had an enrolment of 441 primary school students with an additional 150 children enrolled in kindergarten programs. There is a total of 95% of the student community, that have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and 1% of students that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. There are four foundation classes, one composite foundation class and grade one class. Dallas Brooks Community Primary School is a place that both encourages and enables professional learning, effective teamwork and inclusiveness within purpose designed facilities reflecting a 21st century educational approach to teaching and learning including the provision of open flexible learning areas. The school community represents a diverse range of socio-economic, cultural, religious and language backgrounds. 14 different ethnic groups are represented with the majority of students from backgrounds other than English, the largest community being Arabic and Turkish speaking. The school SFO in 2018 was 88.10.

#### *The Northern Schools Early Years Cluster*

The Northern School Early Years Cluster (NSEYC), an Early Years Management organisation, operates the kindergarten, located on the school site, importantly, within the roofline of the school and adjacent to the foundation rooms and outdoor playgrounds. There are three 4-year-old funded Kindergarten Programs, one 3-year-old program and three playgroups.

The Northern School Early Years Cluster (NSEYC), is a not-for-profit Early Years Management organisation that works in partnership with schools and community. It is located within the local government areas of Hume and Moreland within DET's North Western Victorian Region.

The Hume and Moreland Local Government Areas have a combined population of over 400,000. The culturally diverse population comprises in excess of 30% of people who were born overseas, and 43% of the population speaks a language other than English in the home.

NSEYC Inc. was formed by members of the Broadmeadows Primary School's Principal Network in 2011. This select group and the early year's staff working in the local area have a long history of best practice and establishing innovative programs. Their vision in developing the cluster was to continue to support local families and meet changing community needs by providing a platform to:

- facilitate Government reforms such as the introduction of Universal Access to 15 hours of kindergarten
- promote and improve kindergarten attendance
- attract and retain high quality kindergarten staff
- develop collegiate relationships between teaching professionals and
- ensure that the kindergartens were financially viable.

The growth of the cluster has been steady over the past decade, expanding its platform from five kindergartens to 11. The governance model and management structure has evolved to support the growing operational and community needs and to support government reforms, ensuring sustainability into the future.

The Board of Management now comprises representatives from local government, the community sector, and school leaders. School Principals are also part of an Executive Group that supports networking, collaboration and information-sharing between sites and continuity of learning for children between kindergarten and schools. .

The NSEYC Inc. recognises that a having central body with a robust governance structure and expertise in managing kindergarten services can relieve the burden on school councils and committees. It can also:

- create attractive employment opportunities
- support more effective links between existing services
- promote the benefits of kindergarten within the local area
- provide coordinated professional support and development for continuous improvement
- support effective collaboration between kindergartens and primary schools to address issues of school readiness and transition
- relieve administrative burden from teachers so they can focus on teaching, and
- ensure parents are supported to participate in their child's kindergarten experience.

The cluster's sole purpose to improve outcomes for the children, families and community through strengthening a love of learning and life.

The NSEYC core values of trust, respect, relationships and learning are underpinned by a strong commitment to integrity, respect for and compliance with the law, an emphasis on best practice and a caring spirit. The Board of Management recognises that good governance enables the organisation to operate in a manner that meets ethical, legal and business expectations and at the same time fulfil its commitments to the children and families attending the services, funding bodies and staff who work at the services.

NSEYC's vision of an effective kindergarten program is one that provide a learning environment which is flexible, so that children will find varied opportunities in which they can learn social behaviours which benefit both the individual and the group, develop critical thinking, learn to solve problems, discover, collect, and classify information about the world, build and clarify concepts, extend present knowledge and experience, learn about words, and explore usage and meanings for effective communication with others.

### *Together*

The integrated K-6 model at Dallas Brooks Community Primary School and Kindergarten promotes and creates a professional learning community that is supported by shared knowledge and true partnerships. This multidisciplinary approach leads to stronger learning programs, practices and relationships with both children and families, and ensures there are genuine connections across the curriculum that result in improved outcomes for children and families.

The school emphasises the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills within an orderly and technology rich environment, with a strong focus on play-based learning in the early years. Sporting excellence, the Performing Arts and community partnerships have a strong focus



within the school with extensive programs catering for kindergarten education through to adult education.

Families at Dallas Brooks Community Primary School and Kindergarten value education and students have a positive attitude towards school and learning. The school and kindergarten involve parents in school life, both within and outside classrooms.

The school and kindergarten also work with other educational and welfare groups in cooperative networks, and Allied Health professionals are considered shared resources across the kindergarten and school community.

The kindergarten children have access to the school's facilities and resources, such as the library and gym. Shared projects between school and kindergarten children such as the development of a 'frog bog' on the site support integration and shared learning between different ages and stages of development of children.

Teachers in both the Foundation and kindergarten programs share an adjoining office which enables them to plan together and share ideas, programs and practices. This close working relationship has positive lasting effect on the teachers' own learning, as well as that of the children in both the kindergarten and Foundation classrooms.

The principal of the school is also the chair of the Board, responsible for the governance of the kindergarten operations.

## Hazel Glen (K-12) College

### *The Primary School*

Hazel Glen College (formally known as the Hazel Glen Primary School), was to open in 2014 to families in the local community. The school prides itself on being a 'K-12' education system and a community hub. "We had the vision that we could create a learning/family precinct catering for birth to 18 years." The primary school became a K-12 College in 2015 with the introduction of 3 and 4 year old Kindergarten and Year 7.

### *The Kindergarten*

The Hazel Glen Kindergarten was opened in 2015, a year after the school commenced operation. The Kindergarten is a part of a Child and Family Centre, which includes Maternal and Child Health (MCH). The Kindergarten is a four room service offering 4-year-old kindergarten, 3-year-old kindergarten and an extended care program.

The Kindergarten is recognised as one of the four key stages of learning within the school community; the Kindergarten, Junior School Prep - Year4, Middle School Years 5-8 and the Senior School Years 9-12. The attitude toward the transition to school operates all year long, in the year prior to the foundation year.

Key staff from the Primary School were involved in the establishment of the Kindergarten, from service management to the design of the physical building. Initially, it was the school council representatives and school principal, which were approached about the school assuming the responsibility of Approved Provider, for the Kindergarten. This was investigated in partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET), the local

council (City of Whittlesea), and some community members. The working party researched and visited other services in Victoria and Tasmania, to develop a successful management model.

The City of Whittlesea then approached the school about this not only being the manager for the Kindergarten, but for the whole Child & Family Centre, which we welcomed. This is unique to the College, which is usually managed by the local council. The school believes that management of all services within the centre ensures a more holistic service.

### *Together*

The educational model supports families from birth, through to year 12. This approach enables families with greater access to support services and the possibility of a seamless education from Kindergarten to Year 12 at the same educational precinct.

A Child and Family Centre (CFC) is located on the school site and includes including Maternal and Child Health, children's dance classes, children's drama & movement classes, mums & bubs music groups, playgroups and early morning fitness classes. The CFC is available to community based church groups on weekends, and provides a support service to families in need. Allied health professionals, such as psychologists and occupational therapists, consult in the Child and Family Centre, and are also utilized within the school.

All Kindergarten staff are all employed by the College and all fall under the complete School Resource Package (SRP). Staff have the opportunity and are encouraged to complete professional learning together. The College leadership team have an understanding and responsibility to know how each stage of learning operates.

Members from the kindergarten have representation on the College Council, College Leadership Team, College Curriculum Committee and College Wellbeing Committee to ensure the model is truly integrated. The curriculum (Foundation and Kindergarten), for example, has been developed together with both kindergarten and the foundation teachers, and as such has strong links and synergies. Governing documents, such as the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), is created in consultation with members from both the school and kindergarten community, and all documents are interrelated. Goals are shared and represented within each key document.

The children enrolled in the Kindergarten program, have access to the resources and facilities in the College and likewise, the children in the foundation classes, use the facilities and resources at the kindergarten. This creates a deep sense of belonging and connectedness between environments.

## Broadmeadows Valley Primary School and Gowrie Victoria

### *The School*

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School (BVPS) was established in 2009 and was formed through the merger of Broadmeadows West, Jacana, Meadow Fair North and Westmeadows Heights primary schools. Located just 19kms north of Melbourne's CBD, Broadmeadows Valley Primary School is well situated within the thriving Dimboola educational precinct and the regenerated Broadmeadows community district.

At Broadmeadows Valley Primary School, learning is at the core of all we do. We are committed to delivering a rigorous and relevant curriculum with a very clear focus on literacy and numeracy. We support and demand consistent and high level professional practice and processes in the delivery of our targeted curriculum.

As the school continues to grow and prosper, we readily acknowledge that BVPS is a school for students, a school for children, their families, and a school for our future.

### *The Early Learning Centre – including an integrated, funded Kindergarten*

The Broadmeadows Valley Children's Program and Early Learning Centre (ELC) is a 128-place service, which has achieved a rating of Exceeding National Quality Standards, in all quality areas. There are four programs for children aged 6 weeks to four years, within the early learning centre and two integrated funded kindergarten programs for children aged four to five years. There is a two-day minimum enrolment to ensure consistency and a sense of belonging for children and families. The ELC also has a support team consisting of a Manager, Assistant Manager, Cook, Part time and casual educators and Administration staff.

Early Years Manager (EYM), Gowrie Victoria, assumed management of the ELC in January 2016, providing stimulating early learning programs for children from birth to school age and a commitment to quality education and care with experienced managers, teachers and educators. Gowrie Victoria has been championing good early childhood education and care for over 75 years, with other services located in Carlton North, Docklands and Yarraville. There is a lease in place with DET, regarding the building and property.

The curriculum has a child-centred philosophy that promotes play-based learning with natural materials and sustainable practices. The team are committed to working with families to ensure a smooth transition to school, by connecting children to the school learning environment from as young as 12 months of age. The unique design of this centre provides increased community-building opportunities, through a shared outdoor space, shared dining room and close connections with the Broadmeadows Valley Primary School and wider community.

The Early Learning Centre's building contains permanent office space for Maternal and Child Health (MCH), as well as community meeting facilities. Coordination of these spaces is managed by EYM, Gowrie Victoria.

The Early Learning Centre (ELC) was originally operated under an Early Years Management (EYM) model. Given the complexity of the diverse needs of the community and the ever-increasing level of investment needed to work effectively in the community, an alternative provider was sought that could meet the multifaceted needs of the service community. This was conducted via a tender process and with the support of the primary school, Gowrie Victoria, the Department of Education and Training (DET), Collette Taylor University of Melbourne and the Hume City Council. This panel of experts visited a variety of services on

school sites and engaged in discussions with school councils, particularly BVPS and other professionals, to determine the best fit for the ELC's management.

The desired goals, for the ongoing operation and management of the ELC were to demonstrate high quality service delivery in a complex community; be an effective contributor to research with the University of Melbourne; partner with the school in a way that enabled the community to see the interconnection between the ELC and primary school and to demonstrate what good transitions to school look like in practice.

Once Gowrie Victoria was selected as the successful manager, a Heads of Agreement document was drawn up, stipulating various aspects of the partnership. The document, in particular, highlighted the purpose of the partnership, as well as funding arrangements and contingencies for any ongoing financial risk.

### *Together*

We share the same values and our actions support this on a day-to-day basis  
The decisions we make are always with positive intent to achieve best outcomes for all students and their families.

Each other's expertise is valued and respected. There is trust in others, to provide high quality services within their area of expertise. A professional learning partnership was developed between staff at both sites ensuring children's learning and development goals were being met in a collaborative and cohesive manner and understood by all. Neither the school nor ELC have any formal control over the others pedagogical practice – each are recognised as specialists. Further, external professional development has been undertaken together, strengthening the professional collegiality between both sectors of education and because of participating in this process there was a deeper respect and a shared understanding of each other's work. Teams have also presented at conferences, with the intention of provoking other Early Years and school providers, to deeply reflect on their own transition journeys for children 0-3 and develop an understanding that 'school readiness' is not just the role of the Kindergarten, rather, to be intentionally considered and planned for by all educators, working across all age groups.

Having a representative from the Early Learning Centre (ELC) on the school council, has been very effective in ensuring that the ELC has visibility and understands the breadth of issues facing the school and the school family's priorities.

'Invisible Transitions' are a key component of the relationship between Broadmeadows Valley Primary School (BVPS) and Gowrie Victoria Early Learning Centre. It was evident in the beginning that to ensure the success of this partnership, relationships and trust would be a primary goal for both services and this was enacted over the course of the following months and years. The partnership began to strengthen from the very onset and this immediate approach meant that the school could support the Early Years centre to truly develop a deep understanding of the Broadmeadows community context, especially during this formative stage of our journey. A curriculum 'Scope and Sequence document' was developed between leaders across both the primary and Early Years settings, and now reflects the core of all documentation produced, ensuring a commitment well beyond the reliance of specific individuals at each site.

Recognising early on, through shared understandings and ongoing critically reflective practice, both the school and the early learning centre would be able to ensure the best outcomes for all children from birth onwards. All teaching teams, across both sites, dedicated considerable amounts of time and financial support towards the partnership.

## Inclusion Principles for a successful partnership

An essential component of the partnership between the Early Years and Primary education sectors is the way in which they communicate. Developing and nurturing a shared and common language, is essential in understanding multiple perspectives, when collaborating, and when establishing clear goals and outcomes. The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF, 2016) sets out a framework for shared educational outcomes for children from birth, through to eight years of age. The outcomes provide a shared language for all early childhood professionals and families to use when planning for children's learning and development. When we engage in a shared language for education, we support the continuity of learning.

“The VEYLDF identifies eight Practice Principles for Learning and Development, which describe the most effective ways for early childhood professionals to work together and with children and families to facilitate learning and development. The Practice Principles are based on the pedagogy of the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and evidence about the best ways to support children's learning, development and wellbeing. The VEYLDF emphasises the importance of supporting children's and families' transitions as they move within and across services throughout the early childhood period.” (VEYLDF, 2016, p. 3).

The reference to the practice principles, within this report, serve as a basis for shared language between the early years and primary school setting and help describe the foundations for a strong and successful partnership.

Current practice evidence and information provided by professionals working within an existing 'kindergarten on school site model' in the North Western Region of Victoria, highlight the following core components of a successful partnership between a kindergarten and school operating model:

### Educational Philosophy

***Practice Principals within this area focus on a commitment to:***

**- Integrated Teaching and Learning Approaches**

**- High Expectations for Every Child**

**- Assessment for Learning and Development**

- Professionals from both Primary School and Early Childhood need to commit to working in partnership across all aspects of service operation, from the onset. Each need to support the other to understand the uniqueness of the community in which they work.
- Establish working groups between professionals (leadership teams, school council representation, teachers, and principals) and agree to meet regularly to critically reflect on the connections between educational programs, discuss contemporary research, challenge/assess learning methods and seek ways to integrate events where possible.
- Collaborate in the development of a 'Yearly Planner' that includes activities and learning experiences for children in both the kindergarten and school learning environments (inclusion of the whole community at assembly, when representing the community at conferences, forums etc.).

- Develop shared philosophy and vision for educational aspirations for children and their families. Ensure the teaching and learning approach is consistent throughout the kindergarten and in early years of school.
- Engage in shared professional development opportunities to ensure shared pedagogical understandings. Co-present at conferences and at network meetings to showcase innovation and inspire others. Practices are more effective within an environment with a commitment to a strong culture of professional inquiry.
- Establish a multitude of opportunities for all children to be an ongoing part of the Primary School and Early Years environments – this creates an integrated approach to the transition process and a continuity to learning.
- Support all children to participate in key leadership responsibilities (sustainability teams, leadership programs), to foster a sense of belonging to the whole community.
- Identify ways to share information, ideas and activities on a regular basis, that are relevant to the local community (shared newsletters, central noticeboards, one communication app for the whole school community etc.).

## Relationships with Children and Families

### ***Practice Principals:***

#### **- Partnerships with Families**

#### **- Respectful Relationships and Responsive Engagement**

#### **- Equity and Diversity**

- Establish genuine partnerships with children and families from the beginning of the educational journey. Where possible, seek to consult with families across the whole community (Primary School and Early Childhood) around infrastructure, policy and practice.
- Establish partnerships where information sharing supports confidence within families, identifies what families do well, and recognises the family's critical importance in their child's life.
- Seek to gather information, including the views and perspectives of each child, and use it to inform, review and enrich curriculum and community decision-making.
- Support families to engage in projects that benefit the kindergarten and the school collectively (working bees, community fundraising events). Participate in the planning and implementation of community events together.
- The design of kindergarten environments (indoors and outdoors), where possible, to be integrated within the roofline of school buildings, so collaborative practice and sharing of resources is achieved effortlessly. Design needs to be undertaken in consultation with all stakeholders (designers, service users, professionals, local council etc.) to gain clear and shared understandings.
- Incorporating parenting programs and services that support families holistically (access to playgroups, social skill building, maternal and child health etc.).

- Equity and diversity is valued and visible in all policy and practice areas, to ensure there are multiple ways to communicate with families (access to interpreters, identifying staff that speak multiple languages and utilising them across both settings etc.).
- Support all children to develop a sense of place, identity and a connection to the land and the natural world. Leaders need to ensure that the interests, abilities and culture of every child and their family are understood and valued.

## Leadership and Governance

### ***Practice Principals:***

#### **- Partnerships with Professionals**

#### **- Reflective Practice**

- Integrated Children's Centres on school sites to be considered for any new builds. Principals were very positive about the value of the Maternal Child Health (MCH) service and playgroups operating on school sites. They indicated that these services added considerable value to their local community. The schools with Community Hubs currently operate a range of early year's services and services supporting parents.
- Ensure there are clear lease arrangements in place, outlining expectations and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Governance arrangements to include a shared early years and school leadership structure. Strong and effective leadership that demonstrates in practice, the values of collaboration, inclusiveness and mutual respect.
- Strategic planning and priorities are developed and implemented by a shared governance group. Quality improvement plans (QIP) and Annual Implementation Plans (AIP) need to align.
- Staff are provided with opportunities for individual and shared reflective practice, to ensure ongoing learning in all aspects of practice.
- Adequate and sustained funding for buildings, infrastructure and operations is required, to ensure effective and efficient operation of both the Primary School and Early Years' service (shared safety protocols, maintenance and ICT support etc.).
- Establish an ongoing cycle of planning and review, involving all stakeholders, to create an environment for positive continuous improvement.
- Build a staff team across the whole community, which has a diverse range of expertise, including education and allied health professionals. Where possible, support the acquisition of multidisciplinary qualifications, to provide opportunities for staff to work across both the Primary School and Early Years settings.

## Appendix A: Shared Resources – Primary School and Early Learning Services

### Government departments

#### **Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)**

*The Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority works with all governments to provide guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children*

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

#### **Department of Education and Training (DET)**

*The Department of Education and Training offers learning and development support and services for all Victorians.*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au>

#### **Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)**

*The VCAA provides high quality curriculum, assessment and reporting to enable learning for life.*

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>

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### Curriculum documents

#### **Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (2016)**

*Under the National Law and Regulations, services are required to base their educational program on an approved learning framework, and funded kindergarten programs are required to adhere to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). This should focus on addressing the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, while taking into account individual differences. This document is the Approved learning framework, specific to Victoria, for young children from birth to eight years of age. The VEYLDF adopts a comprehensive approach to children’s learning and development. The VEYLDF recognises health as a crucial enabler of learning and development from birth. The VEYLDF recognises children’s wellbeing from birth as both a prerequisite for and an outcome of learning. Supportive relationships and active skill building with adults in their family and community are central to children’s wellbeing. The VEYLDF upholds the image of the child as a rights holder and a competent learner with capacities to*



*learn from birth. The VEYLDF sets out outcomes and practices to guide early childhood professionals<sup>1</sup> in their work with all families and their young children from birth. Supporting children to progress toward these outcomes, in conjunction with their families, is the core of the VEYLDF.*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldframework.pdf>

### **National Early Years Learning Framework (2009)**

*Under the National Law and Regulations, services are required to base their educational program on an approved learning framework. This should focus on addressing the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, while taking into account individual differences. There are two nationally approved learning frameworks, which outline practices that support and promote children's learning. This document is the National Approved learning framework for young children from birth to five years of age.*

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>

### **National Quality Standard (2011)**

*The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets a high national benchmark for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services in Australia. The NQS includes 7 quality areas that are important outcomes for children. Services are assessed and rated by their regulatory authority against the NQS, and given a rating for each of the 7 quality areas and an overall rating based on these results.*

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>

### **Guide to the National Quality Framework (2018)**

*The Guide to the National Quality Framework (NQF) is designed to help education and care providers, educators and authorised officers understand and apply the requirements of the NQF. It has been designed as a comprehensive reference document to be referred to when seeking guidance on particular matters, such as applications and approvals, operational requirements, and the National Quality Standard.*

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide>

### **Victorian Curriculum F–10**

*The Victorian Curriculum F–10 sets out what every student should learn during their first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship. The Victorian Curriculum F–10 incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian priorities and standards.*

<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>

## **Mapping the VEYLDF to the Victorian Curriculum F–10**

*The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) is structured around five interconnected Learning and Development Outcomes for young children. Each Outcome has key components of learning, which can be expanded to provide examples of evidence that early childhood professionals may observe in children as they learn. For each Outcome, the Maps provide: examples of evidence that early childhood professionals may observe in children as they learn, grouped according to the key components of learning in the VEYLDF and examples of evidence that demonstrate when students develop particular skills and capabilities according to the first three levels of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 that are aligned with the Learning and Development Outcomes of the VEYLDF. These examples of evidence demonstrate a continuity of learning between the VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcomes and the first three levels of the Victorian Curriculum F–10.*

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/earlyyears/vfldoutcomes/index.aspx>

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## Regulations

### **Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)**

*The National Law and National Regulations outline the legal obligations of approved providers, nominated supervisors, and educators and explain the powers and functions of the state and territory regulatory authorities and ACECQA.*

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

### **Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)**

*The National Law and National Regulations outline the legal obligations of approved providers, nominated supervisors, and educators and explain the powers and functions of the state and territory regulatory authorities and ACECQA.*

[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/B73164FE5DA2112DCA2577BA0014D9ED/\\$FILE/10-069a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/B73164FE5DA2112DCA2577BA0014D9ED/$FILE/10-069a.pdf)

### **OHS Act (2004)**

*The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and related regulations aim to keep Victorian workplaces safe. The OHS Act (OHS Act) is the main workplace health and safety law in Victoria. It sets out key principles, duties and rights about OHS.*

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations>

### **Children Youth and Families Act (2005)**

*The Children, Youth and Families Act was passed by the Victorian parliament in late 2005, and its provisions came into effect on 23 April 2007. The Act required that there was a Charter for children and young people in care in Victoria, to provide a framework for promoting the wellbeing of these children and young people. The establishment of a Children's Charter in Victoria was first considered in a discussion paper from 1983, reflecting a shift in philosophy in child welfare towards recognising and enshrining the 'rights of the child'.*

[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/edfb620cf7503d1aca256da4001b08af/15A4CD9FB84C7196CA2570D00022769A/\\$FILE/05-096a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/edfb620cf7503d1aca256da4001b08af/15A4CD9FB84C7196CA2570D00022769A/$FILE/05-096a.pdf)

### **Child, Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)**

*The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (No. 83/2005) was enacted on 1 June 2006. This legislation established the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner. The Act provides an overarching legislative framework designed to encourage and support a shared commitment towards children in Victoria.*

[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/LTObject\\_Store/LTObjSt10.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/AEC2C69107CDD517CA25814D007E870B/\\$FILE/05-83aa021%20authorised.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/LTObjSt10.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/AEC2C69107CDD517CA25814D007E870B/$FILE/05-83aa021%20authorised.pdf)

### **Reportable Conduct Scheme (2019)**

*Victoria has a Reportable Conduct Scheme to oversee allegations of child abuse and misconduct. The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The scheme is established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (the Act). The Commission for Children and Young People is responsible for administering the scheme.*

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/>

### **Victorian Education, Training and Reform Act 2006**

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 represents an undertaking by the Victorian Government to ensure that Victoria has a robust and modern legislative framework for education. It updates and replaces twelve separate education Acts.

[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/575C47EA02890DA4CA25717000217213/%24FILE/06-024a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/51dea49770555ea6ca256da4001b90cd/575C47EA02890DA4CA25717000217213/%24FILE/06-024a.pdf)

### **Australian Education Act 2013**

The Australian Education Act 2013 (the Act) is the principal legislation for the provision of Australian Government funding to government and non-government schools. The Act sets

out the rights and responsibilities of organisations in order for them to receive Australian Government funding for the purposes of school education.

<https://www.education.gov.au/australian-education-act-2013>

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## Professional standards

### **Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics**

*The Code of Ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of early childhood professionals. It reflects current pedagogical research and practice, providing a framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals.*

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>

### **Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**

*The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers describe the knowledge, skills and understanding expected of competent and effective teachers. Accreditation is the structure through which teachers are recognised as meeting these Standards. It ensures the integrity and accountability of the profession.*

<https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/registered-teacher/standards/apst>

### **Department of Education and Training (DET) Program: Protect (Child Safe Standards)**

*As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, which found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse in our community, there is a new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by the Child Safe Standards. The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian early childhood services and schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect. This resource covers both Primary School and Early Childhood responsibilities under the law.*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/safeenviro.aspx>

### **Supporting Document: Protect; Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Early Childhood Services**

*This content in this document has been developed to support staff employed in Victorian early childhood services (including approved and licenced services, Maternal Child Health Services, Early Childhood Intervention Services, Supported Playgroups and Supported Parenting Programs) to take action if they suspect, or are witness to any form of child abuse. This includes all staff within any service providing education and care on a regular basis to children under the age of 13 years, this includes staff working in Outside School Hours Care (OSHC).*

[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/EarlyChildhood\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/EarlyChildhood_Guidance.pdf)

## **Supporting Document: Protect; Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools**

*The content in this document has been developed to support all employees of government, Catholic and independent schools (including principals, teachers, education support staff, allied health professionals and administrative staff) all contractors, volunteers and service providers within government, Catholic and independent schools. This policy has been designed to support you to take action if you suspect, receive a disclosure, or are witness to any form of child abuse.*

[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5\\_SchoolsGuide.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf)

## **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

*The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (commonly abbreviated as the CRC or UNCRC) is a human rights treaty, which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The Convention defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen, unless the age of majority is attained earlier under national legislation*

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

## **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**

*The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.*

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/international/united-nations-convention-rights-persons-disabilities>

## **Australian Human Rights Commission publication: Supporting Young Children's Rights Statement of Intent (2015-2018)**

*Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015–2018) provides high-level principles and areas for collective work, advocacy and action by Early Childhood Australia (ECA), its members and the National Children's Commissioner in relation to the rights of young children—including children from birth to primary school age—over the next three years.*

[https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/supporting\\_young\\_children\\_rights.pdf](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/supporting_young_children_rights.pdf)

## Supporting documentation

### **Transition: A positive Start to School Resource Kit**

The Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit (the Kit) is designed to provide contemporary, evidence-based, practical guidance for early childhood professionals working with children and families during the transition to school process.

<file:///C:/Users/Mel/Desktop/Regulations/Transition%20to%20School%20Resource%20Kit%202017%20FINAL.pdf>

### **Kindergarten Funding Guide**

*The kindergarten funding guide provides detailed information about the types of kindergarten funding available, eligibility criteria, how to apply for funding, how to comply with operational requirement once funding has been granted. The guide is designed to assist services that provide kindergarten programs and currently receive or wish to apply for funding from the Department.*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx>

### **Qualification Requirements – Centre Based Services/Kindergarten**

Centre-based services educating and caring for children preschool age and under must engage educators/teachers with valid qualifications, required to meet the relevant ratios.

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/qualifications/requirements/children-preschool-age-or-under>

### **Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017 (award for Primary School Professionals)**

*Following approval by a majority of employees the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017 (the Agreement) commenced on 22 August 2017 and replaces the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2013. The purpose of the agreement is to provide advice regarding the changes arising from the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017.*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/documents/vgsa-2017.pdf>

### **Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement 2016 (VECTEA)**

*The award recognises the vital work of early childhood educators. It addresses three key areas – educator salaries, workloads and workplace flexibility. Importantly, it enables early childhood educators to achieve salary parity with colleagues in the primary school sector.*

### **Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)**

*The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is an independent statutory authority for the teaching profession, whose primary function is to regulate members of the teaching profession. It is a legal requirement for all teachers to be registered with VIT in order to be employed in a school or early childhood education and care service or Victorian children's service. The VIT was established by the Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 in December 2002. VIT's purpose is to regulate for a highly qualified, proficient and reputable teaching profession. Teachers must be registered with VIT to work, or intend to work in any Victorian school (government, Catholic or independent school) or in any Victorian children's education and care service as a primary teacher, secondary teacher, early childhood teacher (ECT), or principal who has been previously employed as a teacher.*

<https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/>

### **Department of Justice - Working With Children Check**

*Under the Working with Children Act 2005 (the Act), people who are doing child-related work (and are not otherwise exempt under the Act) need a Working with Children Check (WWWC), from the Department of Justice. This applies to both paid and volunteer workers. In addition to the requirements of the Act, many organisations have their own child safety policies an employee may need to adhere. The Working with Children Check is a screening process for assessing or re-assessing people who work with or care for children in Victoria. The Department of Justice review a person's criminal history, and relevant professional conduct findings, to ensure children are protected from sexual or physical harm.*

<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

## Appendix B: Management models for kindergartens on school sites

### School Council operated (SC)

A school council group is made up of annually elected parent members, teacher representatives, the principal and usually a few co-opted members from the community. Both the parent and teacher representatives, are elected by the school community. A school council has particular functions in setting and monitoring the school's direction. Members need to understand what their role is, the powers and functions of the school council and how they are required to work with the principal and the school community. An effective school council will support the development of strategic partnerships to assist the school to achieve the goals outlined in the School Strategic Plan. For example, school council members will consider and discuss opportunities to work with local organisations, (outside the school), in areas such as fundraising and facilities development.

Good governance enables the school council to work efficiently and effectively and to respond strategically to changing demands and educational challenges. Understanding the functional split between school council and the principal is critical for the effective functioning of the council. Within the governance role, the principal manages the school and is responsible for ensuring the delivery of a comprehensive education program to all students. Good governance also relies on the professional leadership of the principal, the elected president and individual school council members to make decisions that are in the best interests of the school community. Effective school councils are characterised by a mutual and respectful sharing of information, knowledge and ideas. There is a focus on open communication where all members are able to exchange information, share experiences, express different perspectives, pose questions, clarify viewpoints, explore relevant research and develop a shared vision for operation.

*Guiding Documents: Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/legislation/Pages/act2006regs.aspx>

*Department of Education and Training (DET) Improving School Governance Training Modules*

<http://www.schoolgovernance.vic.edu.au/12-what-school-councils-do>

### Early Years Management (EYM)

Early Years Management (EYM) organisations manage community kindergartens and other early childhood services such as long day care, occasional care settings and some playgroups. Early Years Management organisations are incorporated associations with an executive management organisational structure and governed by a Board of Directors. Staff are paid employees, with a range of expertise in the delivery of high quality early childhood education and care services. They work with service partners (local council, children and families) to ensure education and care is of a high quality, follows National Regulations and meets National Standards. EYMs are accountable to the Department of Education and Training (DET) and are responsible for:

- working with the community to make sure services meet local needs
- developing strategic plans to manage the ongoing purpose and vision of the organisation



- managing, training and supporting employees
- managing finances and ensuring long term viability for the service

*Guiding Document: Early Years Management (EYM) Policy Document Part 1 and Part 2*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/eym.aspx>

### Committee of Management (CoM)

A Kindergarten Committee of Management (CoM) consists of a group of volunteers who are chosen or elected to make decisions about how the kindergarten is run, to manage the staff, ensure regulatory requirements are met and to ensure particular jobs are done. The members of the CoM will generally be currently enrolled families of the kindergarten community. In most cases, parents will only be on committee for 12 months and leave the CoM once their child transitions to primary school, and as such, elections for members usually occur annually.

The CoM will be an incorporated association and responsible for reporting accountabilities to Consumer Affairs and to the Department of Education and Training (DET). The management committee will have a constitution that details the guidelines for the operation of the group.

*Guiding Document: Early Childhood Management Manual (comprehensive advice on managing services developed by Early Learning Association Australia ELAA).*

<https://elaa.org.au/resources/support-services/governance-support/>

### Local Council Area operated (LCA)

In Victoria, local government has a statutory role in planning for its communities. The Victorian State–Local Government Agreement signed between the Victorian Government and Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), guides state–local government relations. It acknowledges the key role of local government in improving coordination and strategic planning of government services at a local level.

Local government understands and represents the interests of the local community. They play a key legislated role in strategically planning and coordinating Early Years services within a municipality, and act in the best interests of the community. Many local governments also provide Early Years facilities and services, and undertake the role of an EYM organisation (see above).

Where a local government operates as a management organisation for Early Years services, its role as both planner and provider puts it in a strong position to understand and respond to community needs. This in turn helps it to coordinate service provision with other providers in the municipality, including other EYM organisations. The portfolio of a local council will generally extend beyond solely Kindergarten management and include some or all of the following early years services - Long Day Care, Occasional Care programs, Maternal and Child Health and the management of Preschool Field Officers.

*Guiding Document: Refer to local council area for council specific guidelines or manuals*

Management of Kindergartens must be via an approved provider. According to the Education and Care National Regulations (2011), an approved provider is defined as a person who holds a provider approval (under the *National Law*). A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions. An individual, body corporate, eligible association, partnership or prescribed entity (as defined above) may apply to be an approved provider.