

PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

Quality early education and care provides the foundation for children’s development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our Service is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

As an approved childcare service, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to reduce fees to eligible families. Our fee structure is based on our ability to provide the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations, Family Assistance Law, the Australian Taxation Office and guidelines contained in the Child Care Provider Handbook.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

RELATED POLICIES

Arrival and Departure Policy Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Governance Policy Enrolment Policy Governance Policy	Orientation of New Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Termination of Enrolment Policy
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PREAMBLE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the Service fee structure, payment requirements and Child Care Subsidy benefits prior to enrolment. This policy explains process of fee payment and the necessity of ensuring children's fees are paid on time and consequences for failure to pay fees on time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for education and care to be provided for their child. We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all Child Care Subsidy legislative requirements. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure childcare funding is administered appropriately. Our Service ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family.

Our fee structure includes:

Bond Payment

- A bond consisting of \$100.00 full fee is to be paid to hold a child's position at the Service.
- The bond payment will be refunded to families when the child leaves the Service.

GENERAL FEES

- Fees are charged for each session of care and vary depending on the age of the child in care and the family's eligibility for ChildCare Subsidy (CCS)
- CCS is paid directly to the Service and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family's statement).
- Families are required to pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount- the 'gap' amount
- Fees must be kept in advance of a child's attendance.
- A dated receipt will be provided for each payment [via email]
- Fees are to be paid fortnightly or weekly through a direct debit system.
- Fees are payable in advance for every session that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes pupil free days, sick days, and family holidays but excludes periods when the Service is closed. The Service may be directed to close due to periods of local emergency such as bushfire or flood or a pandemic.
- If a session of care falls on a public holiday, families are required to pay normal fees. CCS will be paid for sessions that fall on public holidays.
- Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day).
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the Service's license.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their myGOV account linked to Centrelink and provide supporting documentation.
- Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy. The child must:
 - be a 'Family Tax Benefit child' or 'regular care child' and
 - be 13 or under and not attending secondary school and
 - meet immunisation requirements

The person claiming the Child Care Subsidy or their partner must:

- meet residency requirements and
- be liable to pay for care provided under a Complying Written Arrangement (their written agreement) with their childcare provider
- childcare must be provided by an approved provider
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
 - Combined family income
 - Activity test of parents

- Type of early learning and childcare Service.
- Child Care Subsidy will be provided directly to the Service and this amount deducted from the parent/family account.
- Families must regularly check their details are correct and report a change in circumstance to Centrelink- (family income, activity levels, relationship changes or any other changes to their circumstances).
- Any disputes with CCS payments is the responsibility of the family.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS)

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS) is a Victorian government subsidy paid directly to the funded service to enable eligible families to attend up to 15 hours per week at a funded sessional kindergarten program in the year before school, free or at minimal cost to promote participation. Eligible families include those that hold a Health Care Card.

To be eligible, children must be aged at least 4 years by 30 April in the year that they attend kindergarten and:

- Be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person or
- Hold, or have a parent or guardian who holds, an eligible concession card or humanitarian visa or
- Be identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more).

For more information please visit –

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/comms/kinderfeesub>

If your family meets the kindergarten fee subsidy eligibility criteria, tell your education and care service that you are eligible when you enrol your child or at any time during the year.

Additional Childcare Subsidy (ACCS)

Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) is a short-term payment from the Australian Government to help families experiencing significant financial stress with the cost of child care.

This payment will help with the continuity of child care for children and provide support to families when they need it most.

[Who can get the Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)?](#)

Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) is available to families who are eligible for

the Child Care Subsidy (which can be applied for at the same time) and where an individual is experiencing temporary financial hardship which has caused a substantial reduction in their ability to pay child care fees due to:

- the death of a partner or child of the individual
- unexpected loss of employment of the individual, or a partner of the individual, other than due to resignation or retirement
- loss of income or business failure of an individual, or the partner of the individual, due to circumstances outside of their, or their partner's, control (such as serious illness)
- loss of income of the individual, due to the death of a former partner who was providing ongoing financial assistance in relation to their child
- the individual, or their partner, has been adversely affected by a major disaster event
- destruction of, or severe damage to, the individual, or their partner's, home
- the individual having to leave home and not being able to return because of an extreme circumstance (such as domestic violence)
- where an individual is still living at home and a family member has left or has been removed because of domestic violence against the individual.

Payment of fees

- Fees are set up using the Service's direct debit system (Debit Success)
- Families will be issued with a fee statement on a weekly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements.
- As per your Direct Debit authority, a dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees. This will be added each time the direct debit is dishonoured and collected by our billing partner "Debit Success.

Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session
- Families must still pay the 'gap' fee to the Service if their child is unable to attend. [Fee charging practices are commercial decisions made by each childcare service and are not a matter regulated by the Family Assistance Law. Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment]
- Under the Child Care Subsidy families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances. (See Child Care Subsidy Handbook).

- Allowable absences can be taken for any reason, including public holidays and when children are sick.
- Records will be kept by the Service for each absence.
- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via [myGov](#).
- In a period of local emergency, such as bushfire or pandemic, and our Service is temporarily shut down on public health advice, families may be provided with additional absence days as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the Approved Provider.
- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink if they are in temporary financial hardship. ACCS provides extra assistance for up to 13 weeks.

Failure to Pay

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued after one week and then again, after two weeks if the fees are still outstanding.
- A child's position will be terminated if payment has not been made after three weeks, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the Service will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.

Late Fees

- Our Service is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. This is a breach in the Education and Care Regulations.
- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the Service. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time.
- Currently, a fee of \$15.00 per 10 minutes block or part thereof will be incurred by the family.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late with fee payment.

Change of Fees

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of four weeks written notice is

given to all families.

Termination of Enrolment

- Parents are to provide two weekswritten notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the centre.
- If termination from the Service is required without notification, families may lose their Child Care Subsidy, resulting in the payment of requirement for full fees to be charged.

Responsibility of Management

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring all families are aware of our *Payment of Fees Policy*
- ensuring enrolment information of includes the parent/guardian's Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth and the child's CRN and date of birth
- providing families with regular statement of fees payable
- notifying families of any overdue fees
- providing families with reminder letters as required
- terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid
- discussing fee payment with families if required

Resources and information for families

[New Child Care Package Information for Families Resources](#)

[Child Care Subsidy](#)

[Child Care Package Overview](#)

[Centrelink Customer Reference Number](#)

[Absences from childcare- Australian Government](#)

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/child_care_provider_handbook_0.pdf

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Early Childhood and Care*<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-0>

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs*

Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	MARCH 2020	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MARCH 2021
MODIFICATIONS	August 2020 – Updated to include KFS & ACCS information for families		