



Fees Policy

Statement

To provide a high-quality childcare service at an affordable price within the guidelines of being a not-for-profit community organisation.

Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place around fees to parents.

In the National Quality Framework 6 and 7, it talks about having collaborative partnerships with families and communities and effective management systems.

Legislative Requirements

| Section/regulation | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| Section 168 | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |

| NQF | |
|----------------|--|
| Quality Area 6 | Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities |
| Element 7.1.2 | Management systems |

Procedure

Fee amount, structure and other charges

- The Service's fees will be set by the Board in line with the budget. Fees will be reviewed at the end of the calendar and financial years.
- The fee structure may include, but not be limited to, discounting for full time and charging a higher loading for half days.
- Fees will be charged for public holidays and sick days. On a case-by-case basis, the Service may offer parents the ability to swap a paid sick day to another day in the same week, on request. We will try to fulfil requests, but it is not guaranteed.
- Fees will not apply during the Christmas closure period.
- The Service reserves the right to apply a \$2 per minute late penalty for collection outside of session times. The late penalty is a fine for breach of service rules for a charge for additional service and does not qualify for Childcare Subsidy (CCS). The application of the late fee is at the discretion of the Nominated Supervisor.
- The Service will pass on the cost of any dishonoured EFT payments to the account holder.
- The Board may adopt other charges that are in the interest of the Service.

- As a rule, the Board will endeavour to give families a minimum 14 days' notice of any changes to fees and charges including an explanation of why the changes are occurring. The Board may breach this rule if it believes that it is in the Service's best interest.

Holiday fee

- Parents will need to pay regular fees if they take up to two weeks consecutively for holidays (this will be on a pro rata basis – e.g. if the child's regular bookings over two weeks is two days, then parents will pay their normal fee for two weeks or if the child's regular bookings over two weeks is 10 days, parents will pay regular fees for the 10 days). The child's bookings will be marked as absent for those days, therefore using their allowable absences
- For holiday periods of more than two consecutive weeks, parents will be charged a half fee for the rest of the consecutive weeks (after the first two weeks). This means that the full day fee will be halved, and childcare subsidy will be applied after that. The child's bookings will be marked as absent for those days, therefore using their allowable absences.
- Each holiday (consecutive weeks off) will be treated as a separate occurrence and treated as such.
- If parents do not wish to pay for the time their child is away, parents can withdraw the child from care. When you return from your holiday, you can contact the Service to see if there is space available for your child to return. If there are no spaces the child will be placed on the internal waitlist, as they have been a past parent.

Fee discount for staff

- Availability is not guaranteed for staff that require bookings for their child at the Service, but they will be given priority where possible.
- The Service will offer a 20% discount on fees. This discount is added through the software provider system after Child Care Subsidy has been applied.
- This discount will only be offered to permanent staff and only for the days the educator is rostered on to work.
- This will be conditional on the financial viability of the Service.
- The application of all conditions is at the discretion of the director.

Billing

- Invoices will be generated through the Service Billing and Booking System - Spike.
- Invoices will be issued weekly in arrears via email.
- Invoices will include opening balance, fees charged, any government entitlements received, other charges (e.g. late fee), other goods or services (e.g. fundraising), payments received and closing balance. Please note that if your closing balance is in brackets then you are in credit.
- Processing of the invoices will be the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor or Assistant Director.

Payment

- Payment is through direct debit authorisation.

Bond

- The Service will hold a bond of one week of booked sessions at full fees. The bond amount will be monitored regularly and adjusted to reflect any changes in the fees or service usage.
- Families that believe the application of, or adjustment to the bond would place them in financial hardship, can apply to the Nominated Supervisor and Treasurer to have the application or adjustment staged.
- The bond will be held for the period the family uses the service and credited back to the account shortly before they leave. Any remaining unused bond will be paid back to the family by direct debit.

Family Tax and other Government Entitlements

- The Service is approved for Childcare Subsidy (CCS). Entitlements are managed through the Child Care Management System (CCMS).
- Information about entitlements is available from Centrelink or the Services Australia Website <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy>
- While the service's administration will assist families in claiming their correct entitlement it is ultimately the responsibility of the account holder to make the claim.

Overdue Fees

- Any family who is four weeks behind with their fees will receive a 'friendly' **Fee Reminder** email. The Nominated Supervisor or Assistant Director is responsible for generating this.
- Families can make appointments to speak with the Nominated Supervisor regarding payments if there is a need to do so.
- Payment plans to reduce outstanding fees can be negotiated with the Nominated Supervisor with strict conditions. Continually not paying fees will put the child/rens place/s at the Service in jeopardy and further action may be necessary. This will be decided upon in conjunction with the Chair and Treasurer. This may include issuing additional reminder notices, phone calls and meetings with the Chair or nominated proxy, notice of temporary cancellation of the children's bookings at the Service, notice of referral to a debt collection agency and possible legal action.
- At the end of each month, the Nominated Supervisor will send to the Treasurer an Accounts Receivable Summary or Slow Payer Summary of all outstanding balances and, where the amounts are exceeding four weeks in arrears, will provide information as to action undertaken to recoup the fees.
- At the following Board meeting, the Treasurer will be responsible for reporting this as necessary, including what steps have been taken to date. The Board may ask for additional information or that further action be taken. Undertaking this will be the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor in conjunction with the Treasurer and Chair.

Other Sources

Bryant, L. (2009). *Managing a Child Care Service : A Hands-On Guide for Service Providers*. Sydney: Community Child Care Co-Operative.

CCMS Handbook

Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care) Act 2009

Services Australia Website

Links to other Policies

Financial Management Policy

Ongoing Training

None

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually.

Last reviewed: November 2024

Date for next review: August 2026