

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all families and staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the payment of fees for the provision of childcare at our Service.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, approved provider and nominated supervisor of the Service.

Background

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 meeting our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all Child Care Subsidy (CCS) 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.

Principles

The Service is committed to:

- Providing responsible financial management of the service, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable service, while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level.
- Advising users of the service about program government funding and fees to be paid by parents/guardians.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians.
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts.

Policy

SETTING OF FEES

- Fees will be reviewed by management annually and will take into consideration affordability for families, local demand and economic conditions, the level of quality provided by the service and the financial sustainability of the service.
- Changes to fee schedules will be published at least 14 days before any new fee comes into effect.
- Amounts, notice periods and any other terms and conditions are to be observed by nominated supervisors and those administering fees.
- Additional fees may be charged for enrolment, late enrolment, late collection of children, failure to notify of absence, processing of payments and refunds, dishonoured payments, late payment, debt collection costs or any other fees determined appropriate by management and/or contained within the terms and conditions of each enrolment.

CHARGING OF FEES

- Fees are charged for each session of care as per bookings. Refer separate section on 'Absences from the Service' for information regarding absences.
- Fees will be charged automatically either weekly or fortnightly in arrears using our nominated CCMS Software.

- Families will be issued with a Statement of Entitlement on a weekly or fortnightly basis in accordance with the fee payment and regulatory requirements. The Statement of Entitlement will include details of the sessions of care provided and any resulting fee reduction amounts. Refer separate section on 'Child Care Subsidy' for further information on fee reduction amounts.
- The Statement of Entitlement is generated using our nominated CCMS software which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation.
- Fees will not be charged to account holders during periods of closure including public holidays.

INVOICES AND STATEMENTS

- The service will issue a Statement of Entitlement to families at least fortnightly. This statement will include all required details as per Family Assistance Law, including the service's name, the child's full name and CRN, the dates and times of care provided, the fees charged, the subsidy amounts applied, the gap fee payable by the family, and any payments made.
- Families are encouraged to regularly review their Statement of Entitlement, which will be made available electronically through the service's nominated CCMS software. Any discrepancies should be reported to the service immediately.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (CCS)

- Parents/guardians may qualify for assistance with the cost of childcare from the Australian government via the Child Care Subsidy. In order to qualify, parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their [myGov](#) account linked to Centrelink and provide documentation to support their CCS payment.
- The Common Written Agreement (CWA) outlines the specific care arrangements between the family and the service, including days and hours of care, fees, and other terms. It must be signed by both the service and the family before care commences and updated whenever there are changes to the care arrangements.
- The Common Written Agreement (CWA) must be established and signed by all parties.
- The requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy are outlined on servicessaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy.
- Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to the Service and passed on by the Service to the parent/family in the form of a fee reduction.
- Families are required to make a co-contribution to their childcare fees which is known as the Gap Fee. The Gap Fee is the difference between the session fee charged by the service and the eligible childcare subsidy amount received by the service.
- Families are responsible for ensuring their details are correct in Centrelink including reporting changes in circumstance to Centrelink as soon as they are known (e.g. changes in family income, activity levels, relationships or any other changes to their circumstances).
- Failure to maintain correct details may result in incorrect subsidy payments. Any disputes with CCS payments are the responsibility of the family. The family will be referred to contact Centrelink directly for any enquiries regarding CCS payments.

ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) provides extra help with the cost of early education and care
- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
 - [Child wellbeing](#) to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect. The approved provider is involved in determining children who may require additional support who are at risk of harm
 - [Grandparents](#)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
 - [Temporary financial hardship](#)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
 - [Transition to work](#)—to help low-income families transition from income support to work. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment

PAYMENT OF FEES

- All payment terms, including the timing and method of payment, are outlined in the Common Written Agreement (CWA) signed by both the service and the family. Families must adhere to the terms set out in the CWA to ensure the continued receipt of childcare services and the proper application of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Any changes to payment arrangements must be reflected in an updated CWA.
- Families are required to pay fees electronically using the Service's nominated direct debit system contained within the terms and conditions of each enrolment. The direct debit process requires each family to provide banking details to facilitate the setup of their direct debit arrangement. Alternative methods of payment may be accepted at the discretion of the service, and if accepted, will incur additional processing and administration charges.
- Fees and charges associated with the direct debit system will be charged in line with the terms and conditions of each enrolment. Families are encouraged to log into the services' nominated CCMS Software to view Statements of Entitlement and invoices relating to their enrolment at the service including fee information, payments and charges.
- A dated receipt will be available for review or download via the service's nominated CCMS software.
- Families will be issued with a *Statement of Entitlement* on a fortnightly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements. The Statement of Entitlement will include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts.
- A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions unable to be processed due to insufficient funds to cover the fees.
- Failure to pay fees within the time prescribed is a breach of enrolment and may result in withdrawal of care until the account is paid in full or if a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged at the discretion of the service.

ABSENCES FROM THE SERVICE

- If a child is unable to attend a session they are scheduled to attend, families are still required to pay the scheduled fee to the Service.
- Families can get CCS for up to 42 days per child per financial year when their child is absent from a session of care that they would normally attend. Allowable absences can be taken for any reason. Families do not have to provide evidence.
- If a child is enrolled in more than one session of care on the same day (such as before and after school care) and is absent for one of those sessions, it is counted as one absence day.
- Families are required to notify the Service if their child is unable to attend a session for which they are booked. Failure to notify may result in an additional administration fee to cover any resulting service disruption.
- In shared care arrangements, the allowable absences count is allocated to the child, not to each individual parent.
- Additional absences can be claimed for the specified reasons as defined by the Family Assistance Law.
- Records and evidence will be kept by the Service for each additional absence, where required.
- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via myGov.
- In a period of emergency (declared by the Australian Government), such as bushfire or flood, extra allowable absences for the duration of the emergency will be automatically applied in the CCMS system.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Session reports are required to record actual attendance in and out times. Session reports are submitted through the nominated CCMS Software and include required information as per Childcare Provider Handbook, including.

- Type of report (initial report, variation to a report or withdrawal of a report)
- Dates (the start and end dates of the week the report covers)
- Session details (date and session start and finish times)
- Attendance times (Actual in and out attendance times must be reported for each session of care, not including absences)
- Absences (notification of absences (if applicable), reasons for any additional absence (allowable absence days)
- Actual fee charged.

DEBT RECOVERY PROCEDURE

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued after one week and again after two weeks if the fees remain outstanding. After three weeks, a child's enrolment maybe suspended until payment is made.
- A payment plan for unpaid fees may be negotiated at the discretion of the Service. Failure to adhere to a negotiated payment plan may result in termination of enrolment and referral to a debt collection agency. Costs associated with debt collection will be recovered from the account holder.

- Every effort will be made to assist families with genuine hardship circumstances. Pastoral care support, professional counselling and/or financial assistance from within the Diocese may be offered to families in need. Families requiring assistance should contact Central Administration to discuss their situation.

LATE COLLECTION FEES

- Families must drop off and collect their child during program session times. A late collection fee will apply when children are not picked up on time after the session has finished.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently attending outside of session times. Repeated instances of late collection may result in termination of enrolment.

CHANGE OF FEES

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of 14 days written notice is given to all families.
- CCS hourly rate caps may be increased by the [CPI](#) at the commencement of each financial year.
- Any CCS hourly rate increases are governed by CCS and are automatically adjusted through our nominated CCMS Software.

TERMINATION OF ENROLMENT

- Termination of enrolment must comply with the notice period outlined in the Common Written Agreement (CWA). Failure to provide the required notice may result in the loss of CCS and the need for families to cover full fees for any unnotified periods.
- Parents/guardians are to provide two weeks' written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the Service.
- If termination from the Service is required without notification, families may lose their Child Care Subsidy, resulting in the payment of the requirement for full fees to be charged.
- In some circumstances CCS may not be paid for sessions if the child has not physically started care.
- CCS may not be paid for absences submitted on or after a child's last physical day of care, unless conditions have been met as specified by Family Assistance Law.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT

The approved provider and nominated supervisor are responsible for:

- ensuring that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Regulations are met
- ensuring the service and all Persons with Management and Control (PMC) comply with the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL)
- ensuring Persons with Management and Control (PMC) are considered 'fit and proper' persons
- taking reasonable steps to ensure all educators, staff and volunteers follow the Payment of Fees Policy and procedure
- ensuring all families are aware of our Payment of Fees Policy
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information
- providing families with regular statement of fees payable
- providing families with receipts of fees paid
- 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
- providing at least 4 weeks written notice to families of any fee increases or changes to the way fees are collected

RESPONSIBILITY OF FAMILIES

- provide the Service with the correct enrolment details to facilitate the CCS claim, if required, including:
 - Centrelink Reference Numbers for child and CCS claimant
 - Date of birth for child and CCS claimant
- ensure the Common Written Agreement (CWA) is accurately completed and signed before the commencement of care and updated whenever there are changes to the care arrangements

- ensure that all fee payments are made electronically through the Service's nominated direct debit system, as required by the Family Assistance Law
- notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement
- confirm their child's enrolment through the parent's myGov account.

THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS

Parents are generally liable to pay the co-contribution for childcare fees. Only state and territory governments (and their agencies) can contribute to the cost, in part or full, of childcare fees for families. Where an agreement has been made between an employer or charity to assist in the contribution of fees the fees must be reduced accordingly before CCS has been applied. Our Service will record all documentation regarding any third-party payments.

STAFF DISCOUNTS

Our Service offers educators and cooks a staff discount for children who attend our Service after CCS has been applied. The staff discount applies to employees who are employed, contracted or engaged to work with our services as an educator, early childhood teacher or cook.

Centre directors, OSHC Coordinators are eligible to receive the staff discount if they hold an early childhood education and care qualification and are working at a Service. The staff discount is calculated at 50% of full-service fees after CCS has been applied and does not affect CCS eligibility. (Department of Education – [Childcare discount for early childhood workforce](#)). (Staff must continue to pay at least 5% of the gap fee).

COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Families who wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy should speak with the nominated supervisor in the first instance. The nominated supervisor will follow the steps as outlined in this policy, including advising the approved provider of all grievances. Families can raise concerns regarding the management of the Child Care Subsidy to the dedicated Child Care Tip-Off Line either via phone or email:

Phone: 1800 664 231

Email: tipoffline@education.gov.au

Induction and ongoing training

This policy will be accessible by service staff via the intranet and by families via the website. A hard copy of the policy will be available through the Service. Nominated supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff access to the policy and any supporting documents and undertake induction training prior to the policy being implemented. All service staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy and ongoing training will be provided using a range of learning platforms.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Monitoring of compliance with this policy and the related procedure will be overseen by the policy owner. The review process for this policy will begin eight (8) weeks prior to the scheduled review date and include a consultation period with families, educators, compliance team and any other relevant stakeholders and will be facilitated by the Policy Officer.

All service staff will receive communication about any changes in or review of the policy or procedure. Training will be provided where required to ensure an understanding of the changes. Families will be notified of any changes 14 days prior to the implementation. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the MACSEYE Code of Conduct.

Related documents

Dealing with Complaints Policy
Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
Enrolment and Orientation Policy
Fraud Prevention Policy

Legislative requirements

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)

Quality Area 7	Governance and leadership
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EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW REGULATIONS

Regulation 111	Administrative space
Regulation 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

RELATED LEGISLATIONS

Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
Family Law Act 1975
Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
Family Assistance Law – Incorporating all related legislation as identified within the Child Care Provider Handbook in https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook
Privacy Act 1988

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Centrelink	The agency that delivers payments and services to individuals and families on behalf of the Australian Government.
Child Care Subsidy (CCS)	A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers.

Policy information

Policy information

Policy title:	Payment of Fees Policy	Version:	1.0
Authorised Executive:	Director, Finance	Responsible Manager:	Financial Controller
Approving authority:	Board	Approval date:	26/09/2024
Effective date:	26/09/2024	Review date:	26/09/2025

Version control

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	26/09/2021	Policy developed

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a series of connected loops and a horizontal line at the end.