



## Payment of Fees

### Document Control

Revision Number	Implementation Date	Review Date	Prepared By	Approved By
2	May 2023	May 2024	Katherine Darroch	

## Rationale

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service and take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed. (ACECQA, 2021).

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)

<b>Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership</b>		
<b>7.1</b>	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
<b>7.1.2</b>	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
<b>7.1.3</b>	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defines, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

## National Education and Care Regulations

<b>Quality Area 7: Leadership and service management</b>	
<b>168</b>	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
<b>170</b>	Policies and procedures to be followed
<b>171</b>	Policies and procedures to be kept available
<b>172</b>	Notification of change to policies and procedures

## Related Legislation

Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
Family Law Act 1975
Family Assistance Law – Incorporating all related legislation for Child Care Provider Handbook in Appendix G

## Related Policies

Dealing with Complaints Policy  
Delivery of Children to, and Collection from,  
Education and Care Service Premises  
Enrolment Policy

Governance Policy  
Orientation of New Families Policy  
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

## Purpose

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 the 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, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor 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:

### **Enrolment Fee & Bond Payment**

- An enrolment fee is charged in line with the Services Parent Handbook.
- A bond, as outlined in the Parent Handbook, is charged upon confirmation of enrolment. This fee must be paid prior to commencement at the service.
- The bond payment will be refunded to families after 6-8 weeks, if all accounts are paid in full and no amount is outstanding when the child leaves the Service, taking into account all other requirements as outlined in the Parent Handbook. It is the family's responsibility to provide their banking information for this bond to be returned.

### **General Fees**

- Fees are charged for each session.

- 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 fee charged, less the subsidy amount, referred to as the 'gap' amount.
- 'Gap Fees' must be paid via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) (effective 02 July 2023)
- Fees must be kept in advance of a child's attendance.
- A dated, electronic receipt will be provided for each payment made via Payway
- Fees are to be paid fortnightly through a direct debit system. If families wish to pay fees on a weekly or monthly basis, it is a requirement that the family pay in advance and are not in arrears.
- 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 in line with information provided in the Parent Handbook. CCS will be paid for sessions that fall on public holidays.
- Fees are charged for full day sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day).
- Casual days may be offered to families if available.

### **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 CCS. 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 are the responsibility of the family. The family will be referred to contact Centrelink directly for any enquiries regarding CCS payments.

## Payment of fees

- Families pay fees using the Service's direct debit system. The family is required to provide banking details to facilitate set up of the direct debit account.
- If required, other options available are bank transfer or eftpos and can be arranged through the bursar.
- Fees and charges associated with direct debit system are outlined upon enrolment
- A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees.
- 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
- The Statement of Entitlement is generated using our CCS Software which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation

## Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service or mark their child as absent if their child is unable to attend on any given day.
- 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.
- Under the CCS 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. Families do not have to provide evidence.
- 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 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 for additional fee assistance if they are experiencing temporary financial hardship.

- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
  1. 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
  2. Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
  3. Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
  4. Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work)—to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment

### Debt Recovery Procedure

- 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. This process includes a late payment fee.
- At any time of the debt recovery process the family will be encouraged to enter a debt agreement with the service to repay outstanding fees. A written contract will be provided for the family to sign outlining repayment plan details. The repayment plan will provide information as to the duration and amount of the repayments as well as steps that will be taken if the repayment plan is not adhered to.
- 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

- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the Service. A late fee, outlined in the Parent Handbook, will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late.

### Change of Fees

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of 4 weeks 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 CCS Software.

### Termination of Enrolment

- Parents are to provide **two weeks'** written 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 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.
- Additionally, CCS may not be paid for absences submitted 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 all families are aware of our *Payment of Fees Policy*
- Ensuring enrolment information 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 require
- 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:
  - o Centrelink Reference Numbers for child and CCS claimant
  - o Date of Birth for child and CCS claimant
- Ensure payment of fees as per policy
- Notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement
- Confirm their child's enrolment through the parents 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.

### **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 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](mailto:tipoffline@education.gov.au)

### Resources and information for families

- [Child Care Subsidy](#)
- [Centrelink Customer Reference Number](#)
- [Absences from childcare- Australian Government](#)

### Continuous Improvement/Reflection

Our Payment of Fees Policy will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.

### Source

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. Payment of Service Fees and Provision of a Statement of Fees Charged by the Service.
- Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook [https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/child\\_care\\_provider\\_handbook\\_0.pdf](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/child_care_provider_handbook_0.pdf)
- Australian Government Department of Education Early Childhood and Care <https://www.dese.gov.au/early-childhood>
- Australian Government Department of Education Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017). (2020)
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

### Attachments

Attachment 1: Outstanding Fee-First Reminder

Attachment 2: Outstanding Fee-Second Reminder

Attachment 3: Outstanding Fee-Final Reminder

### Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
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May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy maintenance</li><li>• Minor formatting edits within text</li><li>• Information added regarding staff discounts</li><li>• Change in payment of Gap Fees by EFT (effective 1 July 2023)</li></ul>	May 2024
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# Attachment 1:

## Outstanding Fee | First Reminder

<Insert Date>

<Insert Name>

### RE: OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT

Dear <Insert name>

This is a reminder that your account balance is overdue as of the <Date>.

Outstanding balance: <AMOUNT>

Total amount owing: <AMOUNT>

Please arrange payment of this account by the <DATE>. If you cannot make full payment at this time, please contact us to make a payment arrangement that is mutually acceptable.

Your prompt attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated. If you have any queries regarding this account, please contact our office as soon as possible.

Your current statement is available through your Xplor app, under **Account > Finance**.

### There are 3 ways you can make a payment

**1. Through your Xplor app, Account > Finance > Pay Now**

**2. Bank transfer:**

Account Name: ##

BSB: ##

A/C Number: ##

Reference: Child's name

3. By calling the office on: <insert phone number> to make payment over the phone.

If payment has recently been made, please accept our thanks and ignore this reminder.

Regards,

<Insert name>

<Insert position>

## Attachment 2:

### Outstanding Fee | Second Reminder

<Insert date>

<Insert name>

#### RE: SECOND REMINDER - OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT

Dear <Insert name>

We wrote to you on the DATE reminding you of the outstanding amount of \$<Insert amount> for your ELC/OSHC account, but it appears to remain unpaid.

If you have any queries regarding its payment or if we can help you in any way please contact us. If not, please organise for settlement of this account by: DATE (GIVE 2 DAYS)

If payment has not been received by the above date, a late fee of \$50.00 will be charged.

Your current statement is available through your Xplor app, under **Account > Finance**.

#### There are 3 ways you can make a payment

1. **Through your Xplor app, Account > Finance > Pay Now**

2. Bank transfer:

Account Name: ##  
BSB: ##  
A/C Number: ##  
Reference: Child's name

**3.** By calling the office on: <insert phone number> to make payment over the phone.

If payment has recently been made, please accept our thanks and ignore this reminder.

Regards

<Insert name>  
<Insert position>

## Attachment 3:

### Outstanding Fee | Final Reminder

<Insert date>

<Insert name>

#### RE: FINAL REMINDER - OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT

Dear <Insert name>

We have recently sent you a number of letters to remind you that the balance of \$<Insert amount> was overdue. This amount has now increased as a \$50.00 late fee has been added.

We ask again that if you have any queries or are not able to make full payment immediately, please contact us.

If neither of the above applies to your situation please organise for the settlement of the remaining balance immediately.

Your current statement is available through your Xplor app, under **Account > Finance**.

#### There are 3 ways you can make a payment

**1. Through your Xplor app, Account > Finance > Pay Now**

**2.** Bank transfer:

Account Name: ##

BSB: ##  
A/C Number: ##  
Reference: Child's name

**3.** By calling the office on: 9877 3555 (ext2) to make payment over the phone.

Payment of your account has now well exceeded our normal credit facility, should your fees remain unpaid by the advised date your position at our service will be terminated and your account transferred to our Debt Collection Agency, who will implement strategies to recover the debt owed to the Service.

Regards

<Insert name>  
<Insert position>