

Nunawading Christian College

ELC & OSHC



Payment of Fees Policy

Document Control

Revision Number	Implementation Date	Review Date	Prepared By	Approved By
4	March 2022	March 2023	Katherine Darroch	Leanne Munchan

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.

The payment of fees is the means by which NCCP ELC is able to operate, therefore this policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability by setting appropriate fees and charges
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by NCCP ELC

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 defines, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

National Education and Care Regulations

Quality Area 7: Leadership and service management	
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	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 https://www.dese.gov.au/resources-child-care-providers/resources/child-care-provider-handbook
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Related Policies

Arrival and Departure Policy
Enrolment Policy
Dealing with Complaints 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.

NCCP ELC 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.
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts.
- Ensuring there are no financial barriers for families wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/children.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians.
- Advising users of the service about program funding, including government support and fees to be paid by parents/guardians.

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:

Enrolment Fee & Bond Payment

- An enrolment fee of \$50 when forms are lodged.
- A bond of \$500 is charged upon confirmation of enrolment. This fee must be paid prior to commencement at the service.
- The Bond payment will be refunded back to families when the child leaves the service (provided that 2 weeks notice of deregistration is given).
- Bonds will not be refunded for families that decrease their child/ren's booked days or deregister within the service's 'Locked Period'. Locked Period will be advised at the time of your orientation.

General Fees

- Fees are charged daily and vary depending on the family's eligibility for Child Care 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 fee charged, less the subsidy amount, referred to as the 'gap' amount.
- Fees must be kept in advance of a child's attendance.
- Fees are to be paid fortnightly through a direct debit system, bank transfer, credit card or cash.



- Fees are payable in advance for every session that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes all absent days but excludes periods when the Service is closed. The Service may be directed to close due to periods of local emergency such as bushfire, flood or a pandemic.
- If a session of care falls on a public holiday, families are required to pay half the normal daily fee. 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 within the Service's licence.

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 CCS 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 CCS will be determined by:
 - Combined family income
 - Activity test of parents
 - Type of early learning and childcare Service.
- CCS 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.

Payment of fees

- Families will be issued with a fee statement on a fortnightly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements.
- A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees.
- Families can choose to utilise the ELC's Direct Debit automatic fee payments service.

Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service or mark their child as absent in Xplor 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.
- 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, 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 for additional fee assistance.
- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
 - o 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
 - o 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
 - o Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
 - o 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

Failure to Pay

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder email will be sent.
- If fees have not been paid within two days of the first reminder, a \$50 late fee will be added to the account.
- If fees remain unpaid contact will be made via phone.
- A child's position can be terminated if payment has not been made within one week of the final reminder (via phone). 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 will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time.
- Collection of children between 6:01-6:15pm will incur a \$2.00 a minute late pick up fee per child.
- After 6:16pm every additional minute will incur a \$5.00 per minute late pick up fee per child. Please be aware that this fee is not claimable through CCS.
- 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



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 requirement of full fees to be charged.
- If a child does not attend the service on their last booking, this will result in cessation of care in accordance with Centrelink. Centrelink will forfeit your CCS and families will be required to pay the full fee to the service, back to your child/ren's last attending day.

Responsibility of Management

The Service is 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:
 - Centrelink Reference Numbers for child and CCS claimant
 - 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@dese.gov.au



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 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, Skills and Employment 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.dese.gov.au/early-childhood>
- 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. (2017). (2020)
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

Attachments

Attachment 1: Outstanding Fee-First Reminder

Attachment 2: Outstanding Fee-Second Reminder

Attachment 3: Outstanding Fee-Finale Reminder

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established Payment of Fees Policy• Updated enrolment information contact person who is responsible for the enrolment process at NCC ELC	April 2020
August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Format Update• Policy statement added• Implementation information added• CCS section included• Absences section added• Responsibility for Management expanded• Resources and information section added	March 2021
August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removed dated receipt provision• Adjusted payment options• Wording changes to provide greater clarity• Grammatical edits• Increased late pickup fee for first 15 mins	August 2022
March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update of Related Legislation• Policy revised to align with recommendations with ACECQA's policy guide (August 2021)• Updated Related Policies• Check of links used within policy	March 2023

Attachment 1:

Outstanding Fee | First Reminder



<Insert Date>

<Insert Name>

<Insert address>

RE: OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT

Dear <Insert name>

This is a reminder that your account balance of \$<Insert Amount> was overdue as of <Insert Date>. Enclosed is a statement of account for your reference.

Please arrange payment of this account today or, 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.

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>

<Insert address>

RE: SECOND REMINDER - OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT

Dear <Insert name>

We wrote to you recently reminding you of the outstanding amount of \$<Insert amount> for Invoice number/s <Insert invoice number/s>, but it appears to remain unpaid.

If you have any queries regarding its payment or if we can help you in any way please call. If not, please organise for settlement of this account immediately.

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>

<Insert address>

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.

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 by <Insert due date>.

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>