

## **Fees and Payment**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear set of guidelines for the setting, payment and collection of fees, which ensures the viability of the centre and the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the organisation.

Fees are necessary because there is a shortfall between the level of government funding and the costs of operating a viable high-quality service.

### **Background**

Both Federal and State government provide some payments to families to assist with the cost of child care and/or kindergarten.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) pays fee reductions to approved centres, following the submission of online weekly attendance records / timesheets and enrolment details.

The Family Assistance Office calculates fee reductions using family eligibility information and the information provided by the service on reports and information submitted.

The Victorian Government's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) provides per capita funding as a contribution toward the cost of operating a program for children in the year before school and a discount rate for health care card holders. This is relevant to the 4-year-old integrated and 4-year-old sessional kinder programs only. (This does not include 3-year-old sessions)

The centre is sponsored by the Stonnington Council. They provide the building and some maintenance support however the responsibility for all operational costs falls on the centre/committee. We are a not for profit centre and work on a break-even budget.

### **Fee Setting**

The Committee of Management will set the fees in accordance with government funding guidelines and the Centre's annual budget. The fee will normally be set prior to beginning of each financial year. The Centre's financial year is January to December. At times under exceptional circumstances fees may change mid-year if the committee deems it to be required.

Therefore, the Committee will monitor the Centre's budget throughout the year and review the fee in accordance to this.

The Committee, through the Centre's Managers will notify parents of the new fees in writing as soon as possible after the fees have been set.

### **Procedures**

All families using the centre are required to pay fees and depending upon which programs are utilized and this determines the amount you pay.

The nominated 1<sup>st</sup> parent on the enrolment form completed for the centre can apply for a Family Reference Number (CRN) and a Child Reference Number (CRN) and be assessed through the Family Assistance Office (FAO) on 136 150.

On commencement the full amount must be paid until adjustments are made on the parent's account by the FAO. The centre's program is linked directly with the FAO (See below for more information on CCB and CCR)

Parents are also responsible for ensuring the fees are paid on time and that their email address is current. *Please notify the Centre if email addresses have changed.*

Fee payment will commence on the first day the offer is made.

### **Payments**

Our preferred payment is Direct Deposit, transferring money from your account in to our account. Our Account details are Westpac BSB 033 038 Account 28 4548. Please ensure, when making a payment that we are able to easily identify the payment belonging to you. EG Family name.

Parents are responsible for **payment of fees** during absence for any reason (e.g.; Illness, Holidays etc). No fees are payable for the closure period over Christmas and New Year. No LDC fees are charged on Public Holidays, however kinder charges do occur on public holidays.

No **kinder fee** is charged over the term breaks, however LDC fees for Room 1 to 6 are payable over this time.

For the yearly professional development day when the centre is closed **LDC is not payable** but **kinder fee is for that day.**

### **Late Payment**

Steps taken when family falls into arrears with their fees: -

1. Centre's managers will have a conversation or email parents reminding them of their obligation to ensure fees are paid.
2. If no payment within seven days and parents have not contacted the centre to organise a payment plan a letter will be sent outlining the current late payment with the fee policy attached.
3. If parents fail to respond satisfactorily to this letter, a meeting between the families, the centre manager and/or a committee representative will be held within ten working days.

The Committee of Management reserves the right to withdraw a child's place in the Centre in these circumstances.

*If there is ever a problem regarding fees or payment of fees, please discuss the matter with the Centre managers as payment plans can be arranged.*

### **Non-Payment**

When the centre is required to recover outstanding money owed to the centre contact information on the enrolment form will be used and passed on to the debt collector to assist with the recovery. Where the centre incurs costs associated with the recovery due to non-payment of fees, the costs incurred by the centre will be added to the account in arrears.

### **Child Care Rebate and Benefits**

If you are eligible for Child Care Benefits (CCB) the Family Assistance Office (FAO) credits your account on our system via the internet or you can choose to pay the full fee and claim it back as a lump sum after the end of the financial year.

Again, if eligible for the Child Care Rebate (CCR) the FAO reconciles your payments made to the centre and will refund the appropriate amount to you by crediting your account on our system via the internet.

The above steps can only occur if the Reference Numbers for both parent 1 on the enrolment form and child/children are provided to the centre. Your child's enrolment will then be formalized with the FAO and rebate's and benefit's credits will commence if and when eligible.

Full fees will be required to be paid until credits commence on your account via the FAO.

It is parent's responsibility to pass on the information regarding Multiple Child Percentage (another child using a different service) and Jet statuses including start dates. The JET information is obtained from a letter received from the FAO sent to families.

You are not eligible for Child Care Rebate or Child Care Benefits if: -

- You have picked up an extra day for casual care.
- You have enrolled your child and been given a start date but your child has not physically attended the centre.
- You have given notice for ceasing days and have stopped using care for those days before the actual end date.

*In these instances, full fee will be charged as a miscellaneous fee of \$98 per day*

### **Allowable Absences**

Each family can be absent from the Centre for up to thirty days per financial year and still claim the Child Care Benefit. Once the thirty days have been reached families will be charged a full daily fee, with no CCB being applied to the fee for any day the child is absent from the Centre

In addition to the 30 allowable absences, CCB is also payable for absences taken for the following reasons:

- Illness – medical certificate must be provided.
- Non-Immunisation
- Rostered days off
- Rotating shift work
- Temporary closure of a school or a pupil-free day
- Public holidays
- Periods of local emergency
- Court ordered shared custody
- Attendance at pre-school

To qualify for the above, evidence needs to be provided to the centre. There is no limit on the number of approved absence days a family may claim, providing they are taken for the specified reasons.

### **Centre Absences**

If a child is to be absent for any reason, parents are requested to notify the Centre by 10.00 am, and preferably in advance. Fees must be paid despite non-attendance due to illness or other personal reasons. If your child will be in later please phone and let staff know.

### **Late Pickup**

A friendly but urgent request is made for families to pick up from the centre on time. We need to ensure we have the correct staff ratios in the room at all times. Staff are contracted to particular hours therefore as an employer we are obligated to let staff leave on time at either the end of a session or at the end of the day.

If you are running late, please phone the centre to let us know. Parents will be fined at the rate of \$1 per minute that they are late after the end of a kinder session or at the end of the day. Late fees should be paid to the Service Manager the next day. If parents are late more than three times in three months, the fine will increase to \$5 per minute. If parents continue to be late the managers will speak to the families reminding them they must be on time otherwise their enrolment could be terminated.

Late fee will apply to: -

- LDC if pick up occurs after 6pm
- Kinder at the end of the session period

Charges

- \$1.00 per minute will be charged
- Late more than 3 times in 3 months \$5 per minute

### **Fees Charged**

Depending upon which program you use will reflect which fee you are required to pay. Please see Fee Information document for more detail.

- **Fee Deposit: LDC**  
When securing a place at the centre for LDC program parents are required to pay a \$100 Fee Deposit. Once enrolment starts this is credited into your account towards fees. If you decide not to take up the position the Fee Deposit is retained by the centre.
- **Fee Bond: LDC**  
Fee bonds are charged as an assurance fees will be paid. These bonds are adjusted according when booked days of attendance increased or decreased. One month notice in writing is required when dropping days or ceasing enrolment. If this notice is not given the fee bond is retained.
- **Fee Deposit: Kinder**  
When securing a place at the centre parents are required to pay a \$100 Deposit. Once an offer is accepted this fee is charged to your account. In term 4 the Fee Deposit is refunded on your invoice. *Please note: This Fee Deposit is not refunded if you do not complete the kinder year with us.*
- **Weekly Fee/Invoices (Room 1 to 6)**  
Invoices are sent out weekly after the child has attended the centre.
- **Term Fee/Invoices (Room 7)**  
Invoices are sent out before the start of each term

**Fee Information Sheets will be provided detailing all costs. Fee Information can also be viewed in the foyer on the noticeboard.**

## **Source**

### Legislative Links

- The kindergarten Guide 2017
  - Child Care Management System (CCMS)
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**Created:** March 2011

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