



Parent Handbook 2018

Welcome to Early Years @ Phoenix Park (EY@PP).
We sincerely hope you enjoy your time with us.

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Our Philosophy

Firstly, we are proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boonerwung people from the East Kulin region as the traditional owners of this land and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

EY@PP is a place where:

- children feel happy, safe and nurtured, surrounded by warm & responsive relationships;
- families feel welcome and supported, and
- community members can meet, build connections & develop a strong sense of community.

Our Vision is for strong and cohesive community in which children are central and families are supported.

Our Mission is to work together to deliver accessible, high quality integrated community based early childhood services that maximise child and family wellbeing and build and strengthen community connectedness.

EY@PP is committed to:

□ **Being child-centred**

We recognise children as active participants and decision makers in their learning within a play based curriculum. In developing the learning environment we listen to children, we support the development of their relationships, and value their contribution within the community.

□ **Supporting families**

Communication with parents is respectful, regular and responsive to individual needs and values. Families are supported through listening and sharing information about their child. Educators recognise what is important to families and reflect on how this can be supported through professionally recognised guidelines. Education and resources are made available.

□ **Building communities**

Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin all aspects of the centre. We acknowledge Australia's Indigenous heritage and that of the wider community. We invite the sharing of skills, knowledge and aspirations, building a community of learners with opportunities to connect families with each other and with other services.

□ **Working together**

We create a community in which the questions, expectations, and knowledge of children, families and educators, all have a respected place. Diverse communication methods are used to strengthen relationships. A collaborative approach sustains the evolving curriculum planning processes.

Chapter 1 - General Information

Management Committee

The Early Years @ Phoenix Park is an incorporated association and has a formal constitution and committee structure. As with all associations parents become members; this does not mean you are automatically a committee member, but rather a member of the association. Your membership entitles you to enrol your child into the service and gives you voting rights at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and extra ordinary meetings.

At the AGM the members elect the committee, thus giving them the authority to manage the service. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the committee. All members (parents) are expected to attend the AGM.

The committee meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm, if you are interested in coming along and you are not on the committee, please let us know. If you have an issue that you would like raised at the committee meeting, please speak to the Service Managers.

The Service Managers are responsible for the day to day operation of the centre. They have a pivotal link between the Management Committee and other educators. The Service Managers are your first point of call for any queries, concerns, feedback or chats. Parents are always welcome to drop by the office and say hello.

The role of the committee is to support the ongoing strategic planning of the centre. The Committee consists of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary (shared managers role), and up to six Ordinary members. We would not have a service without the help and support of the parents who join the committee, so we encourage parents to be involved in the committee at some stage while at the service.

The Stonnington council are responsible for the buildings. Whilst they have regular conversations with the Service Managers they do not have any input into the operations of EY@PP.

Parental Involvement

Parents can become involved in the centre in many different ways:

- Parent participation in the room
- Becoming involved with the curriculum
- Sharing your skills with educators and children
- Fundraising
- Joining the committee

Communication Methods

There a number of ways we communicate information to parents. Emails are often used to distribute newsletters and invoices, and Notices displayed around the centre are to inform parents of an event or to share information. Please take time to read and access each of these methods of communication.

Communication with Educators

If you wish to discuss your child's progress or routine in more detail, it is often more appropriate to do this when the child is out of earshot. Time can be made available during the week when Educators can meet with parents or have a phone conversation. Please chat to Educators if you would like to arrange a time.

Educators

The Service consists of Early Childhood Educators with qualifications suited to their roles (Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor). On occasions during leave periods, relief Educators will be employed. When we are unable to fill the shifts with our own bank educators we use an agency. Photographs of Educators are on the noticeboards alongside rooms.

Hours of operation

The centre is closed on gazetted public holidays, fees are not payable.

The centre will also be closed on Tuesday 12th of June 2018, for Educators to undertake professional development. LDC fees are not charged for this day but kinder fees are.

The LDC Service is also closed for the normal working days between Christmas and New Year's Day with no fees charged. Please note that the service may be closed for an additional period in the New Year, this decision is made by the committee each year and they will take into account the most suitable outcome.

The Long Day Care area of our service is open from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Kindergarten runs to the school term, finishing on Dec 20th 2018. In 2018 EYPP will have Two - 3 year old Kinder groups [Red and Purple], One 4 year Sessional Kinder group [Blue] and One Integrated Kinder / LDC group [Green].

Chapter 2 - Daily procedures

Introducing your child to the Service - Orientation

Before your child begins we suggest having a few visits to familiarise your child with the room and educators. For children commencing long day care we would suggest an initial visit where you stay in the room with your child for about 30 minutes, an opportunity to look around and play. A second visit of about 45mins in which you leave your child for a short time in the room, and then a start day when you leave your child for at least half the day. At this point you leave the centre and fees commence. The orientation process may be customised to individual family needs. For children commencing kinder sessions, parents may stay with their child for a short time during their first session and are encouraged to be flexible to collect their child early if this assists the child settle.

Arrival and Departure - Saying Goodbye

Each room has a sign in book (this is required by Government regulations). You are required to sign in the arrival time, expected departure time [LDC] and any comments, eg who is collecting your child, medication that Educators need to administer. Please pass your child to an Educator and allow time for a few words to exchange information. Children should not be delivered or collected without some contact with the child's Educator.

The format of the sign in book is:

- white pages - attendance record
- blue pages - medication details and authorisation to administer the medication
- pink pages - illness, accident, incident or injury, sign when you pick up your child
- yellow pages - collection authorisation, for parent to authorise someone else to collect their child

We understand that drop off times can be stressful and emotional so it is important that we follow a few steps to make the transition from parent/guardian to educator as positive as we can. Say hello to educators with your child - beginning the interactions between the educator and child. Sit with your child at one activity for a few moments - educators to be in view. Let educators know you are ready to leave, say bye to your child - give kiss and cuddle and hand over to the educator, please then leave the room swiftly.

Children must be left in the care of an Educator and not in the corridor. It is very important that you always say goodbye to your child before leaving and make your departure brief so that educators can proceed to settle your child. If your child is unsettled at your departure we welcome you to ring the centre for an update at any time. Please discuss with educators your thoughts on the transition time.

Please make sure Educators know when you collect your child and allow a few minutes to exchange information about your child's day. Check the whiteboard, noticeboards and portfolios for messages. Lost property is easier to keep track of if you check your child's belongings each day. Remember to sign your child out and note the time of departure.

Sun Smart

Educators will apply and reapply sunscreen as required throughout the day, but it is helpful if you are able to apply the sunscreen before arriving for kinder sessions. Also for protection from the sun, your child requires a hat that covers the back of the neck and a brim that shades the face. A top with a high neckline and sleeves (not singlet tops or sundresses with straps) and longer length shorts/skirts are best. Educators access the UV index daily in the rooms regarding times of alert when sun protection is needed. If you prefer to provide your own sunscreen (Cancer Council brand is used in the centre) please label the container and deliver to educators in the room.

Access to the children

By regulation, no child will be allowed to leave the Service with any person other than the parent/guardian without authorisation from the parent/guardian. Therefore, the Service must be notified if someone else is collecting the child and the yellow authorisation form must be filled in. If another person will regularly collect the child, a covering letter may be placed on file. The emergency contact people named on the enrolment form are automatically authorised to collect the child, so details must be kept up to date. If during the day a different person is collecting your child you may phone the centre with the details. ID of the person collecting will be required.

Security

To enter EYPP press the four character security code at the touch pad. Enter by turning the handle and ensure that the door closes behind you. DO NOT give the code to any other person. Visitors need to ring the bell for entry. No animals on or off leash are to be brought into the centre. To exit the building, first press the green release button to the right of the main foyer exit door.

Policy book

The Policy Book is located in the foyer outside the office. This book includes all policies and procedures required by the regulations and for the day to day running of the Service. Please feel free to look at the policies. To ensure the centre can function in a professional manner all families and educators must adhere by all the service policies. On request copies of any of the policies will be provided to families.

Emergencies and Evacuations

By Children's Services Regulations, on enrolment, parents/guardian's must authorise the Service to seek emergency medical, hospital and ambulance services if required. Parents are responsible for any costs involved. In the case of a dangerous and/or emergency situation, the Educator of the Service at the time must assess the situation, deciding what appropriate action to take. The safety of the children, educators and parents are our first priority. Regular emergency procedures are conducted throughout the year ensuring

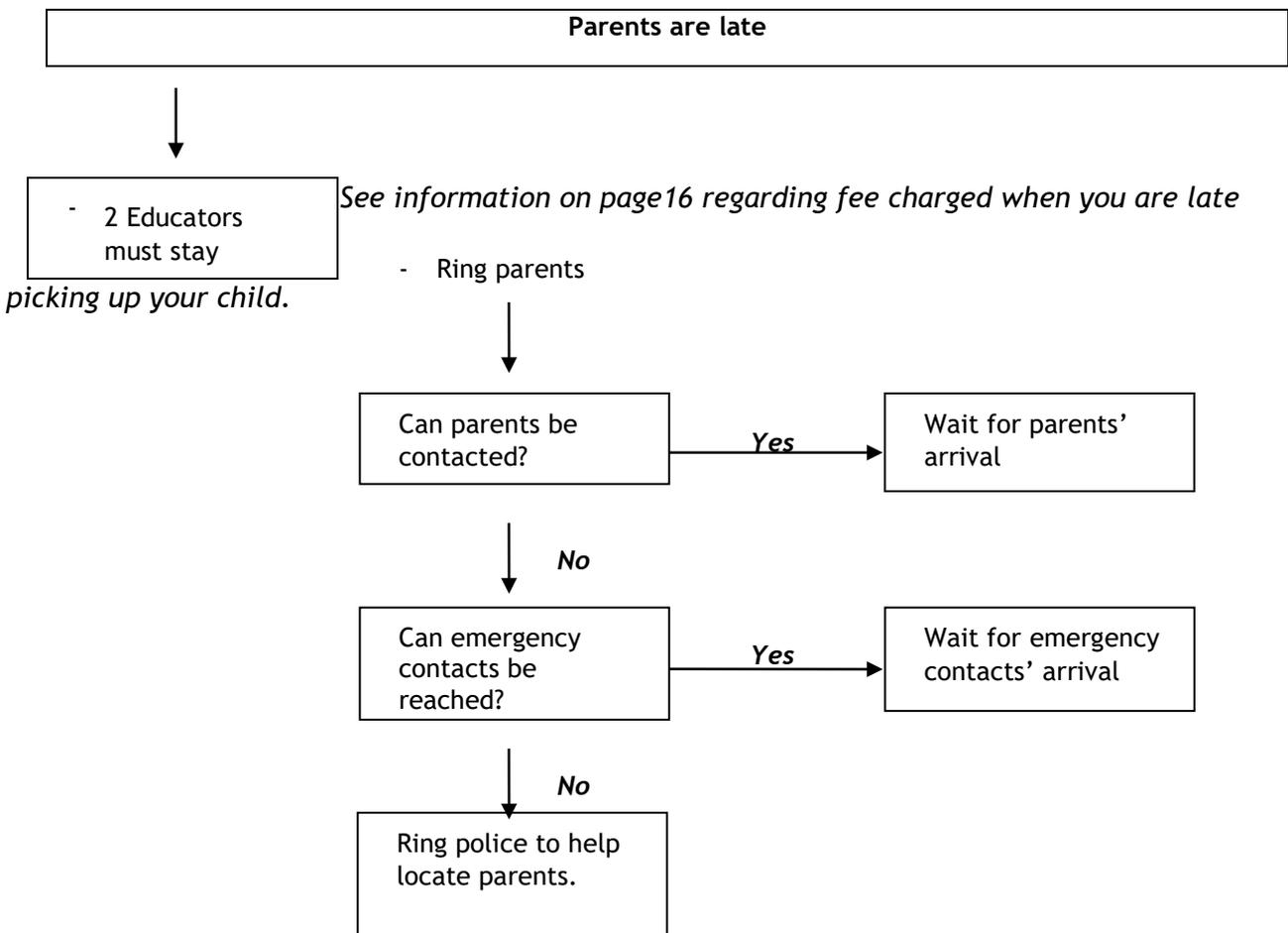
children and educators are prepared. Parents will be advised of upcoming emergency practise procedures if we are leaving the property. Records are maintained. An emergency evacuation procedure is displayed in all rooms and the foyer.

Procedure for late collection of children

There must be two Educators with the child/children at all times in the Service. At NO time may an Educator leave the Service with the child/children.

If the parent gives permission for another parent to take the child/children that is acceptable.

If an Emergency contact comes to pick up child/children, a note must be left on the door to inform the parents of action taken.



Incident, injury, trauma, illness and emergency reports.

Reports will be written up for a child experiencing any of these whilst at the service. Parents/guardians will be alerted to the report on the day of the occurrence. Educators will deal with the situation using first aid procedures and medical advice as appropriate. In the case of serious/urgent illness or accident, an Educator will, if necessary, accompany the child (by taxi or ambulance) to the casualty section of a local hospital, or to a local doctor.

Medication

Details regarding medication and administration need to be discussed between educator and parent before the parent leaves. All sections of the blue authorisation form must be clearly filled out by the parent. If the parent is not dropping off that day there must be a signed letter giving permission with the details of the medication. Make sure the dose is right for the child's age or weight and is suitable if the child is under two. Medication must be in the original container bearing the original label, and written permission and full and specific details must be given, ie, "if needed" is not sufficient, rather "if temp exceeds 38", or "if coughing persists". Educators may not exceed the dose or age range on the container.

Parents must advise the centre fully about the need for and use of preventative medicines for asthma, epilepsy, diabetes and eczema. All medications or medical treatments need to be written up, including teething gel, antifungal creams, eczema creams, etc.

Asthma medications: For children diagnosed with asthma, required medication will be given in line with the written information supplied by the parents/guardians. An 'asthma action plan' must be filled out by the parents/guardians and doctor, detailing usual medications, trigger symptoms, warning signs and steps to be taken should an attack occur. Families are to provide all equipment eg spacer, required to administer.

Anaphylaxis medications: For children diagnosed with anaphylaxis, it is required that the treatment medications such as EpiPen are always available at the service when the child is in attendance. If they are not available the child will be unable to remain at the service until they are provided. A current action plan will be displayed in the rooms with the child's photo.

Diabetes medications: For children diagnosed with Diabetes, it is required that the treatment medications such as insulin are always available at the service when the child is in attendance. If they are not available the child will be unable to remain at the service until they are provided. A current action plan will be displayed with the child's photo.

Fever reducing medications: Panadol or other such pain/fever relievers are not supplied by the service. As with all other medications, authorisation will be required as detailed in 'Medication' section above. Specific instructions are required, "if needed" is not sufficient, rather "if temp exceeds 38"

Cough/cold medication: We recommend parents obtain a letter from your child's GP regarding over the counter medication

Infectious Diseases/Exclusion: Information about exclusion of children with infectious diseases is available on the main noticeboard and in the office.

Parent Code of Conduct

It is important that parents maintain respectful communication when addressing educators, children or other parents at the centre. If parents are not happy there is a grievance policy and procedure that is to be followed. Aggressive or abusive behaviour is not acceptable and may affect your child's enrolment at the centre. Discipline of children is the responsibility of staff. Parents are to refer any matters of concern to staff immediately and are not to discipline any child other than their own.

Children's Curriculum

Educators provide an educational program for all age groups in line with both the National Quality Standards and The Early Years Frameworks that focus on the children's development, individually and in the group setting. Educators use the Early Years Learning Frameworks as supporting documents for planning.

Within each age group a learning curriculum is developed based on children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities and recognises that children learn through their play. At EY@PP educators implement the Early Year Framework's five learning areas which will assist your child to develop:

- A strong sense of their identity
- Connections with their world
- A strong sense of wellbeing
- Confidence and involvement in their learning; and
- Effective communication skills

Observations of the children are gathered and documented on a regular basis in each child's file. This information is used to develop the curriculum and to complete written reports. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss their child's development throughout the year with an Educator.

Each room has on display - curriculum sheet.

Portfolios

Each child has a portfolio. Portfolios are used as a form of communication between the educators and parents and as a record of developmental milestones. Educators will write about the children's play and development and parents are welcome to contribute their comments also. Whilst you are welcome to take the Portfolio home for other family members to read, we ask that you sign it out and return it when your child is next at the service.

Rest time in LDC areas

The Service respects infant's individual sleeping patterns and infants have their sleep periods as necessary. Educators provide alternative quiet activities for older preschoolers who do not need a sleep, although all children over two are required to have a quiet time after lunch.

Nutrition - Food in LDC areas (rooms 1-6)

Early Years @ Phoenix Park supplies all the food required for a healthy balanced diet in the Long Day Care learning environments. Children are served a variety of meals and encouraged but never forced to try all foods. Menu information is displayed outside the kitchen and on the whiteboard in the children's rooms. Children are required to wash their hands before eating.

Morning Tea will be served between 8 and 9.30am. Lunch is 11.30 / 12.00 noon, depending on the age group and afternoon tea is around 3.00 pm. A light snack is provided for children still in the centre at approximately 5.30.

Food Safety

To fulfil our Food Safety Program requirements and to minimise the potential health risks to children with serious food allergies, we ask you **not to bring food into the long day care rooms**. As we have a number of children with **life threatening allergies** it is essential that no food of any kind is brought to long day care by families. Please check that there are no food products in your child's bag.

Food in sessional kindergarten, Room 7

To ensure children maintain a high energy level to last them the whole day, it is important during the 5 hour Blue and Purple sessions that parents provide a balanced lunch box with healthy food and fresh fruit. In Red Group families are asked to bring a snack box of healthy foods, fruit or vegetable and water bottle. Sweet foods are sometimes food and should not be included in their lunch box. Keep this type of food for home special occasions.

We ask that families also remain aware of the serious allergies at the centre. Please do not pack nuts, peanut butter, etc in your child's snack or lunch. We teach the children not to share their food from their lunchbox with their friends. Your support in this would be greatly appreciated.

Celebration Display

The Celebration display is located in the foyer. This is used to set up cultural or learning topics we celebrate as a centre throughout the year. It is at the children's level so they can engage with the experience. We incorporate celebrations that are relevant to our families within the centre and families are welcome to contribute to displays.

Chapter 3 - Fees and Payment Policy

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 1st 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 (eg; 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/ren 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)