

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.

The Federal government administers fees through Child Care Subsidies.

You can submit a new Child Care Subsidy using your Centrelink online account through myGov or ring 136160 or visit a Centrelink Office.

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.

It is a requirement under the Family Assistance Law for all children who attend a child care centre, including a kinder program, must have an enrolment notice regardless of their Child Care Subsidy eligibility status. This is implemented through Centrelink.

If you are entitled to a subsidy, through our software that is linked with the government department, it will be added to your account automatically. The centre does not have control of when and how much credit is added to your account. Any credits will show on your invoice when they occur.

Please ensure you place the parent that applies for Child Care Subsidy as the 1st parent on the enrolment form. Once received let the centre know the CRN's (Reference numbers) that are allocated to the 1st Parent and Child

On commencement the full amount must be paid until any adjustments are made on the parent's account by Centrelink.

Payments

Parents are responsible for ensuring payment are made by the due date. 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).

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 Subsidy (CCS)

CCS is generally paid directly to the centre to be passed on to families as a fee deduction. Parent's accounts will be credited on our system via the internet. Full fees will be required to be paid until credits commence on your account.

There are three main aspects of CCS:-

1. An individual's eligibility for CCS
2. Types of programs children are enrolled in
3. Amount of CCS payments (entitlement)

The amount of CCS to which a family is entitled is determined by the:-

1. Family Income
2. Results of an activity test
3. Types of Service

The centre is not directly involved in the calculations of families' entitlements. This process is between the family and Centrelink. Parents are encouraged to provide true and complete information to Centrelink. It is also parent's responsibility to ensure they follow the steps required in the Enrolment Process.

Preschool Exemption and CCS

Parents who do not meet the Activity Test will be entitled to 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight to support children attending 4 year old kinder program.

Immunisation and CCS

In Order to claim CCS children must be

1. immunised in accordance with the National Immunisation Program Schedule or
2. be on the recognised catch up schedule according to the current Australian Immunisation Handbook or
3. have a valid immunisation exemption recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register.

Allowable Absences

Each child can be absent from the Centre for up to forty-two days per financial year and still receive CCCS. Once the forty-two days have been reached families will be charged a full daily fee.

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 including family holidays. 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 refer to Fee Information document relevant to the program your child is enrolled in.

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 2018
- Child Care Provider Handbook
- mychild.gov.au
- my.gov.au
- beta.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation

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