



Wangaratta Children's Services Centre

Payment of Service Fees and Provision of a Statement of Fees charged by the Service Policy 2023

Document Type	Council Policy
Department	Children's Services
Date of Council Endorsement	27 September 2023
Date for Review	September 2027
Responsible Officer	Family & Early Childhood Services Coordinator
Authorising Officer	Director Community and Infrastructure
Version Reference Number	1.0
SIM Reference Number	TBC

National Quality Standard

7.1	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service
2.2.3	Management, educators, and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

National Regulations

Regulation 111	Administrative space
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care service
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

Statement and Purpose

This Policy is intended to assist parents in gaining a clear understanding of the Service fee structure, payment requirements and Child Care Subsidy benefits prior to enrolment. This policy explains 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.

Policy and Procedure

Payment of Fees

- Our preferred payment is via Electronic Automatic deduction. This needs to be set up prior to enrolment;
- If a family's payment fails, they will be contacted as soon as practicable and requested to authorise a payment via EFTPOS/ credit card to recover the failed payment;
- If a failed payment occurs, an additional charge will be applied via electronic gateway;
- Payment for Family Day Care (FDC) will be paid directly to the FDC Educator. Method of payment is to be agreed upon by the family and FDC Educator; AND
- All Families can access their statements via their Xplor App

Wangaratta Children Service's Kindergarten

The sessional kindergarten program being delivered at Wangaratta Children's Services Centre primarily provides only a kindergarten program. The Victorian Department of Education and Training provides funding for the four-year-old kindergarten and Early Start programs with A PER TERM parent/carer fee ISSUED - This fee is set within Council's budget for the financial year (health care card holders, Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders are exempt from this parent/carer fee.)

Change of Fees

Increases in fees and charges will only occur upon the completion of Council's budget review process and according to the services required income. Families will be given four weeks' notice of any increase in fees and charges.

Complying Written Agreement (CWA) will be provided to the families indicating the cost of their daily fees as per their bookings. The service offers permanent and casual fees.

- Daily
- Weekly
- Before/after Kinder care
- Kindergarten Fees
- Late charges

All Families can access their statements via their Xplor App.

Holiday Holding Fee

A Holding fee of 50% of the weekly booking will be charged for absences where notice in writing is received by the coordinator 2 weeks prior to the leave being taken. This 50% charge will be offered in week blocks. 1st week of absence families will pay, 2nd week absence will be no charge.

Where notice is not given, the full fee will be charged for these absences. To be eligible for the holding fee, absences must be equivalent to the weekly booking in length. Where the absence is less than a weekly booking the families regular fee will be charged.

Wangaratta Centre Based Care will not charge fees for the week(s) the Service is closed over the Christmas/New Year period.

Public Holidays

Public Holidays will be charged at the normal fee unless there are two or more consecutive public holidays, in which case there will be no charge for all consecutive days. Families are not able to swap days without an additional casual booking fee occurring.

Overdue Fees

Families will be encouraged to discuss any payment difficulties with the Services Nominated Supervisor or Administration Team Leader (or Educator in Family Day Care) so that suitable arrangements for payments can be made.

Where payments are overdue and the family has not made payment arrangements, the family will be informed their account is overdue.

A date for full payment will be agreed on or a payment plan will be put into place. The payment plan will be negotiated between the service and the account holder. If the agreement is not upheld within the agreed timeline, care may be suspended or cancelled.

Outstanding debts will be referred to Council's finance department to commence debt collection proceedings. If proceedings are commenced, the family will also have to pay the legal and associated costs of the collection proceedings.

Families with outstanding debts will not be provided care at Wangaratta Family Day Care, Wangaratta Centre Based Care until outstanding debts are paid in full.

Late Fees

- Our Service is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. This is a breach of the Education and Care Regulations.
- 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.
- A fee of \$1 per 1 minute will be incurred by the family. CCS is not applicable to this.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their myGov account linked to Centrelink and provide documentation to support the CCS payment;
- 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;
- Full fees will be charged and required to be paid in advance if a family requires children to start before CCS has been processed;
- Families are responsible for paying the full fee for any care that does not have CCS applied; and
- Families are required to sign their child in/out accurately using the Xplor app to ensure their child's attendance is correct.

Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session;
- Families must still pay the fee to the Service if their child is unable to attend

- Under the Child Care Subsidy families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances.
- 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.

Additional absent days may be approved over the forty-two-day limit if the family provides evidence of the following:

- Illness with a medical certificate;
- Exclusion due to non-immunisation;
- Rostered day off;
- Rotating shifts; and
- Shared care by court order

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring all families are aware of this Policy;
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information;
- 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 required;
- 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 required payment of fees; and
- Notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement

Payment of Fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by FDC

The Service will determine a fee parameter for all care and services provided within the Service by Council. Educators can set a fee within the fee parameter considering their qualifications, experience, and the care environment (Refer to Service Fee Agreement).

Each educator will complete an Educator Fee Agreement upon registration and whenever there is an increase in fees. The Educator Fee Agreement will include the educator's fee for standard, non-standard, casual care, public holidays, and other services provided such as transport and meals.

An individual Family Fee Schedule for each educator will be completed by the Co-ordination Unit and forwarded to the educator for use with families.

Public Holidays

- Educators will document their availability to provide care for all gazetted public holidays on the Educator Fee Agreement and Family Fee Schedule. Educators will need to complete a Leave Form giving a minimum of two weeks' notice in the event the educator is not going to be able to provide care on a specific public holiday that has been stated as being available on the Family Fee Schedule.
- Families will not be charged for any public holiday where the educator is unavailable to provide care. Where the educator is available, and it is the families' normal booked day, the family will be charged their usual fee if they are absent. Refer to the Family Fee Schedule for the hourly fee if attending care on a public holiday.
- The educator has a responsibility to collect the gap fee from families on the Services behalf. The educator will negotiate with the family the most suitable day of the week for fees to be paid. The educator will contact families if a payment has not been made by the day agreed upon
- FDC families will be Emailed a statement on a weekly basis.
- Families will be able to request details of their account at any time and will be provided with information in writing.

- The educator will follow the procedure for outstanding fees as outlined in this policy. The Co-ordination Unit will only follow up outstanding fees if the educator has implemented this policy and procedure.
- The Co-ordination Unit will provide information and training on how to manage the collection of fees as part of their induction and then as needed thereafter. Educators will issue families with a receipt for all payments received. Receipts will be sent via email from the Harmony software.

Definitions

Term	Meaning	Source
Child Care Subsidy	The main Australian Government payment to assist families with the costs of education and care for their children. It is, with some exceptions, paid directly to providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families make a co-contribution to their fees and pay the provider the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.	https://www.dese.gov.au/resources-child-care-providers/child-care-provider-handbook/how-child-care-subsidy-paid
Notice period (fees)	The length of time stipulated by a service to notify families before making any changes that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected. The notice period must be at least 14 days.	National Regulation

Human Rights

This policy has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.'

Gender Impact Assessment

This policy has considered and applied Council's Gender Impact Assessment

References

Legislation and Guidance

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
Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment Early Childhood and
Care
Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment Information for child care
providers when
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011).
Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services
National Regulations.
Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).
Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

Policies

Enrolment and Orientation 2023
Delivery and Collection of children from, Education and Care Service Premises Policy 2023
Governance and Management Policy 2023

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every four years or whenever legislation or operational
changes require a review.

Version History		
Version Number	Date of change	Reasons for change
1.0	September 2023	Re-formatting and re-structure of Council’s Children’s Services policy framework