

WCS Children's Services ADMINISTRATION – Fee Policy

Purpose

WCS strives to provide affordable high quality education and care services for the local community, with clear direction on the payment and collection of childcare fees.

Scope

This policy applies to the staff and all families using WCS Children's Services and those who wish to enrol into a service.

Policy statement

This policy details the service's procedures in relation to fees, methods of payment and associated provisions.

WCS Children's Services are committed to:

- Establishing fees that are affordable while maintaining the financial viability of the service.
- Dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees and outstanding debts in a fair and manageable way.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians.
- Ensuring families have access to any subsidies available to reduce fees.
- Providing information about funding including government support and fees to be paid.

Strategies and practices

- The service follows their current fee schedule.
- The Service's Fee Policy and Fee Schedule is provided to parents/guardians at enrolment and/or upon request.
- The necessary paperwork relating to fees is discussed with parents/guardians if needed, and completed.
- WCS will aim to minimise fee increases on families. However, fees will be adjusted regularly to balance each service's budget and ensure sustainability. At least four weeks' notice will be provided to families when changes to the fee schedule are to occur.
- Fees are to be paid by direct debit on date of the invoice as per the service's fee arrangements. Families unable to pay by direct debit are to contact the Enrolments Team.

- Normal fees are charged for public holidays, sick days, family holidays and any other absence. Fees are not charged for days when the service is closed outside of public holidays.
- Childcare subsidy is paid for up to 42 absences per financial year per child. Once 42 absences have been reached, documented proof is required for additional absences for continued Childcare Subsidy (CCS) entitlement as assessed by Department of Human Services.
- The service does not exchange days of care and does not arrange make up days.
- Receipts are issued for all fee payments. The system generated receipt will show the child's name, the period of time for which the receipt is issued, the amount paid, and all other details required by regulations. If an overpayment is made, no change will be given but the excess will be credited to the family's account.
- Fee reminders are sent to any family one or more weeks late in the payment of fees. If the fees are not paid within the following week or an arrangement not entered into, the child's place at the service is at risk.
- Parents/guardians are advised to contact Centrelink directly to determine their eligibility for CCS before the child commences at the service.
- The service requires 14 days' written notice of an intention to change the hours of care or the number of days required or to withdraw a child from the Service. The notice begins from the close of business on the day the service receives the written advice. Fees are charged during this time.
- Where children are absent for their first booked session, CCS cannot be applied and full fees are charged for all absences.
- When notice to cease care has been given, CCS will only be applied to this period if the child attends care during this period including the last day of care, as per Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). Full fees are charged for any absences if the child does not attend on the last day of their booking.
- CCS enrolments will automatically cease after 14 weeks of nonattendance. This process is automated by Services Australia and cessation of care will be applied. CCSS cessation of care is applied to all fees where there is no attendance on the last day/s of a CCS enrolment. This also applies to absences at the beginning of a CCS enrolment.
- A late fee as per the Service's Fee Schedule will be charged for any child collected later than the Service's closing time.

Responsibilities of parents/guardians

- To ensure payment of fees is kept up-to-date.
- To keep the Service informed of any changes in attendance (e.g. family holidays, other absences)
- To ensure their information is kept current and correct with their My Gov accounts and Centrelink.
- To respond promptly to communications from Centrelink to maintain Child Care Subsidy (CCS) eligibility.

- To sign their children in and out of care on a daily basis. This record of attendance and/or absence days is a legal document used by Centrelink to calculate CCS payments.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

Reg	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
	172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
QA	4.2.2	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
	6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
	6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
	7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
	7.2.1	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Child Care Provider Handbook Version 2, June 2019 <https://www.dese.gov.au/resources-child-care-providers/child-care-provider-handbook>
- Dr. B. Abbey and P. Maclean, NQS - the complete system of policies, procedures and forms, <http://www.childcarebydesign.com.au/> September 2016

Further reading

- Information for families <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/information-families>

Useful websites

- Department of Education, Skills and Training – <https://www.dese.gov.au/>

Policy review

This policy is a living document and will be monitored and reviewed as issues are identified. Proposed changes will be circulated and discussed by all programs and any external stakeholders for approval.

Current version

Service line Service area	Children's Services	Version	2.0
Process owner	Director, Children, Youth and Family	Date of issue	July 2021
Approved by	Kate West	Scheduled review date	July 2023

Modification history (including current version)

Version	Date	Author	Approved by	Description of changes
1.0	Nov 2014		Susan Henderson	Review of policy
1.1	Sept 2016		Susan Henderson	Review of policy
1.2	Dec 2016		Susan Henderson	Review and formatting of policy
1.3	Jan 2018		Susan Henderson	Revised National Quality Standard 2018
1.4	July 2021	Krysta Cordina	Kate West	Review and additional content in line with changes to Child Care Subsidy.