

PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) provides quality education and care for primary school-age children outside school hours and during school holidays. Our OSHC Service supports children to engage in play and leisure activities, develop new skills and build relationships with other children and educators whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our OSHC Service is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

As an approved childcare service, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to reduce fees to eligible families. Our fee structure is based on our ability to provide the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations, Family Assistance Law, the Australian Taxation Office and guidelines contained in the Child Care Provider Handbook.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION

Child Care Subsidy Secretary’s Rules 2017 A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999	Family Law Act 1975 Child Care Subsidy Minister’s Rules 2017
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RELATED POLICIES

CCS Accounts Policy Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Governance Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy	CCS Accounts Policy Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Governance Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy
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Delivery of Children to, and Collection from and Education and Care Service Premises
Enrolment Policy

Fraud Prevention Policy
Governance Policy
Orientation of Families Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Record Keeping and Retention Policy
Termination of Enrolment Policy

PURPOSE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the OSHC 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our OSHC Service aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for education and care to be provided for their child. We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all Child Care Subsidy legislative requirements. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure childcare funding is administered appropriately. Our OSHC Service ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family.

GENERAL FEES

- Fees are charged for each session for before and after school care and per day for vacation care programs
- CCS is paid directly to the Service and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family’s statement).
- Families are required to make a co-contribution to their child care fees. This is the difference between the fee charged and the child care subsidy amount- the ‘gap fee’
- ‘Gap Fees’ must be paid via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)
- Fees must be kept in advance of a child’s attendance
- A dated receipt will be provided for each payment via email on a weekly basis
- Fees are to be paid weekly or fortnightly through a direct debit system. If families wish to pay fees on a weekly or monthly basis, it is a requirement that the family pay in advance and are not in

arrears. Fees are payable in advance for every session of Vacation Care that a child is enrolled at the OSHC Service and for the last week of each term.

- Fees for BSC and ASC will be charged on a weekly basis after the care is provided. Invoices will be distributed to parents following the previous week's care. The exception to this invoicing and fee payment is for the last week of each term. Vacation Care fees are charged in advance and are due by the last day of each term.
- The Service may be closed due to periods of local emergency such as bushfire or flood or pandemic.
- Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day).
- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session.
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the OSHC Service's license. If these bookings are made after 6.00pm on the night before care is required or the booking is made on the same day that care is required, a \$5.00 emergency booking fee will be charged per child per session that is booked in late.

VACATION CARE BOOKING AND CANCELLATION POLICY

- No telephone bookings will be accepted.
- Completed booking forms are to be left at the CHPS Office or the OSHC service.
- Each application will be processed in order of receipt. You will be contacted by the coordinator and advised of the success of your application and you will be invoiced accordingly.
- Bookings will follow the priority of access regulation.
- Once the Vacation Care enrolment form has been submitted, a \$5.00 alteration fee per child applies for any changes to your bookings up until the last day of the school term.
- From 6.00pm on the Friday (or last day of term) before the Vacation care program commences, no refund will be given.
- A \$5.00 per child emergency booking fee will be charged to all bookings that are made after the program commences.

WAIVING GAP FEES

- During periods of local disaster such as Covid-19 Lockdown, bushfires, extreme weather etc and the service remains open to care for children of authorised essential workers, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and children whose parents can't work from home, and only when the government has given permission for services to waive the gap fees in these instances, each child's bookings will remain in place. Under these circumstances if a child does not attend the service the

child will be marked absent, not cancelled from care, and the families will not be liable to pay the “gap fee.” In all other instances, the usual cancellation policy will remain in place.

- Gap fee waiving helps parents keep their children enrolled without having to pay for a service they are not using. When our service chooses to waive gap fees, families will continue to receive the child care subsidy (CCS).

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
- Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy.
- Parents must:
 - o care for their child at least 2 nights per fortnight or have 14% share of care
 - o be liable for child care fees at an approved early childhood education care service
 - o meet residency requirements

The child must:

- be 13 or under and not attending secondary school and
- meet immunisation requirements
- Childcare must be provided by an approved provider
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
 - family income estimate
 - activity level
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
 - number of children in care
 - type of early learning and childcare Service
- Child Care Subsidy will be provided directly to the Service and this amount deducted from the parent/family account.
- 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 is the responsibility of the family. The family will be referred to contact Centrelink directly for any enquiries regarding CCS payments.
- Child care discounts for early childhood workforce will only be offered as outlined in the CCS Handbook.

PAYMENT OF FEES

- Fees are set up using the OSHC Service's direct debit system. The family is required to provide banking details to facilitate set up of the direct debit account.
- Families will be issued with a *Customer Account Statement/Statement of Entitlement* on a weekly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements
- The *Customer Account Statement/Statement of Entitlement* will include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts
- The *Customer Account Statement/Statement of Entitlement* is generated using our CCS Software which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation

ABSENCES FROM THE OSHC SERVICE

- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session
- Families must still pay the 'gap' fee to the Service if their child is unable to attend, unless notification has been given by 6:00pm the night before care is required. If the day to be cancelled is a Monday, notification must be given by 6:00pm on the Friday before. If notification is not given within the above-mentioned time-frame then the families will be charged the gap fee. Please note, that according to the guidelines and National Law, if a child's first or last booked day is an absence then Centrelink will not pay the CCS portion of the fee and families will be responsible for paying the full fee of the cancelled session.
- The exception of this rule is in periods of local disaster or emergency such as Covid-19 where services are then permitted to waive gap fees for absences under Government advice.
- 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. (See Child Care Subsidy Handbook).
- Additional absences can be claimed for the specified reasons as defined by the Family Assistance Law
- Records and evidence will be kept by the Service for each additional absence, where required
- Allowable absences can be taken for any reason, including when children are sick.
- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via MyGov.
- In a period of emergency (declared by the Australian Government), such as bushfire or flood, extra allowable absences for the duration of the emergency will be automatically applied in the CCS system

ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) provides extra help with the cost of early education and care
- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged. In the first instance, speak with the program Coordinator.
- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
 - (child wellbeing)—to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect. The approved provider is involved in determining children who may require additional support who are at risk of harm
 - (grandparent)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
 - (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
 - (transition to work)—to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment

DEBT RECOVERY PROCEDURE

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued after two week and then again after three weeks if the fees are still outstanding.
- At any time of the debt recovery process the family will be encouraged to enter a debt agreement with the service to repay outstanding fees.
- A child's position will be terminated if payment has not been made after four weeks, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the OSHC Service will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.

LATE FEES

- Our OSHC Service is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. This is a breach in the Education and Care Regulations.
- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the OSHC Service. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time. A fee of \$15.00 per 10 minutes block or part thereof per child will be incurred by the family. After the first 10 minutes, the cycle will continue and each child will be charged \$1.00 per minute.

- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late with fee payment.

CHANGE OF FEES

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of four weeks written notice is given to all families. (Regulation 172 requires a minimum of 14 days' notice)
- CCS hourly rate caps may be increased by the CPI at the commencement of each financial year.
- Any CCS hourly rate increases are governed by CCS and are automatically adjusted through our CCS Software.

TERMINATION OF ENROLMENT

- Parents/guardians are to provide one week's notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the OSHC service.
- If termination from the OSHC Service is required without notification, families can lose their Child Care Subsidy, resulting in the payment of requirement for full fees to be charged.
- In some circumstances CCS may not be paid for sessions if the child has not physically started care.
- Additionally, CCS may not be paid for absences submitted after a child's last physical day of care, unless conditions have been met as specified by Family Assistance Law

RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT

The approved provider and nominated supervisor are responsible for:

- ensuring that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Regulations are met
- ensuring the service and all persons with management and control (PMC) comply with the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL)
- ensuring persons with management and control (PMC) are consider 'fit and proper' persons
- taking reasonable steps to ensure all educators, staff and volunteers follow the Payment of Fees Policy and procedure
- ensuring all families are aware of our *Payment of Fees 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
- providing at least 4 weeks written notice to families of any fee increases
- discussing fee payment with families if required

RESPONSIBILITY OF FAMILIES

- Provide the OSHC 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 payment of fees as per policy
- Notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement
- Confirm their child's enrolment through the parents MyGov account.

THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS

Parents are generally liable to pay the co-contribution for childcare fees. Only state and territory governments (and their agencies) can contribute to the cost, in part or full, of child care fees for families.

Where an agreement has been made between an employer or charity to assist in the contribution of fees the fees must be reduced accordingly before CCS has been applied.

Our Service will record all documentation regarding any third party payments.

COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Families who wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy should speak with the OSHC Coordinator in the first instance. The OSHC Coordinator will follow the steps as outlined in this policy, including advising the Approved Provider of all grievances.

Families can raise concerns regarding management of the Child Care Subsidy to the dedicated Child Care

Tip-Off Line either via phone or email:

Phone: 1800 664 231

Email: tipoffline@dese.gov.au

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

[Child Care Subsidy](#)

[Centrelink Customer Reference Number](#)

[Absences from childcare- Australian Government](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our Payment of Fees Policy will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP- RELATED RESOURCES

<p>Fee Increase Letter – General</p> <p>Overdue Fee Payment Letter</p>	<p>Overdue Fee Payment Procedure</p> <p>Payment Plan Template</p> <p>Staff Discount Application</p>
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SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
 Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework.](#)
 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 Child Care Provider Handbook
<https://www.dese.gov.au/resources-child-care-providers/child-care-provider-handbook>

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Early Childhood and Care*
<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-0>

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs*

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations.](#) (2023).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2023).

Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	ANGELA STEVENS	BUSINESS MANAGER	MAY 2024
POLICY REVIEWED	MAY 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MAY 2025
VERSION NUMBER	V15.05.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy maintenance • updated CCS eligibility (effective July 2023) • added content to responsibility of approved provider/management • sources checked for currency and hyperlinks updated 		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
MAY 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance • minor formatting edits within text • Change in payment of Gap Fees by EFT (effective 1 July 2023) • information added regarding staff discounts • continuous improvement/reflection section added • Childcare Centre Desktop Related resources section added 	MAY 2024
SEPTEMBER 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of Department name from Department of Education, Skills, and Employment to Department of Education • policy maintenance • minor formatting edits within text • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' 	MAY 2023
MAY 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance – name change of related policy Arrival and Departure Policy • no major changes to policy • minor formatting edits within text • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 	MAY 2023
AUGUST 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of Related Legislation • Policy revised to align with recommendations with ACECQA's policy guide (August 2021) • Updated Related Policies • Check of links used within policy 	MAY 2022
MAY 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy reviewed following updates in October 2020 as part of yearly review cycle • Policy content and sources current • Resource-<i>Overdue Fees Procedure</i> information added 	MAY 2022