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## **Policy Statement**

Our Organisation is committed to providing all families the opportunity to enrol their children with a clear, transparent, fair and inclusive fee structure. Fee levels will be set by Parent Management Committee each year in accordance with the annual budget, and to ensure that we adhere to Laws and Regulations set out by State and Federal Governments.

## **Procedures**

### **Setting fees**

- ✓ Fees are to be set on an annual basis ensuring that the required income will be received to run the Organisation efficiently.
- ✓ All fees and charges will be in accordance with the current fee structure.
- ✓ Current fee structure and session times can be found on the Organisations website.
- ✓ Parents will be given a minimum of fourteen days notice of any changes in the fees.

## **On enrolment**

- ✓ The current Enrolment Fee must be paid prior to the child attending and is non-refundable once Enrolment has been processed.
- ✓ The current Bond for each child must be paid before the child's first day in care, the Bond will be credited to your account once notice is given.

## **Permanent Bookings**

**Note:** Permanent bookings are defined as any booking where children attend the program regularly (weekly) on the same days. These bookings are automatically carried over each week. Changes to these bookings must be made in writing, with a minimum of 2 weeks notice.

- ✓ Fees will be charged at the current permanent rate, for families who book a place for their children on a permanent basis.
- ✓ Permanent bookings secure a place for the child and must be paid for, even if the child is absent.

## **Casual Bookings**

**Note:** Casual bookings are defined as any booking that is not a permanent placement for a child or any booking of an irregular nature. Casual bookings are to be made prior to 2:00pm on the day care is needed and are subject to approval of Service Coordinator to ensure appropriate ratios are maintained.

- ✓ Fees will be charged at the current casual rate.
- ✓ Casual fee will be charged if the child is absent on an expected casually booked day.

## **Child Care Subsidy**

**Note:** Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is the regular payment that assists most families with the costs of childcare. Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to ACI, to be passed on to families as a fee reduction.

- ✓ It is the parent's responsibility to obtain a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for themselves and their children.
- ✓ It is the parent's responsibility to supply the service with the following 4 important pieces of information
  1. Parent Customer Reference Number (CRN) from Centrelink
  2. Parent Date of Birth
  3. Childs Customer Reference Number (CRN) from Centrelink
  4. Child's Date of Birth
- ✓ Some absences are allowable without affecting payment of Child Care Subsidy. If a child does not attend the session of care, or part of the session of care, the Service is still taken to have provided the session and Child Care Subsidy can still be paid, as long as the absence is allowable. An absence is allowable if the care was booked, and an individual was liable to pay for that care. A child can have 42 allowable absences in a financial year, but more may be allowable in particular circumstances (such as illness, where supporting documentation must be provided by the family).
- ✓ CCS entitlements will not apply after the child's last present day of care, as per Legislation. Families will pay full fees if their child's last day/s are absent days, once notice of termination is given, in writing, to the Coordinator.
- ✓ If a child is enrolled and is absent before their first physical day in care, any absent days will be charged at full fees. CCS does not apply until a child's first physical day at the Service.
- ✓ Centrelink will not pay CCS entitlements before your child has physically started in care or after your child's last physical day in care, however as we are holding a place open for your child, we require fees to be paid in full.
- ✓ Parents and guardians should contact Centrelink if further information is needed for CCS.

## **Statements of Entitlement/Billing Cycle**

- ✓ ACI must provide a Statement of entitlement to parents of children eligible for Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy enrolled in their Service, once every fortnight. This Statement must include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts.
- ✓ Statements of entitlement can only be issued for care already provided, as they must include details of the child's physical attendance at the Service and actual fee reduction amounts. Statements of Entitlement cannot be issued in advance, based on estimates.
- ✓ Statements will be issued fortnightly in arrears.
- ✓ Statements will be emailed to the parent/carer who is registered to receive the Child Care Subsidy, this parent/carer is the account holder.
- ✓ Account holder can request that a copy of the Statement be sent to another parent/carer in addition to themselves.
- ✓ Families who use our Service on a casual basis will be sent a statement in line with our current fortnightly billing cycle.
- ✓ A Statement of account can be emailed or printed upon request.
- ✓ All records will be kept confidential and stored or destroyed appropriately.
- ✓ All financial records will be kept for 7 years, or as per Government Legislation.
- ✓ It is the account holder's responsibility to inform the Service if they are not receiving statements and/or if contact and billing information changes.

## **Fee payment**

- ✓ Account holders will be issued statements by email every second Monday for attendances to the previous Friday. Payment of fees are due by the Friday that directly follows. It is the account holders responsibility to ensure fees are paid on time.
- ✓ Fees are paid to hold a place for children even when the child is absent due to illness or holidays.

## **Methods of payment**

- ✓ Fees can be paid by:
  - direct deposit into the nominated ACI bank account: please see Service Coordinator for account details.
- ✓ No cash or cheque payment will be accepted.

## **Refund of account**

- ✓ The final Statement will be issued to the account holder as per normal billing cycle due date.
- ✓ If no payment is received, then the debt recovery process is to start immediately, and account holder forfeits their bond.
- ✓ Bond will be refunded once the account has been finalised as per CCS requirements which will be at least 14 days after the child's last day in care but can take up to 6 weeks for the finalisation of CCS. Account holder is required to email a request for bond refund, and they will then be issued with a Bond/Credit Refund Form with all required details included.
- ✓ Bond will be taken as a donation 12 months after the child's last day in care if account holder has not requested a refund.
- ✓ Account credit will be taken as a donation 12 months after the child's last day in care if account holder has not requested a refund.

## **Overdue Accounts: Active Families**

- ✓ Fortnightly overdue account fee will apply each fortnight until account is paid in full.
- ✓ Families are encouraged to discuss any financial difficulties with Coordinator or Management who will work with the families to arrange a suitable payment plan.
- ✓ If no previous arrangements have been made regarding overdue fees, Coordinator will flag the account to inform Management of the overdue account.
- ✓ A reminder email will be sent out to all account holders flagged as an overdue account, reminding them to make payment within 7 days.
- ✓ If payment is made, no further action will be required.
- ✓ If no payment is received after 7 days, a second reminder will be emailed to account holder requesting outstanding fees by the due date (further 7 days). Or to arrange a payment plan.
- ✓ If no payment or contact is received after the second reminder due date a final notice for payment will be emailed to account holder to advise the immediate suspension of care\* and Letter of Demand will be emailed.

\*To allow families time to seek alternative care arrangements, for Immediate suspension of care, the Coordinator or Manager will decide how soon the suspension of care will begin.

- ✓ If account holder has not actioned Letter of Demand legal proceedings to recover debt will commence.
- ✓ The account will be lodged with our current external debt collection agency where the account holder will be charged the current debt collection fee.
- ✓ If the Service is currently operating a waiting list, the family will not be placed on the waiting list until their account has been paid in full, the family will need to wait until a place comes available for their child/ren to be placed back in care.

### **Overdue Accounts: Inactive Families (ceased care)**

- ✓ A reminder email will be sent out to the account holder flagged as an overdue account or family who has ceased care, reminding them to make payment within 7 days.
- ✓ If payment is made, no further action will be required.
- ✓ If no payment or contact is received after the reminder due date, a final Letter of Demand for Payment will be emailed to account holder.
- ✓ If account holder has not actioned Letter of Demand, legal proceedings to recover debt will commence.
- ✓ The account will be lodged with our current external debt collection agency where the account holder will be charged the current debt collection fee.

### **Debt Recovery Procedure:**

- ✓ ACI reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the Organisation. This can and will include the engagement of debt collectors to recover monies owed.
- ✓ Families will have to pay any debt recovery fees incurred by any external debt recovery agencies.

### **Fees and charges explained as per fee structure:**

#### **Bond**

- ✓ Bond is paid on Enrolment prior to a child's first day of care and held as security, then refunded once 2 weeks notice is given to leave the Service and account has been settled, including finalisation of CCS.

#### **Debt Collection Fee**

- ✓ After reasonable attempts to have an overdue account paid, the account will be lodged with an external debt collection agency and the debt collection fee will be applied to the account before lodgement with the collection agency.

#### **Enrolment fee**

- ✓ Enrolment fee is paid on enrolment prior to a child's first day of care.
- ✓ Enrolment fee must be paid each time the child returns to care. (i.e. if 2 weeks' notice has been given prior, then they would like to return).
- ✓ Enrolment fee will not be charged for continued enrolment from one year to the next.

#### **Hats**

- ✓ If your child arrives without a hat and children are required to wear one while playing outside (as per ACI Sun Protection Policy) and we must supply them one, it will be charged to their account at the current cost.

#### **Late fee**

- ✓ Any parent who collects their children after the service closing time will be charged the current late fee for every minute after closing.

#### **Non-notification fees**

- ✓ Any family that fails to inform the Service of their child's absence 1 hour before School finishing time on the booked day for after school care, where Staff are required to search for your child, will incur a non-notification fee per day.

#### **Non sign out fee**

- ✓ This fee will be charged for failing to sign your child/ren out of care, where Staff must call to confirm when your child was collected and by whom.

#### **Overdue account fee**

- ✓ Overdue account fee will be applied to accounts that have monies owing after the fortnightly due date.

#### **Raincoats**

- ✓ If your child is in care during wet weather and does not have wet weather gear, they will be given a disposable raincoat, the fee will be added to your account.

#### **Resource Fee**

- ✓ This fee is charged per child per month to assist in the purchasing and upkeep of Service resources.
- ✓ Resource fee will only be charged for children who are actively attending.

## Vacation Care only

### Vacation Care Early Bird Fee

- ✓ Discounted rate when families book before early bird cut-off date.

### Vacation Care Standard Fee

- ✓ Applies when families book after early bird cut-off date and before closing date.

### Vacation Care Booking Fee

- ✓ On enrolment of Vacation Care a booking fee per family is applied to accounts for that vacation care period.

### Vacation Care extras

- ✓ Water Bottle – if your child does not have a refillable water bottle for excursions, we will supply one.
- ✓ Lunch – if your child does not have lunch and we need to supply it.

## Considerations

### Education and Care Services National Law

175	Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents
301	National Regulations

### Education and Care Services National Regulations

111	Administration space
150	Responsible Person
157	Access for parents
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

### Education and Care Services National Quality Standards

Quality Area	Standard	Element
QA 6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	6.1 Supportive relationships with families	6.1.1 Engagement with the service
QA 7 Governance and Leadership	7.1 Governance	7.1.2 Management systems

### Activity Centres Inc. Policies and Procedures

Enrolment	Management Committee
Excursion	Responsible Person
Financial Management	Vacation Care

## My Time, Our Place

<u>Learning Outcome 1</u> Children have a strong sense of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children feel safe, secure and supported</li> </ul>
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## Early Years Learning Framework

<u>Learning Outcome 1</u> Children have a strong sense of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children feel safe, secure and supported</li> </ul>
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## The Child Safe Standards

Standard 1	Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Standard 2	Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
Standard 3	Families and communities are informed and involved
Standard 5	People working with children are suitable and supported
Standard 7	Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

# Fee Policy

Standard 9	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
Standard 10	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

## Legislation

Childcare Provider Handbook	Work, Health and Safety Act 2011
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Endorsed by the Management Committee on the 30 October 2024  
 Fee Policy is to be reviewed by the 30 October 2025