

Fee Policy

NQF

QA7	7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
-----	-------	---

Aim

For parents to pay their child care fees on time, to ensure Noarlunga Community Children's Centres in return is able to continue to provide high quality child care to all families.

Related Policies

Orientation for Children Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Who is affected by this policy?

Parents
Management

Implementation

Enrolment

- An enrolment fee of \$10 per child is required when lodging an enrolment form. This is non refundable if your child does not take place at our service.
- Upon enrolment families will be billed a **bond fee** equal to one week's full fee without any benefit.
- Any bond owing when a child leaves the service will be refunded within two weeks of the child's last week of attendance being submitted to CCMS.

Fees must be paid

- **Accounts** will be issued by email, on a **weekly** basis. It is expected that fees be **paid weekly / fortnightly**. Payments can be made by direct deposit through internet banking (Bank details are located on the invoice that is emailed to you weekly), via BPoint (facilities are available at both services), Centrepay or Cash which can be posted into the locked fee box. All payments received will be displayed on your subsequent statements.
- **Equipment Levy** of \$15 per family is charged annually in July.
- The centre is closed on **Public Holidays**. If it falls on a day when your child would normally be in care, a \$54 public holiday fee (from Monday 25th February 2019) will apply per child.

This is to help cover the cost of paying permanent staff. This amount can be reduced by your CCS entitlements.

- The centre will be closed for one to two weeks over the **Christmas period** based on the needs of the families. No fee is charged over this time.
- Bookings of more than 4 weeks are considered **regular bookings**. Families making regular bookings must nominate a regular pattern of use, which will determine normal weekly fees for which the family is responsible. Since the centre makes a commitment to providing that regular care each week and having the resources and staff available as requested, child care fees for regular care are charged each week that the centre is open, whether the child attends or not.
- **Additional days** may be booked by regular users with the administration staff. The extra days shall be charged for as per our Fee Structure Families with outstanding accounts may not book additional days. Days cannot be swapped, but extra days can be added. If you cancel an additional day booked you will still be charged. If 1 weeks notice is provided you will be charged the 50% holiday rate.
- In special circumstances depending on your employment or study conditions we can accommodate **bookings** for families who are on a working/studying roster. Staffing arrangements are organised on the basis of the number of permanent children booked. Rotating roster/study bookings will only be taken if a position is available and this will depend on the staff to child ratios. These bookings must be made through administration staff, not with educators in the room.
- **Full fee is charged for children absent** from the centre due to **illness**. A doctor's certificate needs to be provided to ensure continuity of CCS fee reduction, but does not mean a reduced fee will be charged, unless 1 weeks notice is provided.
- CCS will be paid for a limit of 42 days combining holidays, occasional absences and sick days. Each family can book **holidays at 50%** rate, provided that 1 weeks' notice in writing has been given. The holidays cannot be accrued and therefore cannot be carried over to the next financial year. No evidence is required for these days. The CCS does not apply if the **42 days allowable absences** have all been used. Additional absence days may be available if they meet the situations outlined in the Family Assistance Law and there is evidence to support these.
- Billing for **additional items**: on occasions you may be billed for additional services or items, Eg. Hat, underwear, birthday cake or incursions and excursions.
- A minimum of 1 week's written notice or payment in lieu of, is required when **withdrawing your child from the centre**. Please note that CCS is not available for this week if your child does not attend. If your child is leaving the centre to start school we will still require 1 week written notice.
- Most Australian families are entitled to the **Child Care Subsidy (CCS)**. Full fees will apply until CCS is granted. Families experiencing financial difficulties may apply for additional special assistance. Please see Director or Administration Officer.

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is available to all families who are Australian Residents if the child meets the immunisation requirements and parents meet eligibility requirements. Entitlement is determined by an activity test which determines the number of hours of subsidised care to which families are

entitled. Please register through MY GOV / Centrelink for your subsidies and ENSURE YOU HAVE A CUSTOMER REFERENCE NUMBER (CRN).

<i>Hours of activity per fortnight</i>	<i>Maximum number of hours of subsidy per fortnight</i>
8 hours to 16 hours	36 hours
More than 16 hours to 48 hours	72 hours
More than 48 hours	100 hours

A broad range of activities meet the activity test requirements, including paid work, self-employment, unpaid work in a family business, active job hunting, volunteering or studying. You can also include reasonable travel time to and from a place of activity to the centre. In two parent families, both parents must meet the activity test, and subsidy hours are calculated on the lower number where parents have different levels of activity. There are exemptions for parents who legitimately cannot meet the activity test requirements. Low income families who do not meet the activity test can access 24 hours of subsidised care per fortnight.

The percentage of subsidy a family receives is based on their estimated combined annual income. All families wishing to access Child Care Subsidy need to complete an online Child Care Subsidy assessment through their MyGov account. Assessment asks families to provide information about their expected combined family income, activity level of parents and types of child care service being used.

The Additional Child Care Subsidy may be available to help support:

- families needing help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
- grandparents on income support who are primary child-carers
- families in temporary financial hardship
- families moving to work from income support

Families can claim Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy online by signing into their MyGov and completing a Child Care Subsidy claim. If eligible, the Subsidy will be paid directly to the service on families' behalf and we will reduce the fees owed. This can occur after our service enters families' enrolment information online, and families confirm their enrolment information through their myGov account. Until Child Care Subsidy details are available, families will need to pay full fees.

Outstanding Accounts:

21 Days overdue:

You will be reminded via email that your account is overdue and a \$5 late fee will be incurred.

28 Days Overdue:

An email and a reminder phone call will be made to the account holder, and another \$5 late fee will be applied.

+ 28 Days Overdue:

Another \$5 late fee is charged, and the account holder will be contacted to discuss a payment plan or reducing care.

If the account is not managed as per agreement, and contact has not been made with the Director or Administration staff, **care can be withdrawn with 24 hours' verbal notice** unless full payment is received immediately. The account will be sent to a debt collector for commencement of formal recovery action.

If families are having difficulty in paying their accounts we will encourage them to meet with the Director or Administration Officer to discuss your situation. It is not appropriate for child care staff to be continually reminding and chasing families to pay fees.

You shall pay all costs incurred in any attempt to collect any monies owed by you under this agreement, including debt collection and other related costs.

Late Collection of Children:

It is not acceptable that children are picked up late from the centres. The centres are able to open for specific periods as per our license from the State Government. Staff are employed to work those hours and have a right to finish work at the agreed time. Late shift staff delayed from finishing on time may suffer public transport delays etc and may have their own family commitments that need to be met. Families and children must leave the centre prior to normal closing time (not merely arrive at the centre prior to normal closing time). If parents or guardians are delayed beyond their normal booking they **must ring** the centre to notify staff so we can organise appropriate staffing to cope with the change. It is the parents or guardians responsibility to ensure their child is picked up on time. We understand that a parent or guardian may be delayed and unable to be at the centre by closing time through circumstances beyond their control. **If there is a delay through unavoidable circumstances, please ring the centre to inform staff about what is happening.** If we have not heard from the parent or guardian staff will attempt to contact both parents and then emergency contacts nominated on your enrolment form. Families who are late collecting children after closing time will be required to pay a penalty of up to **\$15 per quarter hour** at the discretion of the Director.

Sources

Bryant, L. (2009). *Managing a Child Care Service : A Hands-On Guide for Service Providers*. Sydney: Community Child Care Co-Operative.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care) Act 2009

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually.

Review will be conducted by:

- Management, Employees, Family Members and Interested parties.

Reviewed: June 2015 ; June 2016 ; March 2018 ; May 2019; July 2019

Date for next review: July 2020