Fees Policy

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

(1) This policy is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. The approved provider must ensure that comprehensive and transparent policies and procedures are in place for the setting, collection and payment of fees.

(2) This policy helps us to comply with Family Assistance laws, particularly related to receiving and passing on the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Kindergarten funding and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS), as well as NQF Quality Area 7.1: Governance.

SCOPE

(3) This policy applies to:

- 'Staff': the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, paid workers, volunteers, work placement students, and third parties who carry out related work at our service (e.g., contractors, subcontractors, self-employed persons, employees of a labour hire company)
- Children in our care, their parents, families and care providers

DEFINITIONS

(4) The following definitions apply to this policy and related procedures:

"Approved provider": An organisation or individual authorised to operate an early childhood education and care service, responsible for meeting required standards, providing quality care, facilities, and qualified staff.

"Child Care Subsidy (CCS)": An Australian Government payment that helps cover the cost of childcare for eligible families. The payment is made to an approved provider and passed on in the form of a fee reduction; the family then pays the 'gap fee'. Providers must report fee information to the government.

"Free Kinder": A Victorian Government initiative providing free three- and four-year-old kindergarten at participating services.

"Nominated supervisor": An individual designated to ensure compliance with regulations and The National Quality Standards, playing a key role in the service's management and administration.

"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.

"Parent": includes guardians and persons who have parental responsibilities for the child under a decision or order of court

"Person in day-to-day charge": A person nominated by the approved provider (other than a nominated supervisor or the approved provider) to be in day-to-day charge of the service.

"Persons with management or control": PMCs are responsible for managing the delivery of our service, including making or contributing to making decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part, of our service or our financial position. A PMC has the same legal responsibilities as the approved provider and must exercise due diligence to ensure that the approved provider has complied with all legal obligations, including putting into place effective governance systems and operational processes.

"Staff": unless otherwise indicated, refers to approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, paid employees, volunteers, students, and third parties who are covered in the scope of this policy

POLICY STATEMENT

(5) The safety, rights and best interests of all children is our paramount consideration in all decisions and actions taken when providing care and education for children (the paramount consideration) (*National Law* s 2A). The rights and best interests of each child must prevail over all our other interests or obligations.

(6) We are committed to meeting our regulatory requirements in relation to staffing and taking all reasonable steps to protect children's safety, health and wellbeing while they are being educated and cared for.

(7) This policy supports our service to responsibly manage our financial obligations, provide high quality care and education for children and support families to have fair access to services.

(8) This policy enables our service to fulfil their obligations under the Family Assistance Laws and in line with kindergarten funding.

(9) This policy assists families to understand their obligations with regards to fee payment procedures and requirements.

Our legal obligations

(10) Our service has several obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*. We must:

- have policies and procedures for the payment of fees
- provide families with a statement of fees
- take reasonable steps to ensure that these policies and procedures are followed
- notify families at least 14 days before making any change that will affect the fees charged or the way fees are collected (*National Regulations* reg 172).

(11) We have obligations under Family Assistance Law. These relate to receiving and passing on the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS).

(12) We also have further obligations under the Victorian Government's Free Kinder initiative which provides fee relief payments for eligible children.

Fees

(13) Our childcare fees are outlined in our fee schedule which is available from our office/administration area and also displayed on our website. We will advise eligible families if we can access any Government funding which may reduce the fees they are required to pay. This may include, for example, fee free or reduced cost kindergarten or preschool programs funded by the State Government.

(14) Please note our fees may change from time to time. We will notify families in writing at least 14 days before we change our fees or the way in which we collect them.

(15) Fees must be paid on time and:

- via electronic payment methods (e.g. direct deposit, bank/credit card) unless an approved exemption is granted
- for all booked days, including absences, public holidays, pupil free days, sick days, family holidays and public holidays

(16) Fees may also be payable during any period when the service closes in response to a local emergency eg fire, flood. Potential emergencies which may affect our service are considered in our service risk assessment for potential emergencies and covered in our emergency response procedures

See Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy

(17) Any dishonoured payment will incur a reasonable administrative fee of $10.00.

(18) All fees and charges are applied in accordance with the Australian Consumer Law and are transparent, fair, and clearly communicated.

Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)

(19) To comply with Family Assistance Law, families claiming Child Care Subsidy (see below) must complete a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) before care commences. This agreement outlines:

- agreed sessions of care
- fee structure
- start date

(20) A new CWA must be completed when any permanent, ongoing changes to a child's booking patterns, fees, or session days occurs.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

(21) The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is administered by Services Australia.

(22) Eligibility for CCS depends on:

- residency status
- immunisation requirements
- recognised participation requirements when requiring more than 72 hours per fortnight (the 3-day guarantee).

(23) To comply with Family Assistance Law, upon enrolment, all children must have one of the following forms completed:

- a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) for enrolments where families wish to claim CCS/ACCS. This contains details of the care to be provided and fees to be charged.
- a Relevant Arrangement for enrolments where the family has advised that they will not claim CCS/ACCS
- an arrangement with an organisation, for enrolments where a third-party organisation (such as an employer) will be responsible for paying childcare fees on behalf of the child.

(24) Subsidy entitlements are determined by:

- combined family income
- level of recognised participation

(25) All families are required to pay the **gap fee** (the difference between the service fee and CCS paid). The service will not waive gap fees except where permitted under Family Assistance Law.

(26) Enrolments must be confirmed by families via their MyGov account before CCS can be applied.

(27) Until CCS eligibility is confirmed, full fees are payable.

(28) CCS will not be paid for:

- absences exceeding allowable limits
- sessions before first attendance
- sessions after the last physical attendance

(29) Additional Child Care Subsidy is available for eligible families and provides a top up of the standard CCS. Further information here.

3-day guarantee

(30) All CCS-eligible families are guaranteed at least 72 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight (3 days per week/6 days per fortnight), regardless of activity levels.

(31) Families can get 100 hours of subsidised child care each fortnight for each child if they:

- are caring for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child
- have more than 48 hours each fortnight of recognised participation (work, study, or volunteering)
- have an exemption or experience exceptional circumstances, or
- receive Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing, temporary financial hardship or grandparent payments.

Pre-prep

(32) Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to prep from 2025, with programs across Victoria increasing from 15 to 30 hours each week.

(33) There are no changes to the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Free Kinder, and these programs will continue to benefit families across Victoria.

Free Kinder

(34) In addition to CCS and the 3-day guarantee, the Victorian Government offers further fee relief in the form of the Free Kinder Initiative, paid directly to the provider.

(35) The Free Kinder payment replaces the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy at participating services.

(36) Free Kinder is available for children enrolled in funded Kindergarten programs, including Pre-Prep, and covers the following hours:

- Three-Year-Old Kindergarten: Between 5 to 15 hours, increasing to 15 hours by 2029.
- Four-Year-Old Kindergarten: Currently 15 hours
- Four-Year-Old Kindergarten is becoming Pre-Prep: Funded hours are gradually increasing from 15 to 30 hours each week from 2025. Learn more about Pre-Prep.

(37) Free Kinder is offered across Victoria at participating standalone (sessional) kinder services and long day care services.

(38) Free Kinder is available to all children in participating services, families do **not** need a Health Care or Pension card, Australian citizenship or proof of address. Families do **not** need to be eligible for CCS to receive free kinder.

(39) Families can only receive Free Kinder at one service at a time and are required to complete a "One Funded Place Declaration Form"

(40) The Free Kinder payment is applied to fees and families should see the amount clearly stated on their invoice as 'Victorian Government Free Kinder offset'.

(41) Where services provide programs that run for longer than the maximum funded hours, families pay the gap fee.

Free kinder- priority groups

(42) Children from the following priority groups are eligible for increased hours of Free Kinder from 2026:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- children from a refugee or asylum seeker background
- children who have had contact with Child Protection
- children who were supported by Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) or Access to Early Learning (AEL) in their Three-Year-Old Kindergarten year

(43) From 2026, children from these priority groups are eligible for between 16 and 25 hours of Free Kinder (or Pre-prep).

Kindergarten fee subsidy

(44) Some kinder services may choose not to offer Free Kinder and, in this case, the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy may be available at those services.

(45) The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy enables all children to participate in funded Three- and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten for up to 15 hours free of charge or at low cost, with payments made directly from the Government to the service.

Families with children enrolled in kinder programs at participating long day care centres will receive an annual Free Kinder fee offset:

- In 2026, for 3-Year-Old Kinder, this means from $700.33 for 5 hours to $2,101 for 15 hours.
- For 4-Year-Old Kinder, this means $2,101 for children enrolled in a 15-hour kinder program.
- For children eligible for more hours of 4-Year-Old Kinder (Pre-Prep), Free Kinder still applies. This means a free kinder program of between 16 and 30 hours per week.

The funded program is the time that the qualified early childhood teacher is in the room delivering the kinder program.

The long day care service will receive the Free Kinder funding on your behalf. The service will pass on the savings as a direct reduction to your out-of-pocket fees after the Child Care Subsidy is applied, This will be applied weekly to your account weekly for 40 weeks of the year.

(46)

Early Start Kindergarten

(47) Early Start Kindergarten is available for children who turn 3 by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten, and who:

- are from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- have had contact with child protection.

Fee Setting and Agreements

(48) Fees are determined by the Approved Provider based on:

- operational costs
- staffing requirements
- regulatory compliance
- local market conditions

(49) A Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) is established with each family.

(50) The service cannot offer make-up days for absences due to staffing ratio requirements and operational consistency.

(51) Any discounts (including workforce discounts) are applied consistently and in accordance with Family Assistance Law.

(52) Approved providers may offer early childhood teachers and educators, centre directors and coordinators (who hold an ECEC qualification) and cooks workforce discounts.

(53) Workforce discount amounts are determined by the approved provider, provided employees pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

(54) Workforce discounts are applied after CCS calculation and will not reduce a family's CCS entitlement.

(55) Workforce discounts are prescribed discounts and must be managed accordingly. You must report the following in session reports and statements of entitlement:

- the total session fee before applying the discount
- the discount amount
- the type of discount, in this case the workforce discount.

STATEMENT OF FEES

Each week we will send you a statement via email before your weekly debit. Please check these statements to ensure all details are correct and accurate. If there is any discrepancy, please contact the nominated supervisor as soon as possible [insert your own information about statements].

Families are provided with access to OWNA to access account information. Each family will be provided with individual log in details; families are reminded not to share passwords or log in details. Families are encouraged to check statements and invoices for any changes to CCS entitlements.

Absences

(56) Families may receive CCS for up to **42 absence days per child per financial year**.

(57) Absences include:

- illness

- public holidays
- family leave

(58) Additional absences may be approved with supporting documentation (e.g. medical certificates) in line with Family Assistance Law.

Statements of Entitlement

(59) Families will receive fortnightly statements via the service's software system. These include:

- child's name
- dates of care
- fees charged
- CCS applied
- gap fee payable
- absences

Invoices

(60) Invoices are issued Weekly.

(61) Overpayments will be credited to the family's account. No cash refunds will be issued unless the account is finalised.

Receipts

(62) Receipts will be provided upon payment.

Late Fees (Collection of Children)

(63) A late collection fee of $15 per 15 minutes (or part thereof) will apply when children are collected after closing time.

(64) This fee reflects the reasonable cost of staffing required outside operating hours and is not intended as a penalty. The fee may be waived at the discretion of the Nominated Supervisor.

Termination

(65) Families must provide **two weeks' written notice** to end enrolment. Fees will be charged in lieu of notice if not provided.

(66) The service may suspend or terminate enrolment with two weeks' notice. Immediate termination may occur where necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of children, staff, or families, in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law.

(67) Children must be signed in and out on their final day of attendance for CCS to apply.

Overdue Fees

(68) Families who fall behind in payments will receive a reminder.

(69) If financial difficulty arises, families are encouraged to discuss payment arrangements confidentially with the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor.

(70) Where fees remain unpaid:

- care may be suspended or terminated
- debt recovery action may be initiated

(71) Any debt recovery process will comply with the Privacy Act 1988 and relevant privacy obligations. Costs associated with recovery may be added to the outstanding balance where permitted.

(72) A reasonable administrative charge of $10.00 per day may apply to overdue accounts.

Privacy and Confidentiality

(73) All financial and personal information is managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and Australian Privacy Principles. Information will only be used for legitimate service and regulatory purposes.

PRINCIPLES

(74) The best interests, rights, welfare, safety and wellbeing of children in our care is our number one priority

(75) We comply with all relevant legislation, regulations and standards at all times.

(76) We communicate with staff, families, children and government authorities ensuring that everyone is informed of their obligations and responsibilities.

(77) Our governance, operations policies, risk management plans, procedures, systems and practices are best-practice and kept up-to-date.

POLICY COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND MONITORING

(78) The approved provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors and relevant staff members follow and can readily access this policy and related procedures (*National Regulations* regs 170, 171).

(79) This policy and related documents can be found OWNA app

(80) The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure that relevant staff are formally inducted and trained to implement this policy and related procedures, and to understand their roles and responsibilities under them.

(81) The nominated supervisor and staff leaders will ensure this policy and its related procedures are regularly reinforced.

(82) At enrolment, the nominated supervisor will ensure that families are given access to OWNA to access this policy and related document. We will also regularly share relevant information about this policy through our usual communication channels

(83) Families are notified in line with our obligations (*National Regulations* reg 172) when changes are made to our policies and procedures.

LEGISLATION OVERVIEW

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Law (section)	Description
2A	Paramount consideration – safety, rights and best interests
172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
175	Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents
Regulations	
111	Administrative space
168	Education and care services 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 or procedures
177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by the approved provider
181, 183 - 184	Confidentiality and storage of records

Other applicable laws and regulations

Name	Description
Privacy Act 1988	Principal act governing the handling of personal information
Family Assistance Law	A collection of Acts and rules which set out how the government delivers family payments and tax benefits and the child-care subsidy
Australian Consumer Law	The national law protecting consumers and governing fair trading across Australia

National Quality Standard

Standard / Element	Concept	Description
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service that is child safe
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

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0 – all Outcomes are relevant

Victorian Child Safe Standards

Most relevant principles
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Key Policies	Enrolment Policy |Orientation for Children Policy | Privacy and Confidentiality Policy | Governance and Management Policy
Procedures	Roles and Responsibilities- Fees (Appendix A)
Additional Resources	Child Care Provider Handbook Australian Government: Child Care Subsidy Australian Government: 3-day guarantee Victorian Government: Resources for funded kindergartens Victorian Government: Delivering pre-prep to children from priority cohorts

SOURCES

National Quality Standard \| Family Assistance Law \|

POLICY INFORMATION

Approval	Person with Management and Control
Review	Reviewed annually and when there are changes that may affect this policy or related procedures. The review will include checks to ensure the document reflects current legislation, continues to be effective, or whether any changes and additional training are required

Reviewed: 21/11/26

Date for next review: 21/22/27

APPENDIX A

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – Fees

Approved provider responsibilities (not limited to)
Ensure our service meets its obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *Regulations* and the relevant legislation
Ensure that our service's governance, management, operations, policies, plans, systems, practices and procedures are appropriate in practice, up-to-date, best practice, and comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidelines
Ensure this Fees Policy and related procedures are in place and available for inspection
Take reasonable steps to ensure our Fees Policy and related procedures are followed (e.g. through clear and accessible communication, and systemised inductions, training and monitoring of all staff – including volunteers, students)
Set fees for children to enrol at the service and ensure relevant policies and procedures are in place relating to the setting, collection and payment of fees.
Regularly review this Fees Policy and related procedures in consultation with children, families, communities and staff
Notify families at least 14 days before changing this Fees Policy if the changes will: affect the fees charged or the way they are collected; or significantly impact the service's education and care of children; or significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service
Abide by the Worker Retention Grant requirements when considering fee increase
Nominated supervisor / persons in day-to-day charge responsibilities (not limited to)
Ensure our service meets its obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *Regulations* and the relevant legislation in relation to payment of fees.
Support the approved provider to ensure that our service's management, operations, policies, plans, systems, practices and procedures are appropriate in practice, up-to-date, best practice, and comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidelines
Communicate with families at enrolment about fees, including: the amounts charged, payment periods and methods, how the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy (e.g. from your jurisdiction) will be applied, notice periods, how they can access copies of statements/receipts, financial hardship considerations and payment plans
Ensure families receive receipts for fees paid
Monitor the application of the Child Care Subsidy or any other government subsidies
Ensure staff, families and visitors are aware of their rights and responsibilities
Contribute to policies and procedure reviews and risk assessments and plans in consultation with children, families, communities and staff. Support the approved provider to notify families of reviews and changes according to legislation and our policies and procedures
Educator / other staff responsibilities (not limited to)
Be familiar with the Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy and procedures
Support families to approach the person whose role it is to collect fees with any fee-related questions

Families responsibilities (not limited to)
Ensure they understand the service's fee requirements and expectations at enrolment and any ongoing changes
Meet the fee requirements
Raise any fee-related questions with the person responsible for fee collection at the service (see Complaint Handling Policy)
Ensure interactions with staff are professional and appropriate