

PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

Quality early education and care provides the foundation for children’s development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our 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 Family Assistance Law – Incorporating all related legislation for Child Care Provider Handbook in Appendix G https://www.dese.gov.au/resources-child-care-providers/resources/child-care-provider-handbook
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RELATED POLICIES

Arrival and Departure Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy Enrolment Policy Fraud Prevention Policy Governance Policy	Orientation of Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
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PURPOSE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the 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, management, and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our 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 Service ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family.

Our fee structure includes:

General Fees

- Fees are charged for each session of care - each session either before and after school care, or per day for early years, vacation care/student free day programs
- Fees payable by families vary depending on the family's eligibility for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
- 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 pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount- the 'gap' amount or without CCS full amount of fees.
- 'Gap Fees' must be paid via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) (effective 02 July 2023)
- Fees must be kept in one week advance of a child's attendance.
- Parents are required to download the Xplor home app or log into Xplor home to see their live statements
- Fees are to be paid weekly on a Thursday through Direct Success our direct debit system on Xplor
- Fees are payable in advance for every session that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes pupil free days, sick days, and family holidays but excludes periods when the Service is closed. The Service may be directed to close due to periods of local emergency such as bushfire or flood or a pandemic.

- If a session of care falls on a public holiday, families are required to pay normal fees. CCS may be paid for sessions that fall on public holidays.
- Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day).
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the Service's license.
- Cancellations for casual bookings will be granted if you have given 7 days' notice via email to oshc.coldstream.ps@education.vic.gov.au
- Permanent bookings and vacation care bookings cannot be cancelled, or refunded once bookings have been made

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. The child must:
 - be a 'Family Tax Benefit child' or 'regular care child' and
 - be 13 or under and not attending secondary school and
 - meet immunisation requirements
- The person claiming the Child Care Subsidy, or their partner must:
 - meet residency requirements and
 - be liable to pay for care provided under a Complying Written Arrangement (their written agreement) with their childcare provider
- Childcare must be provided by an approved provider
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
 - combined family income
 - activity test of parents
 - 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 are the responsibility of the family. The family will be referred to contact Centrelink directly for any enquiries regarding CCS payments.

Payment of fees

- Families are required to pay fees using the Service's direct debit system. The family is required to provide banking details to facilitate set up of the direct debit account via the Xplor home app before commencing. We will not provide care until the direct debt has been set up.
- Fees and charges associated with direct debit system are outlined upon enrolment through Xplor
- A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees
- Families can access their statement at any time via the Xplor app in accordance with the fee payment and regulatory requirements
- The *Statement* will include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts
- The *Statement* is generated using our Software Xplor which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation
- Parents/guardians must complete a 'Complying Written Agreement' (CWA) which is a contract of care between the family and Coldstream Primary School OSHC & Early Years. The CWA can be found on your Xplor home app. We will not accept enrolments until the CWA is signed
- If an account is in credit upon the parent/guardian ceasing care, they will receive a refund to their nominated bank account. Any additional refunds need to be approved by the Manager
- Please refer to Debit Success/Xpay terms and conditions for further information on out-of-pocket expense costs as well as associated transaction fees and dishonour fees. This information can be found in the account section of your online account or your Xplor home app

Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service, or mark their child absent via Xplor 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
- 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
- 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)
- Records and evidence will be kept by the Service for each additional absence, where required

- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via [myGov](#).
- Allowable absences can be claimed for the specified reasons as defined by the Family Assistance Law
- In a period of local emergency, such as bushfire or pandemic, and our Service is temporarily shut down on public health advice, families *may* be provided with additional absence days as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the Approved Provider.
- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink for additional fee assistance if they are experiencing temporary financial hardship.
- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
 - **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
 - **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (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
 - **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
 - **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (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

- Families are able to make payments anytime via the Xplor 'PAY NOW'.
- 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 written contract will be provided for the family to sign outlining repayment plan details. The repayment plan will provide information as to the duration and amount of the repayments as well as steps that will be taken if the repayment plan is not adhered to.
- A child's position will be terminated if payment has not been made after **three weeks**, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the Service will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.

- There will be a dishonour fee each time a direct debit is scheduled and failed. This will be billed to the account holder.

Late Fees

- Our 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 Service. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time.
- Currently, a fee of **\$15.00 per 10 minutes** block or part thereof will be incurred by the family.
- 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 **14 days** written notice is given to all families.
- 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 are to provide **two weeks** written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the centre.
- If termination from the Service is required without notification, families may 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 Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring all families are aware of our *Payment of Fees Policy*
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information
- providing families access with regular statement of fees payable via Xplor app
- notifying families of any overdue fees
- providing families with reminder letters as required

- terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid
- discussing fee payment with families if required
- providing at least **14 days** written notice to families of any fee increases

Responsibility of Families

- Provide the 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
- Provide **2 weeks** written notice for changing permanent booking days, or withdrawing from the service

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 Nominated Supervisor in the first instance. The Nominated Supervisor 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.

Source

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

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 discount for early childhood workforce](#)

Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook>

Australian Government Department of Education *Early Childhood and Care* <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood>

Australian Government Department of Education *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](#). (Amended 2023).

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

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Kumari Van der Meer	Managing Director	17/07/2023
POLICY REVIEWED	July 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	July 2024
MODIFICATIONS	<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) 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
SEPTEMBER 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update of Department name from Department of Education, Skills, and Employment to Department of Education minor formatting edits within text hyperlinks checked and repaired as required links within sources updated to education.gov.au link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in ‘Sources’ 	MAY 2023	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous Improvement/Reflection section added Childcare Centre Desktop Resource section added 	
MAY 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance – related policy name change- Arrival and Departure Policy to Delivery of Children to and from EEC Service 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
OCTOBER 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor adjustments recorded Additional information added- ACCS, absences, responsibility of families, CCS tip-off line and complaints. 	MAY 2021
MAY 2019	<p>Grammar, punctuation and spelling edited. Sources/references alphabetised. Minor formatting for consistency throughout policy. ‘Related policies’ alphabetised.</p>	MAY 2020