

Payment of Fees Policy

Policy Number: 27
Date Updated: 27/07/2017

Rationale and Policy Considerations

The setting and payment of fees takes into account all requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Australian Tax Office, Privacy Act and the guidelines contained within the Australian Government Child Care Service Handbook. All records held at the service will be maintained in accordance with Confidentiality and Privacy Policy. Merino Court Childcare understands the importance of maintaining accurate fees statements and providing clear information to families on fees payment processes.

Legislation and Government Requirements

- Guidelines on child care fees payments (Child Care Service Handbook 2013- 2014) Privacy Act 1988 (Cth.)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2012
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 2000

Needs

Children's

For continuity of care and family support where payment of child care fees is an issue.

Families'

Advice about fee levels and Child Care Benefit application process; affordable fees; simple fees payment process; accurate fees payment statements; information about available financial support; family difficulties in maintaining fees/payments to be addressed in order to prevent any negative impact on the care provided to children.

Educators

Clearly explained fee payment process; families to maintain fee payments; fee payment issues not to impact negatively on the relationships between educators, children and families.

Management

Sufficient fee income to ensure maintenance of a quality service; fee payments to be up to date; accurate fee collection records to be maintained.

Scope

This policy is for all clients of Merino Court Childcare

Policy Statement

The service aims to provide a quality education and care service at an affordable price to families eligible to attend under the Australian Government Priority of Access Guidelines. Fee levels will be set by the Approved Provider each year according to the service's required income in order to provide a quality education and care service.

Merino Court Childcare relies on the regular payment of fees to provide a quality service for its families. Failure to pay fees when they are due results in forced cost cutting and a decrease in the quality of services provided.

Policy Principles

Fees

- The fee schedule and fee payment policy will be fully explained to families during the enrolment process.
- Families will be given a minimum of 14 days notice of any fee increase.
- Families pay for a place and may elect to book a full-time or part-time place. Families are required to pay fees on public holidays if the holiday falls on their normal day of care.

- Fees are payable on all booked days regardless of whether they attend or not. This includes sick days, school holidays, public holidays and family holidays.
- Parents/guardians should contact the service to advise of their child's inability to attend as soon as this is known. Fees will still be required on days the child would normally attend.

Child Care Benefit and Child Care Management System

- The service will comply with the Australian Government requirements to be an approved education and care service for the purposes of (CCB). The on-line (CCMS) reporting requirements and any other requirements for claiming and administering CCB will be maintained by the service.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to complete and lodge their CCB application with the FAO. Families need to apply for each type of care they will use i.e. Long Day Care, Before School Care, After School Care, Vacation Care.
- CCB can only be paid for children who have met immunization requirements.
- Families will only be eligible for CCB if child care attendance records are accurately completed and signed by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult, and other eligibility requirements are met.
- Families are entitled to 42 absence days for each registered child in each financial year. CCB is paid for these days provided that the child would normally have attended on that day, and fees have been charged.

Overdue Fees

- Parents/guardians with overdue fees will be encouraged by the nominated supervisor/manager to discuss any difficulties they may have in meeting payments and make suitable arrangements to pay. If this is not done, or the agreed arrangements are not kept, the following procedure will apply:
 - after two weeks overdue - a written reminder will be forwarded to the parent/guardian;
 - after three weeks overdue - a letter will be sent advising that the place may be cancelled if the account should become four weeks overdue. The letter will include a reminder that parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss payment difficulties and make suitable arrangements to pay with the nominated supervisor/coordinator;
 - after four weeks overdue - if no arrangements to pay have been made or kept, the place will be cancelled and family notified.

Late Collection Fees

- Children who are collected after 6.00pm will be charged a fee to cover overtime rates for the staff who have had to stay later than their shift.
- The fee will be \$25 for each 15 minutes or part thereof.

Account Procedure and Payment

- Accounts are emailed out each fortnight for the coming two weeks. All childcare fees are paid by Direct Debit on the second Friday of the accounts period.
- Merino Court Childcare reserves the right to cancel care if fees are outstanding.
- Full fees are payable until CCB, CCR, SCCB or JET has been processed. Credit balances once these have been paid will be returned to the payer or kept in the account as a credit depending on the request of the family.
- Outstanding fees need to be paid within four weeks of leaving the centre. All fees, commissions, charges and legal fees accrued in the collection of any debts will be added to the initial account.

Direct Debit

- Merino Court Childcare uses a Direct Debit system for collection of fees.
- Direct debit is set up on enrolment and is included in the enrolment form.
- Families are to nominate their desired account and sign the authority.
- All fees associated with Direct Debit are passed on to the family.
- Nominated accounts will only be debited the amount owing on the selected date. This is not a set amount and will reflect usage over the nominated period.

Fees associated with Direct Debit are passed on to the family. They are:

- Bank Account per transaction \$0.75

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------|
| • Visa/Mastercard | Calculated on transaction value | 0.90% + \$0.75 |
| • Amex | Calculated on transaction value | 3.85% + \$0.75 |
| • Failed transaction | Per failed or returned transaction attempt | \$2.75 |
| • Claim/Chargeback | Only charged when payment is reversed | \$33.00 |
| • Refund | Per refund (credit/debit card only) | \$2.75 |

Related Documents

- **Education and Care Services National Law Act 2012 - Section 3(3)©; 175**
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations -75; 158-159;**
- **National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (Nov 2010) - Element 6.1.1; Element 6.1.3; Element 7.3.1; Element 7.3.3; Element 7.3.5;**
- **Early Years Learning Framework for Australia**
- **Framework for School Age Care in Australia**
- **Parent Registration Form**
- **Guarantor Form**
- **Regulation 168 (2)(n)**
- **Enrolment Form**

Links to other Policies

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Equal Opportunity
- Health, Hygiene and Infection Control
- Partnership and Communication with Parents
- Records Management

Source

www.pscalliance.org.au

Further Sources

- **DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2011 - 2012; Section 4.9 Information Management**
- **Section 5.5 Key obligations imposed on approved child care services under family assistance law**
- **Section 6.3 Priority of access Section 8.1 Overview (CCB and CCR)**
- **Section 9.3 Reporting enrolment information Section 10 Reporting attendance information**
- **Section 11 Calculation of fee reductions and payments to services**
- **Section 13 Absences from child care**
- **Section 14 Special CCB Section 15 Child Care Rebate** - Retrieved 2 May 2012, from www.deewr.gov.au
- **Family Assistance Office - Family Assistance Payments - Child Care Benefit** - Retrieved 2 May 2011, from <http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/>
- **Privacy Law** - Retrieved 19 April 2011, from <http://www.oaic.gov.au/> and www.privacy.gov.au/law

Document History

| Version | Date updated |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Created | 18/12/13 |
| Payment of Fees Policy | 28/7/14 |
| Payment of Fees Policy | 16/7/15 |
| Payment of Fees Policy | 1/4/16 |
| Payment of Fees Policy | 27/07/2017 |