

Albury & District Pre-Schools

Jindera Preschool

SECTION: 7 – Leadership and Service Management

POLICY NO: 7.2.0

POLICY: Fees

REVIEW DATE: December 2017 **DATE OF APPROVAL:** 16th December 2014

Introduction

In accordance with the Education & Care Services National Regulations 2011, the Centre provides access to information regarding fees via the information package (See Section 6, Policy 6.3.0 Enrolment) given to each family upon enrolment.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) subsidises the Pre-School by providing funding under the New South Wales Community Preschool Funding Model. This grant does not cover all expenses involved in providing a quality service, and fees are therefore required to help meet costs including Pre-School supplies, books, equipment, cleaning costs, utilities, office requirements and staff salaries.

To enable our service to provide high quality early education and care for children we need to ensure we are financially viable at all times. Prompt payment of fees allows us to plan with certainty. We have a commitment to ensuring our fees are as affordable as possible and that all families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce these fees. Our service will advocate with governments for all children's right to access early education and care regardless of their family's financial situation.

Goals – What are we going to do?

The Committee of Management, in accordance with the DEC funding agreement, will make every effort to ensure that fees are kept to a minimum and method of payment considered to assist the family's ability to pay. Fees charged reflect the cost of providing the service once grants, fundraising and all other incomes are deducted.

Our service's financial health and access to our service will be maximised by:

- ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment;
- keeping fee increases to a minimum;

- ensuring the cost of administering fee collection is minimised;
- following the appropriate priority of access requirements;
- following all legal requirements required by our access to government funding;
- managing fee collection to avoid bad debts;
- families are notified as far ahead as possible and no less than 14 days of any changes to fees or the ways fees will be collected; and
- ensuring we issue statements of fees on a regular basis.

National Quality Framework Standard 6.1 Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained

- 6.1.3 Current information about the service is available to families

National Quality Framework, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management

National Quality Framework Standard 7.1 Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.

- 7.1.1 Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service

National Quality Framework Standard 7.3 Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service

- 7.3.2 Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.

Strategies - How will it be done?

The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure vacant places are filled under the appropriate priority of access policy. For NSW state funded community based preschools the Priority of Access Guidelines are defined by NSW State Government funding agreements. In no particular order, these are: Children who are at risk of harm, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, Children from low income families, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children in their year before school.
- Ensure adequate records of attendance are kept for each child as required;

- Comply with NSW Government funding agreements as required;
- Ensure the service remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due;
- Review fees at least annually in line with CPI and market forces;
- Only collect and disclose personal information about children and families to the Department of Education and Communities where the disclosure is legally required.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure all families are made aware of service fees and available subsidies on enrolment;
- Ensure statements of fees are given to all families no less than every three months;
- Join in advocacy actions designed to reduce the cost of early education and care fees for families wherever possible.

Families will:

- Record the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending care.
- Upon confirming acceptance of a position families will be required to pay the Enrolment fee, Membership fee, and Maintenance levy. Maintenance levy will be refunded in Term 4 if one working bee is attended throughout the year, or if the family is an active Committee Member.

Fee payment procedures

The Approved Provider will:

- Fees are calculated on a term basis, to cover all sessions. The yearly amount is charged in three instalments in the first three terms (Term 1, Term 2, and Term 3). Thus, by the end of Term 3, the full year's fees are paid and there will be no account in Term 4.
- Fees are charged on a 40 week year. Term 1's fees will be charged as a 10 week term for 2015. Fees for Terms 2, 3, and 4 (30 weeks) will be charged at 15 weeks each, payable in Term 2 and Term 3 in 2015. In 2016 the fees for the 40 weeks will be divided evenly over Terms 1, 2, and 3.
- The Preschool's Enrolment form asks families to sign a fee agreement as part of the enrolment process.
- The Clerical assistant follows an overdue fee collection procedure authorised by the committee.
- Jindera Preschool Committee of Management has the discretion to charge an additional, alternative, or reduced fee with regards to any or none of the following: siblings, lump sum payment, of the full year's fees and or late collection of the child from the Preschool.

- If a child is withdrawn from the Preschool in Term 4, a refund is subject to the discretion of the Director and Executive Committee.
- The Committee of Management sets the fees in the 4th Term for the next year, but will revise the fees for Terms 2, 3 and 4 in Term 1. The Committee of Management advises parents of attending children in writing of any changes to fees charged.

The Nominated Supervisor or The Clerical Assistant will:

- Accounts are kept on computer and issued within the first two weeks of Term 1. Term 2 and Term 3 fees will be issued before the end of the previous term. A ledger of account payments will be kept with relevant information recorded.
- Families are advised of available fee subsidies at enrolment and those who wish to apply must provide a copy of their Health Care Card.
- Ensure families are aware of fee payment options: (Direct Deposit into the Preschool's bank account, cheque or cash.) A fee payment box is available for all payments other than direct debit. Periodical payment arrangements may be made with the Clerical Assistant.
- Fees are due at end of 4th week of each term.
- Implement an overdue fee process with any families whose fees are not paid by due date.

The following procedure will be followed and adhered to:

1. An invoice will be issued which shows due date for payment.
2. After the due date, a reminder will be given to those families who have not paid. These reminders will allow one week from the original due date for payment.
3. Failure to pay fees may jeopardise the child's enrolment.
4. If parents are unable to pay in one instalment, they must make a payment arrangement with the Clerical Assistant by the third week of each term.
5. Fees for Out of Hours Care are to be paid (preferably) on the day that care is provided but may be added to the current terms fees if requested.
6. Children turning 3 after the beginning of term 1 will be required to pay fees for the whole term, only if there is a waiting list for that position.

Families will:

- Ensure all fees are paid by the due date at all times.

Late fees

The Approved Provider will:

- Levy a late fee for families who arrive after the service closing time. This fee is set at \$20 for first 10 minutes and an additional \$1 per every additional late minute.

OR

- Invoice families as per fee structure stated in Extended Preschool Policy if children are not picked up within 10 minutes of the session finishing time.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure families are made aware of late fee on enrolment; and
- Organise for separate invoicing of late fees and/or Extended Preschool Fees.

Public holidays

Families will:

- Pay for any booked day of education and care which falls on a public holiday.

Withdrawal from Centre

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Provide all families with a statement of outstanding fees on receipt of notification of withdrawal of a child from the service.

Families will:

- Provide 2 weeks' notice of withdrawal from the centre in Terms 1, 2, and 3. . If child does not attend during this 2 week notice period full fees will be chargeable

PROCEDURES

The Authorised Supervisor, Nominated Supervisor and Clerical Assistant recognise the parent's rights to confidentiality when unpaid fees are discussed or negotiated (See Section 2, Policy 2.9.3 Confidentiality).

The Authorised Supervisor reserves the right to take legal action to recover fees that have not been paid. If a place has been reserved for a child since the beginning of term, then full term fees must be paid.

When children are enrolled and offered a place after the commencement of term, pro-rata payment will be calculated on the basis of each week of term remaining or part thereof.

If a child is withdrawn during Terms 1, 2 and 3 - 2 weeks' notice must be given, otherwise 2 weeks fees will be charged. If full term fees have been paid, a pro-rata refund will be given.

Children from families with fees outstanding will not be accepted by the Pre-School until the debt is cleared. Unpaid accounts will be handled by a Debt Collector.

If families default in making payment and recovery / legal action is undertaken, families will be responsible for all expenses in relation to the collection of the outstanding amount including, but not limited to, all charges and fees, legal costs on an indemnity basis, and disbursements

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

- *Education & Care Services National Regulations 2011, Regulation 168 (2)(n)*
- *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care*
Council of Australian Governments December 2011
- *Department of Education & Communities, Community Preschool Funding Model*

Sources

- Community Childcare Co-operative Ltd. (NSW)
- Department of Education and Communities - www.dec.nsw.edu.au