

# Fees Policy

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## NQF

QA7	7.1.2	Management Systems. Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operations of a quality service.
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## Aim

Parents fully understand fee payment procedures and requirements, and pay their child care fees on time.

## Related Policies

Enrolment Policy

Orientation for Children Policy

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

## Who is affected by this policy?

Parents

Management

## Implementation

Gloucester Pre-School Incorporated is a community based service run by a volunteer Management Committee. The Pre-School receives funding from the NSW Department of Education and Communities: fees paid by parents and fundraising activities. Fees for long day care services are subsidised by The Federal Government through your MyGov account. The Committee is responsible for setting fees, which are kept as low as possible to ensure that the Pre-School and Early Years Learning Centre is affordable for all of our parents.

The service runs to a tight budget and the fees are used to cover costs such as wages, purchases of materials and equipment, building maintenance, rates, electricity and so on.

Fees need to be paid promptly so the service can meet its financial commitments and provide the highest level of care and learning programs for its students.

### General Conditions:

- a) Fees are charged on a daily rate:
  - pre-school day (8.15am to 3.45pm),
  - long day care day (8.00am to 5.15pm)
  - fees are charged for EYLC LDC, PreSchool LDC or Preschool (see fees & booking schedule) and Vacation Care
  
- b) A quarterly equipment levy of \$10 per child will be charged at the start of each term.

- c) An annual membership is charged at \$5.50 including GST per family.
- d) Fees are payable if the child is absent due to illness or any other reason on the days they are enrolled.
- e) Fees are not charged for public holidays.
- f) Fees are not charged for pre-school days that fall in school holidays.
- g) Fees are charged during school holidays for long day care bookings.
- h) Fees are payable for all days a child is enrolled until written notification or a change of attendance form is given to the Director that the child has been withdrawn from part or all of these days. Two weeks written notification stating intention to withdraw a child from the Pre-School & Early Years Learning Centre is required.
- i) There are three levels of fees for pre-school bookings:
  - Tier 1: Children 3 to 5 years of age who parents' hold a Health Care Card in the parents' name and the enrolled child's name is on the card and/or families who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
  - Tier 2: Children who turn 4 by 31 July in year before school.
  - Tier 3: Children who are 3 years of age but do not qualify for tier 1 or 2.
- j) Fees for long day care (see **Child Care Subsidy** section)
- k) Fees for staff currently employed by the organisation. Staff will receive a 5% discount on the full daily rate payable for preschool and/or long day care fees for children in their care. Long day care fees will be submitted to the government at reduced rate prior to the CCS subsidy being applied.
- l) Health Care Card must be valid and the original sighted by the pre-school. The pre-school will retain a copy of the card for their records. A current Health Care must be provided at the start of each year for children re-enrolled from the previous year if their card on record has expired.
- m) Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families may be requested to show documentation if they are not known by the local Aboriginal community.
- n) No 'make up' days are available for days where the child has been absent.
- o) Casual days are determined by availability and pre-arranged with the Director/Assistant Director and will incur the cost of that additional day.

### **Child Care Subsidy for Long Day Care Bookings**

Child Care Subsidy is available to all families who are Australian Residents if the child meets 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. Combined family income is used to determine the subsidy percentage. Income thresholds

change each financial year. Current thresholds are available from the Department of Human Services website. See [servicesaustralia.gov.au/](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/) . See 'Activity Level and Subsidised Care.'

<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 under the Child Care Safety Net. Families who do not meet the activity test but have a preschool-age child attending preschool are eligible for 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight. Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families are eligible for 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight regardless of activity test requirements. People with disability or impairment, including those who receive Disability Support Pension or an invalidity service pension or who have been diagnosed by a registered medical practitioner or clinical psychologist as impaired to a significant degree may be exempt from the activity test.

Families who need more than their available hours of subsidised care per fortnight due to exceptional circumstances can also apply to Centrelink for additional hours.

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 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 application is finalised, families will need to pay full fees.

Child Care Subsidy may not be paid by the Government in certain situations and families will be required to pay full fees for the period involved. These include:

- non-attendance for 14 weeks in a row
- for any days before a child attends the service for the first time.
- for any days in the final attendance period after a child last physically attends the service.

## **Absences**

Families are entitled to receive Child Care Subsidy for up to 42 days where their child is absent, for example due to illness, public holidays, local emergencies and parental leave. Evidence to support these absences is not required. Additional absence days may be available if they meet the situations outlined in the Family Assistance Law and there is evidence to support these.

## **Changes to CCS Payments & Subsidy Rates**

The number of activity hours and subsidy percentage paid by the government can fluctuate depending on the family's circumstances. It is the family's responsibility to keep their details up to date on their myGov account.

Areas that can affect or stop your CCS payments could include one or more of the following areas:

- Child's current immunisation status.
- Lodgement of individual, partners, business or company's annual tax returns.
- Change in work or study hours.
- Changes to income.
- Changes to living or support arrangements with a partner or parent of the child.
- Any other information requested by the government.

Parents are strongly advised to check their myGov and CCS benefits regularly as they are responsible for paying the full daily fee if their CCS support payments have been stopped, varied or suspended. The service has no access to your private myGov account and therefore cannot inform you of any issues regarding your account. The service may notice that CCS payments have been stopped or changed when CCS payments received from the government differs from the Xplor's payment estimate. Where possible we will inform you of a change, but parents are responsible for rectifying the payments with Centrelink

## **Statement of Account**

Fee statements are emailed & available on the Xplor app.

## **Long Day Care Bookings:**

### **Statements of Entitlement**

We will issue fortnightly Statements which include child/children's full name/s, date of care, date of payment, daily and weekly hours of care, absences, hourly fees and hourly and daily fee totals and the number of hours' fees were reduced (eg by Child Care Subsidy) and total reduction amount. (Parents' MyGov accounts will also have how much care families have received and how much Child Care Subsidy has been paid.)

If families pay more than the fee amount required at the time, change will not be given but will be credited to the family's account.

### **Pre-School Bookings:**

We will issue a statement each fortnight detailing the name of the child attending, the number of days per week they are enrolled, the fee payable for attendance and the total owing for that term. If families pay more than the fee amount required at the time, change will not be given but will be credited to the family's account.

## **Invoices**

Invoices for the amount of fees payable in a period will be issued every two weeks. If families pay more than the fee amount required at the time, change will not be given but will be credited to the family's account.

## **Receipts**

Families can view their receipts on the Xplor app once Payments have been processed.

## **Early and Late Fees**

Early and late fees will be charge at \$20 per 15 minutes. They will apply when:

- Arrivals are before 8.15 am or departures are after 3.45pm for pre-school booking,
- Arrivals are before 8.00am or departures are after 5.15pm for long day care booking.

If you have arrived late or signed out late electronically it will be recorded on our software system and charge out accordingly. Please note that late collection of children may be reported to the Child Protection Helpline as Neglect of Care (see Delivery & Collection of Children Policy).

A child's position may be withdrawn if families have multiple late pick up charges. Repeated incidents of late pickups may also be reported to Family and Community Justice under the NSW Mandatory Reporting Guidelines as a sign of neglect of care.

This fee covers the cost of employing the staff required to supervise a child outside our operating hours. It may be waived at the discretion of the Nominated Supervisor.

## **Vacation Care Fees**

### **Long Day Care:**

Fees are charged for 50 weeks per year, starting from early January and finishing at the end of December. Families only need to pre book into the vacation care program if they require additional days.

### **Pre-School:**

Fees are not charged for the school holidays, as set by the Department of Education but families can book into the vacation care program by completing a booking form. All booked days will be charged regardless of attendance. Fess will we charged to the families as a long day care fee. Families must be registered for CCS to receive a discounted daily rate.

There is a maximum of 20 preschool aged children per day during the vacation periods. Priority will be allocated to parents who are working, studying or a child is identified at risk.

## **Meal Fees**

Meals for preschool bookings are charged at a daily rate of \$6 per day regardless of your child's attendance. Meals are included in the long day care fees.

## **Wet Bags Fees**

All children will receive one wet bag as part of their initial enrolment into our service. All additional bags will be charged out at \$10 each. An additional bag may be received as a request of purchase from the families or

given to a child to put wet or soiled clothes in if their original bag is not available for use. (ie the wet bag is not in the child's bag and may have been left at home).

When spare wet bags have been returned to the service a credit will be generated back on to the child's account.

### **Termination**

Should families wish to end a permanent booking at the service, 2 weeks written notice is required. If families do not provide this notice, they will be charged 2 weeks' fees. The Nominated Supervisor may also suspend or terminate a child's enrolment after providing 2 weeks' notice, unless they believe the child's behaviour poses an unacceptable risk to the welfare and safety of other children and educators, in which case no notice period is required. Please note children must be signed in and out by parents/guardians on the last scheduled day of their attendance for the Child Care Subsidy to apply. If this does not occur families are required to pay full fees.

In relation to casual bookings, at least 24 hours' notice is required if a child no longer requires a place in the booked session. If this notice is not provided, families will be charged for the session.

There may be instances where cancellation occurs as a result of an emergency or other special circumstance. The Nominated Supervisor has the discretion to waive the termination fee in these situations.

### **Method of Payment**

#### **Pre-School Fees & Long Day Care Fees:**

- Are charged fortnightly
- Must be paid in full before the following fortnight invoice is issued.
- At the end of each term, preschool fees must be paid in full to secure your child's placement for the following term.
- All fees must be paid in full at the end of each calendar year to secure your child's placement for the following year.

#### **Payment of Fees:**

- Cash fees are not accepted.
- Payment by Direct Debit, Internet Banking, or EFTPOS is preferred.
- Payments can be made through the childcare software program. Please note additional charges will be applied by the software provider to payments made this way.
- If the incorrect amount is paid, change will not be given but will be credited to the family's account.
- All fees received will be processed and a receipt emailed.
- Any queries regarding fees are to go to the Clerical Assistant or the Treasurer.
- Are required to be paid on time while your child is enrolled at the Service. This includes sick days and family holidays but excludes periods when the service is closed.

#### **Waiving of Fees:**

The organisation holds the right to waive fees under certain circumstances:

- Financial hardship

- The child's wellbeing is at risk

Fee waivers can be made at the discretion of the Director and/or with approval from the Management committee. See Fee Waiver Policy.

### **Fees in Arrears**

If fees remain unpaid, the Gloucester Pre-School Incorporated Management Committee will take the following action:

- a. When fees are one week overdue, a friendly reminder note (Letter 1) is placed in the child's folder and emailed with seven days to pay.
- b. If fees are not brought up to date within 7 days (Letter 2) is placed in the child's file and emailed.
- c. If fees are not brought up to date within 7 days the parents will be sent a letter requesting payment of outstanding fees (Letter 3) to their home address. This letter will be followed up with a telephone call from the Treasurer (or other Executive Officer). Parents will then have 7 days to pay the fees. If the fees remain unpaid the child will no longer be enrolled and they will be unable to attend.
- d. If fees remain unpaid following the cessation of the child's placement at the Pre-School the Management Committee will commence legal action through a debt collection agency or the office of the Sheriff. Costs incurred for this action will be added to the parent's account.
- e. If at a later date the child or another child from that family wishes to re-enrol, they may only do so when all previous debts are paid.
- f. Once a family has fallen into arrears, they will, from that point on, be expected to pay their Pre-School fees weekly and consider themselves on one week's notice of the child's position being cancelled if they fail to pay on time.

### **Disputed Fees**

If a family have a dispute about fee payment they may:

- a) Talk to the Clerical person
- b) If it is unresolved, submit a letter outlining their issues to the Management Committee.
- c) They are welcome to attend the next Management Committee meeting and present their case.

Any Committee decision regarding the fees is final and binding.

### **Overdue Fees**

If a family is having difficulty paying fees, or wish to change the method by which they pay their fees they may discuss this with the Clerical person so suitable arrangements can be made. Alternatively, families can make an appointment to speak with the Director.

Not paying fees will put a child/ren's place/s in Gloucester Pre-School & Early Years Learning Centre in jeopardy.

**Any unpaid fees remaining at the end of a term must be paid up in full prior to the commencement of the following term. The child/ren cannot commence the following term until all fees are paid in full.**

**End of Year Payments:**

By week 8 of term 4 all pre-school fees for the year must be paid in full. If families have a balance owing after this date and have not made alternative arrangements with the Director or Treasurer of the pre-school, the families will not be entitled to the following until fees are paid in full;

1. participation in any pre-school activities,
2. attend the last 2 weeks of pre-school and
3. their child's journal

If parents wish to take their fees dispute to an external dispute resolution body they may email their complaint to ACECQA. [www.acecqu.gov.au](http://www.acecqu.gov.au) or [www.complaintline.com.au](http://www.complaintline.com.au) which will give them up to date links to dispute resolution schemes.

### **Long Day Care End of Enrolment Attendances**

Children attending the Early Years Learning Centre or Long Day Care are required to give two weeks' notice of any enrolment changes. A child must physically attend their final day of enrolment. If they do not attend on the final day families will be invoiced the full daily rate for each day back to their last attendance as no CCS will be paid by the Department.

Children heading to school the following year will be required to give two weeks written notice as we operate in January as your enrolment will continue until the school term starts.

### **Emergency Closures**

If, in the case of an emergency, the Pre-school needs to be closed for an entire day or part thereof (eg power outage), fees will be payable as per regular attendance.

## **Sources**

Managing a Child Care Service – a hands-on guide for managers

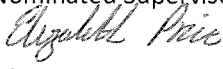
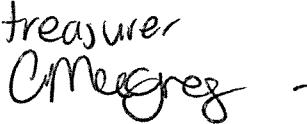
Bryant, L. (2009). *Managing a Child Care Service : A Hands-On Guide for Service Providers*. Sydney: Community Child Care Co-Operative.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care) Act 2009

## **Review**

The Management, Staff, Families and interested parties will monitor and review the effectiveness of this Policy regularly. Updated information will be incorporated as needed.

- Reviewed by: Elizabeth Price  
Date: 19/06/2023  
Position: Nominated Supervisor  
Signature: 
- Accepted by Committee Member:  
Date: 29/6/23  
Position: treasurer  
Signature: 
- Previously reviewed: 25/06/2022  
Date for next review: 19/06/2024