

Policy 3.8

FEES AND BOOKINGS POLICY

Accounts, Fees, & Payment of Fees on Time

- **A booking fee of \$400 per family** is required in advance, to ensure that the place is kept available. **This amount is non refundable if you do not commence attendance**, as holding your place prevents others from booking in. When you leave the centre, after the week's attendance have been submitted and validated by Centrelink, the bond will be deducted from any unpaid fees, *providing one full week's notice is given that care is ending*. Any remaining credit will then be reimbursed to you by cheque.
One week's notice is required when care is ceasing - or the bond paid will be forfeited.
- **One week's notice is required to alter the Contract for Care** (which you signed on enrolment) **for days/sessions for care**. Extra (casual) non-booked days are sometimes available if needed – talk to the Directors about this.
- **Fees must be paid promptly, each week**. **If not paid, your child's care may be cancelled**. Accounts are provided showing attendances and total Centrelink benefit paid for the previous week, and estimated charges for the current week. We ask that you use the Numero Pro “Debit Pro”, system to avoid any penalties. If you decline to do this, and your fees are not paid on time, we will insist that you use this system as a condition of your child remaining in the Centre.
If Debt Collector is required their commission fee will be added to your account.
- When a **public holiday** falls on a day when your child would normally be in care, the normal daily fee applies. No make up days can be offered for any reason.
- Holidays are charged at half fees– this is to hold your child's place during this time. Two weeks' notice is required for **holiday bookings** (ie. your annual leave)
- Normal fees are payable if a child is **absent from care due to illness**. If you receive Childcare Benefit we advise you to provide a sickness certificate if your child is sick, as there are limits to your fee subsidy entitlement for absences (30 Days per financial year-Sick days are not counted as one of the 30, providing a medical certificate is provided).

WE REGRET, WE WILL BE UNABLE TO TAKE CHILDREN INTO CARE IF FEES ARE NOT PAID PROMPTLY

- **ALL BOOKED DAYS MUST BE PAID FOR, INCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, SICK DAYS, HOLIDAYS, OR YOUR ROSTERED DAYS OFF, WHICH MAY FALL ON YOUR BOOKED DAY.**
- If fees paid fall **more than two weeks behind, parents can not continue to access** the Centre until their fees are fully paid. Even then, ongoing enrolment can not be guaranteed as there is a waiting list for vacant places
- Parents with a **repeating history of late payment** or non-payment of fees will have their enrolment at the Centre cancelled.

- **Weekly accounts and receipts** will be emailed to you, or placed in your parent pockets. Please clear these weekly.
- **You must notify the Director immediately if you are experiencing financial difficulty.** We may be able to direct you how to seek additional financial assistance. In some cases you may be eligible for extra benefits such as JET allowances for parents studying or special circumstances relief.
- **Payment of Fees:-**
The Centre requires you to pay your fees by direct debit from your bank account or credit card via the Numero Pro Debit Pro system. Please complete the authorisation form to authorise the Centre to process weekly direct debits against your bank account or credit card on the Friday of each week. Credit card transactions attract a charge of 2.2% for Visa/Mastercard cards

Late Fee for Picking up your child after 6.30pm:

A late fee of \$2 per minute or part thereof is charged, and is to be paid for, to the staff member, at that time. This is because the staff charge a fee for privately looking after your child after 6.30 pm, which is after our licensed operating hours. **To avoid paying this fee, you must exit the centre prior to 6.30 pm**

- **If you require more than 10 hours daily**, there is an extra fee involved. Discuss your circumstances with the Director, and you may be able to access additional fee subsidy to assist.

Bookings, Child Care Benefits and Centrelink.

- Parents or guardians enrolling children must sign the enrolment form which includes our fees payment policy. Fees must be paid in line with the policy. **Please note that signing this form is your undertaking to pay all fees due, and your acceptance of our Fees and Bookings Policy.**
- Before a booking can be accepted, **a bond of \$400 is required.** Bookings will be accepted subject to the availability of licensed places and in the priority of access prescribed in the regulations.
- **Changes** of bookings or cancellation of care require a minimum of **one week's notice** in writing, otherwise normal fees will be charged.
- Please notify us in writing of any upcoming **holidays two weeks in advance.**
- Days additional to your booking will be charged at the **casual rate**
- The **gap fee** (the Centre daily rate less the child care benefit) **must be paid** for **all** booked days regardless of the reason for any absence. **PUBLIC HOLIDAYS which fall on your booked days must be paid for.** (This is normal practice in Childcare centres) We cannot offer make up days for any reason.
- All bookings are **weekly. We cannot accept fortnightly roster bookings.**
- We can not guarantee you a place for **casual** day bookings as the Centre has a waiting list, although we will endeavour to help. Please ring the Centre as far in advance as possible
- As early as possible, before commencing care, notify Centrelink that your child will be attending our Centre and quote our reference number 555 006 374K. It may take over two weeks for Centrelink to advise us of your Child Care Benefit Rate. **Until we receive this notification, you will be required to pay the full fee without benefit.** When the advice of the benefit rate is provided to us by Centrelink, we will credit your account for any overpayment.

- If you are eligible, Centrelink will **subsidise your child care fees for up to 42 days per financial year for holidays, sick days and rostered days off**. To access this benefit you are required to note the reason for the absences and sign for them on the sign on sheet. Absences in excess of your allowable number will be charged at the full fee rate. Holiday fees will be reduced to half fees if we are formally advised in advance. If you provide a sickness certificate the days absent due to illness will not reduce the days subsidised
- It is your responsibility to notify Centrelink with any changes to your financial situation which may affect your Child Care Benefit Rate. Please talk to the Director if you need assistance or explanation on how the system of Child Care Benefit subsidy works.
- The Centre processes your child's attendance information by computer link to CCMS (Commonwealth Government body) for calculation of eligibility for Child Care Payment Benefits and Child Care Rebate. When this information is received back from CCMS, you are charged the gap fee.
- The government has introduced a **rebate** of up to 50% on child care out of pocket costs which is paid directly to parents through Centrelink. Please contact Centrelink for information that is specific to your family. Parents are asked to assign their 50% out of pocket rebate from Centrelink (Child Care Rebate), to be paid directly to the Centre, to reduce their weekly gap fees.
- Commonwealth regulations **prohibit any discounting of fees**.

References

Private Operators Long Day Care Handbook
Commonwealth Government & CCMS Bulletins 2009.
Consultation with staff & parents

Original Policy 1997
Latest Update October 2012

Recent Update Jan 2012
Update Due Oct 2013