

STATEMENT

Kogarah Community Services (KCS) sets Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) fees according to our annual budget in order to meet the income required to develop and maintain a quality service for children and families. As a community-based organisation, we strive to ensure that our service is affordable and accessible to all families in our community. The KCS Board of Management ratifies the budget annually and monitors it on a monthly basis.

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.

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, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor and visitors of the OSHC 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.

The KCS fee structure is outlined as follows. For current session rates, please refer to our website.

ADMINISTRATIVE FEES

- An Administration Levy is charged per term. This fee will be applied to your account if your child(ren) attends one or more of our Services. The fee will be applied to a maximum of 2 children per family.
- An Equipment Levy is charged per term for before and after school care only.

GENERAL FEES

- Fees are charged per session regardless of the actual attendance hours at the Service.
- Fees are invoiced fortnightly in arrears
- CCS is paid directly to KCS 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
- 'Gap Fees' must be paid via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) (effective 02 July 2023)
- Fees are payable to KCS for any absence which falls on a day that a child is booked into the Service unless one week's written notification is provided to KCS.
- No fee is charged when the Service is closed over the Christmas/New Year period/Public Holidays
- Booking can be made on a permanent or casual basis. Casual bookings are only accepted if a spot is available.

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, bank transfer or credit/debit card. The family is required to provide banking details via the Xplor Home app or authorisation form to facilitate set up of the direct debit account
- Cash and cheques will not be accepted
- Fees and charges associated with the direct debit system provided by our external provider are outlined when completing a direct debit authorisation form (either online or hard copy)
- A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees or if the card link to the direct debit has expired and new card details have not been updated
- Families will be issued with a Statement of Entitlement on a fortnightly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements
- The Statement of Entitlement will include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts
- The Statement of Entitlement is generated using our CCS Software which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation

ABSENCES FROM OSHC SERVICE

- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session
- Families must still pay the 'gap' or full fee to the Service if their child is unable to attend unless 7 days' notice has been given. [Fee charging practices are commercial decisions made by each childcare service and are not a matter regulated by the Family Assistance Law. Source: Australian Government Department of Education]
- 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).
- Allowable absences can be taken for any reason including when children are sick. Families do not have to provide evidence.
- Additional absences can be claimed for the specified reasons as defined by the Family Assistance Law
- 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.
- 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 Children's Services Manager.
- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink 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

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued within 2 working days and then again after one week if the fees are still outstanding.
- 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 agreement 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. To enter in to a debt agreement a minimum of 50% of the outstanding fees must be paid.
- A child's position may be suspended if payment has not been made after three weeks, for which the family will receive a final letter suspending the child's position. At this time the KCS will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.

NON-NOTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE FEE

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to inform the Service if their child is absent from care.

- During After School Care the fee will be applied if the Service has not been notified that their child is absent prior to the start of care.
- During Before School Care & Vacation Care the fee will be applied if the Service has not been notified that their child is absent prior to the end of the session.

Notifications can be made either by:

- Text
 - Carlton South: 0419 019 032
 - Kyeemagh: 0416 301 781
- Email: childcare@kcs.org.au
- Via the Xplor Home App

Please note: A message from a sibling or representative of the school will not be accepted as appropriate notification, and the fee will still apply.

LATE COLLECTION FEES

The service operational hours are listed below. It is a breach of the Education and Care Services National Regulations to accept or provide care to children on the premises outside of these hours.

| SERVICE | Before School Care | After School Care | Vacation Care |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Carlton South Public School | 7am – 9am | 3pm – 6pm | 7am – 6pm |
| Kyeemagh Public School | 7am – 9:10am | 3:10pm – 6pm | |

- After School Care and Vacation Care close at 6pm each day. Should children be present after the closing time, a late collection fee will be applied to your account. This fee is charged per 15 minutes or part thereof and will be applied per family, not per child.
- Families who are continually late collecting their child/ren may jeopardise their child's place at the Service. Should this be the case, a representative from KCS will contact the Parent/Guardian to discuss this matter in line with the KCS Arrival and Departure Policy.

CHANGE OF FEES

- The fees are set by the KCS Board of Management. Should it be necessary to amend fees, families will be given a minimum of two weeks' notice of any fee changes (Regulation 172).
- 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.

VACATION CARE

Excursion/Incursion Fees:

- Additional charges will apply if your child attends an Excursion or Incursion during the Vacation Care period. The amount will be confirmed within the Excursion Booking Form & Vacation Care Program
- Fees will be applied in addition to the daily in centre fee

- You will be charged the Excursion/Incursion fee unless you have provided 7 days' notice that your child will be absent from care on the day of the Excursion/Incursion

RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor are responsible for:

- ensuring all families are aware of our Payment of Fees Policy
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information
- Ensuring that the primary guardian nominated on the account is the parent linked to the child's CRN
- providing families with regular statement of fees payable
- 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 2 weeks written notice to families of any fee increases or changes to the way fees are collected

RESPONSIBILITY OF FAMILIES

- provide the Service with the correct enrolment details to facilitate the CCS claim, including:
 - Centrelink Reference Numbers (CRN) for any child and CCS Claimant
 - date of birth for child and CCS Claimant
 - This information needs to be provided within 21 days of the child commencing care, if the information is not provided or provided incorrectly then KCS cannot guarantee that CCS will be backdated for this period.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to accept the Enrolment Notice submitted to Centrelink, by KCS. This needs to be done for the CCS to be applied to the account.
- Accept the Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) via the Xplor Home App
- If the parent does not have a current application for CCS they will need to contact Centrelink – in this instance the CCS will only be backdated to the date of the application not the care start date
- 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.

THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS

Parents are generally liable to pay the co-contribution for child care 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@education.gov.au

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

[Child Care Subsidy](#)

[Centrelink Customer Reference Number](#)

[Absences from childcare- Australian Government](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The Feed Payments Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators and management.

COMPLIANCE

| NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS) | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE & 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 |
| 170 | Policies and procedures to be followed |
| 171 | Policies and procedures to be kept available |
| 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.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook |
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SOURCE

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- 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 Provider Handbook
<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook>
- Australian Government Department of Education
<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 Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Updated 2023).
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Fee Payment Procedure
- Delivery of Children to, and Collection from and Education and Care Service Premises
- Governance Policy
- Dealing with Complaints Policy (Families)
- Enrolment Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

RECORD OF REVISIONS

Unless the Policy specifically states otherwise, the Policy does not form part of your employment agreement with KCS. KCS may unilaterally vary, remove or replace this Policy at any time. To the extent that this Policy imposes any obligations on KCS and/or purports to provide any right or benefit to you, those obligations are not contractual and do not give rise to any contractual rights. The Employee is required to be familiar with the content of the Policy and comply with the terms at all times.

| File Reference | CSP061 – Fee Payments | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Date Created | 14/10/2021 | Created By | Jordan Ross | Responsible | Children's Services Manager |

| Version Number | Modified or Reviewed by | Modifications Made/Notes | Date | STATUS (Internal, External, Archived) |
|----------------|-------------------------|--|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| V1 | OM | New policy | August 2014 | External |
| V2 | SR | Compliance with NQF & Rebrand | January 2016 | External |
| V3 | SR & TT | Annual Review | July 2017 | External |
| V4 | TT | New CCS payments | August 2019 | External |
| V5 | OM | Childcare Desktop template | May 2020 | External |
| V6 | TT | Review due to inclusion of KCS OSHC Kyeemagh | October 2020 | External |
| V7 | SR | Childcare Desktop Policy Review | February 2021 | External |

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|----|----------|---|--------------|----------|
| V8 | JR | New format | October 2021 | External |
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| V8 | SR/Board | Review/Approval (sent 24/11/2021) | 24/11/2021 | External |
| V8 | SR/Board | Approved by the Board | 30/11/2021 | External |
| V9 | JR | <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) • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required | July 2023 | External |