

CEEC FA POL FEES POLICY

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PURPOSE

Catholic Early EdCare, a Directorate of Centacare under the Corporation of Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to providing quality education and care services to families at an affordable cost and therefore this policy has been developed to ensure Catholic Early EdCare implement fee structures across all Services that are consistent with the Mission, Vision and Values of Centacare, with consideration to legislative requirements, quality, sustainability and affordability.

SCOPE

This policy applies to staff as defined in the Education and Care Services National Law.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with –
- Regulation 168 (2) (n) of the Education and Care National Regulations 2011
 - National Quality Standard- Element 7.1.2
 - Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme – Funding Requirements 2017 for Long Day Care services
 - Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme – Funding Requirements 2017 for Central Governing Bodies and Member Kindergarten Services

- DET Child Care Service Handbook – Department of Education and Training

2. SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 All Catholic Early EdCare Services will –

- Consult with the Area Manager in relation to fees and fee structures
- Ensure payment of fees results in the delivery of a sustainable service with consistently high standards of quality education and care is provided to families and the wider community
- Respond to the non-payment of accounts and identify appropriate actions required to recover outstanding monies in consultation with the Area Manager
- Inform Parents/Carers of all fees through a Fees Fact Sheet
- Provide reasonable notice to Parents/Carers (at least 28 working days in advance) if there is a fee change at the Service. Notification may be in writing, in the form of a memo on the notice board, in a newsletter, electronically via email or may be placed as a special note on the account statement.
- Provide a variety of payment options to collect fees from families
- Discuss with Parents/Carers outstanding fees
- Inform Parents/Carers of the Service's fee structure, terms of payments and notify Parents/Carers of outstanding fees
- Where required, facilitate the receipt of payment of fees
- Implement a fee payment plan as required to assist Parents/Carers with the timely payment of fees
- Apply 'other' fees/levies based on the requirements of the Service and set out in the Fees Fact Sheet and introduced only when authorised by of the Director of Catholic Early EdCare. 'Other fees/levies' include but are not limited to – hat levies, late payment fee, non-communication fee, key/fob levy, late collection fee etc.

3. PARENT/CARERS

3.1 Parents/Carers (families) are requested to –

- Adhere to CEEC FA POL Fees Policy
- Ensure fees are paid

4. LONG DAY CARE

4.1 Further to the service requirements section, all Long Day Care Services are additionally required to –

- Not charge fees during the two week Christmas closure period
- Ensure fees are charged for public holidays

- Invoke a non-communication fee when the Service is not informed in timely manner that a child won't be attending (for permanent booking only)
 - Inform Parents/Carers that seven working days should be provided by Parents/Carers in order to amend a permanent booking and/or cancel a permanent booking
 - Charge an enrolment fee annually
 - Permanent bookings absences should be charged irrespective of notice of absence. An absence occurs when a child does not attend the day/session of care as booked, and neither a cancellation or an amendment in writing has been made to their booking
- 4.2 Each Long Day Care has an Approved Kindergarten program operating. Various subsidies, through the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme - Funding Requirements 2017 (QKFS) are available to reduce costs to families (and to support the provision of a kindergarten program). These subsidies are paid directly to the Service for children in the eligible-age cohort (i.e. children who are at least four years old by 30 June in the year they participate) and attend during Kindergarten Program hours for a minimum of 3 days per week. Subsidies are not available for children outside the eligible cohort, although they may be participating in the program.
- 4.3 Standard Subsidy –
- Funding ensures that children attending the Kindergarten Program do not pay an additional cost for accessing the program (i.e. the daily fee is not higher)
 - Families utilising more than one kindergarten program (i.e. two different Services) must nominate which service will receive the QKFS funding. This information is on the enrolment form
 - Funds received will be utilised to support the kindergarten learning program including but not limited to the ongoing purchase of quality and age-appropriate resources
- 4.4 Low socio-economic subsidy –
- Funding is based on Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) and is not relevant at all Services
 - If received, the subsidy is to be used by the service to reduce out of pocket expenses for all families with eligible children
 - The subsidy is applied as an account adjustment per term
- 4.5 QKFS Plus Kindy Support –
- For families who can provide a copy of –
 - A current Australian Government Health Care Card (HCC), or
 - Current Australian Government Pensioner Concession Card, or
 - Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card or White Card, or
 - Formal communication, such as a letter, from the relevant agency stating the intent to issue a HCC, or
 - The child identifies as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (indicated on the enrolment form by the family),

- The family has three or more children, of the same age, enrolled in the same year.
- Funding will only be claimed for the term the evidence is provided i.e. when the service receives a copy of the evidence.

5. KINDERGARTEN

5.1 Further to the Service requirements section, the following terms apply to stand alone Kindergartens –

- Fees should be charged at the beginning of each Kindergarten term (for the forthcoming term)
- Fees are required to be paid in full prior to the end of the term
- Fees are payable during a child's absence, including family holidays, as the child's place and child/staff ratios are required to be maintained by the Service

5.2 Each standalone Kindergarten has an approved Kindergarten program operating. Various subsidies, through the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) are available to reduce costs to families (and to support the provision of a kindergarten program). These subsidies are paid directly to the service for children in the eligible-age cohort (i.e. children who are at least four years old by 30 June in the year they participate) and attend during Kindergarten Program hours for a minimum of 3 days per week. Subsidies are not available for children outside the eligible cohort, although they may be participating in the program.

5.3 Standard Subsidy –

- Funding ensures that children attending the Kindergarten Program do not pay an additional cost for accessing the program (i.e. the daily fee is not higher)
- Families utilising more than one Kindergarten program (i.e. two different Services) must nominate which service will receive the QKFS funding. This information is on the enrolment form
- Funds received will be utilised to support the Kindergarten learning program including but not limited to the ongoing purchase of quality and age-appropriate resources

5.4 Low Socio-Economic Subsidy –

- Funding is based on Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) and is not applicable at all Services
- If received, the subsidy is to be used by the Service to reduce out of pocket expenses for all families with eligible children
- The subsidy is applied as an account adjustment per term

5.5 QKFS Plus Kindy Support -

- For families who can provide a copy of:
 - A current Australian Government Health Care Card (HCC), or
 - Current Australian Government Pensioner Concession Card, or
 - Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card or White Card, or

- Formal communication, such as a letter, from the relevant agency stating the intent to issue a HCC, or
- The child identifies as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (indicated on the enrolment form by the family), or the family has three or more children, of the same age, enrolled in the same year.
- Funding will only be claimed for the term the required documentation/evidence is provided i.e. when the Service receives a copy of the required documentation/evidence.

6. OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE (OSHC)

6.1 Further to the Service requirements section, the following terms apply to Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) –

- When applying a casual booking fee this may be charged at a higher rate than a permanent booking
- A non-communication fee may be charged when the Parent/Carer fails to notify the Service that their child will not be attending a session of care and the Service is required to contact an authorised nominee(s) etc. to follow up absent children and locate their whereabouts etc.
- Fees are not to be charged for public holidays or during the Services' Christmas closure period
- It is recommended that bookings for vacation care should not be confirmed and processed until term fees are up to date (or alternative arrangements have been made between the Service, Area Manager and the Parent/Carer).

7. OSHC – ABSENCES (TERM TIME)

7.1 Permanent and casual booking absences should be charged irrespective of notification of absence. An absence occurs when a child does not attend the day/session of care as booked, and neither a cancellation nor an amendment in writing has been made to their booking. An absence may also occur when a Parent/Carer contacts the Services to inform them their child/children will not be attending the next booked session of care.

8. OSHC – VACATION CARE PERMANENT BOOKING CANCELLATIONS

8.1 A permanent vacation care booking is a booking made 10 working days prior to the commencement of the vacation care period and/or a booking made within the 10 working days period but prior to the commencement of the vacation care period. The difference between the two permanent booking scenarios is that a booking made 10 working days prior to the commencement of the vacation care period should be charged at the Service's permanent booking rate; whilst a booking made less than 10 working days prior to the commencement of

the program should be charged at the Service's casual booking rate (even though it is considered a permanent booking).

- 8.2 A Parent/Carer may cancel a vacation care booking at any time by providing a notice of cancellation in writing to the Service.
- 8.3 If a cancellation is received with less than ten working days of the booking, the full cost of the day (or days) should be charged to the Parent/Carer account.
- 8.4 If a cancellation is received with ten working days' notice (or more) prior to the commencement of the booking, the Parent/Carer should not be charged for this cancellation.

9. OSHC – VACATION CARE CASUAL BOOKING CANCELLATIONS

- 9.1 A casual booking is a booking made after the commencement of a vacation care program.
- 9.2 A Parent/Carer may cancel a casual vacation care booking at any time by providing a notice of cancellation in writing to the Service.
- 9.3 A casual booking requires a minimum 48 hours notification of cancellation in writing, to avoid the full cost of the day being charged to the Parent/Carers account. Whilst a casual vacation care booking may be viewed by the Parent/Carer as a favourable option due to the fact they can cancel with only 48 hours notification, they run the risk that a casual booking (made after the commencement of the vacation care program) may not be able to be accommodated by a service.

10. OSHC –VACATION CARE ABSENCES

- 10.1 If a child is absent from a vacation care day without a cancellation in writing being provided to the Service as per the above sections/requirements, irrespective of whether it is a permanent or casual booking, the full cost of the day should be charged to the Parent/Carer account.

11. OSHC –VACATION CARE AMENDMENT

- 11.1 An amendment to a vacation care booking is where a Parent/Carer varies the day or days their child is booked to attend vacation care.
- 11.2 If a permanent vacation care booking is to be amended by a Parent/Carer, a minimum of seven working days' notice in writing is required to be provided to the Service. The main reason a Service requires seven working days' notice is to allow the Service to amend a staff roster in accordance with the requirements of the Children Services Award and avoid circumstances which can financially impact a Service.
- 11.3 If a casual vacation care booking is to be amended by a Parent/Carer, a minimum of 48 hours' notification in writing, should be provided to the Service.
- 11.4 It is at the discretion of the Coordinator to charge the Parent/Carers account for an amendment made to a permanent and/or casual vacation care booking, if notification was not provided to

the Service in the requested time frames. For example if a Parent/Carers amends a booking to change the day of care, without the required timeframes required for notification, the Service may consider charging for the original booking and amended booking.

12. DETERMINING FEE STRUCTURES

- 12.1 The fee structure for each Service will be determined and set by Catholic Early EdCare.
- 12.2 Fee structures will be reviewed at a minimum annually, by Catholic Early EdCare.
- 12.3 Senior Management and Area Manager will determine individual Service fees via
 - Consultation with Service Directors/Coordinators
 - Assessing the resources and materials that the Service currently has at its disposal
 - Quantifying the resources and material required for the financial year to achieve the needs of the Service
 - Ensuring adequate staffing is provided to meet legislative compliance
 - Considering the future needs of the community in relation to components of care and maximum capacity and financially plan to accommodate any increasing/decreasing needs
 - Developing a budget to ensure there are sufficient funds to operate a high quality and compliant service
 - Due consideration for maintaining service sustainability over the immediate financial year and into the future
 - Considering the fee structures of other similar Services, particularly Services within the local area
 - Considering the maximum funding (CCS or Kindergarten Funding) as compared to the proposed fee structure
 - Determining what is a reasonable level of increase in fees
 - Consideration of how fees can be adjusted to minimise cost to families and identify where possible complimentary financial processes exist or can exist

13. BUDGET PROCESS

- 13.1 Area Managers will consult with Directors/Coordinators to identify all of the costs associated with the provision of a service. This may include but is not limited to –
 - Staff costs, Payroll liability
 - Materials and Supplies
 - Expected/forecast enrolments
 - Facility costs, Capital provisions
 - Fees and Charges
 - Cash flow commitments and projections

14. DESIGNATED PAYMENT PERIOD

- 14.1 The designated payment period is the day/days the fees should be paid by in regard to the criteria listed below –
- Booked attendance payments are to be made at least one week in advance (i.e. the Friday before the week that care is provided)
 - Casual attendance payment should be collected on the day the care is provided
- 14.2 Services will require written authorisation by an Area Manager to operate outside of this policy (The payment period can be up extended up to a maximum of 14 days).
- 14.3 All Parents/Carers are required to abide by the designated payment period unless other terms are negotiated with the approval of the Area Manager (e.g. a fee payment plan arranging periodical instalments).
- 14.4 Notations of any arrangements must be added to the appropriate section of Child Care Software
- 14.5 Non-payment of overdue fees may result in the suspension of care

15. REVIEWING OUTSTANDING DEBT

- 15.1 When reviewing overdue accounts for each stage of action, Directors/Coordinator must consider any special circumstances before proceeding, such as a child at risk, family with financial hardship etc. When a family meets the relevant criteria, Directors/Coordinators are to discuss this with Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) with the Area Manager.

16. ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

- 16.1 Directors/Coordinator are required to –
- Keep records of all accounts (including overdue accounts)
 - Maintain records of communication with Parents/Carers in relation to overdue fees should be maintained on the CEEC Debt Tracker form (available on AI)
 - Liaise with the Area Manager to develop an advance fee payment plan (to ensure prompt payment is received in a timely manner) where required or deemed necessary
 - Take reasonable steps to ensure that all Parents/Carers are informed of the fee structure, balance of account, terms of payment and facilitate payment through communication of payment methods e.g. direct debit.

17. PAYMENT PERIOD EXTENSION

- 17.1 The Area Manager has the discretion to grant a payment period extension to Parents/Carers. When considering any extension, the Area Manager shall take into account –
- length of time the family has used the service
 - past payment record (if applicable)
 - relationship with the parents/guardians

- the likelihood that the parents/guardians will pay (if attainable)
 - The reasonableness of the requested payment period extension
 - In some cases outstanding fee practices of the Parish/school could be consulted
- 17.2 Payment period extensions must be documented and reviewed by the Director/Coordinator and the Area Manager on a regular basis, taking into account the criteria above.

18. MANAGING OUTSTANDING DEBT

18.1 When reviewing overdue accounts for each stage of action, consider any special circumstances before proceeding, such as a child at risk of harm or neglect, a family undergoing financial hardship etc. In such cases, consideration should be given to whether Additional Child Care Subsidy is applicable. All amounts overdue (i.e. exceeding the relevant payment period) shall be managed as follows –

- Stage 1 – Within 7 days

Within 7 days of a debt being deemed overdue, the Parents/Carers shall be contacted informally (e.g. face to face or by phone) to allow for the identification of any issues causing the non-payment. If there are circumstances that are preventing the family from paying, the Director/Coordinator will contact the Area Manager to discuss the situation, the Service's options and if a payment plan is necessary. An account reminder will be issued with the next statement.

- Stage 2 – More than 14 days

Where payment has not been received within 14 days after the relevant payment period or a payment plan has been breached, after consultation with the Area Manager, a reminder letter (Stage 2- Outstanding Fees Reminder Letter) with a statement of account is to be sent to the Parents/Carers requesting the payment of all outstanding monies highlighted as "Outstanding Fees- Reminder".

- Stage 3 – More than 21 days

Where payment has not been received within 21 days of the relevant payment period expiring, the Parents/Carers must be advised by letter (Stage 3 – Outstanding Fees Overdue Letter) with a statement of their account, that care may cease to be provided until payment has been received.

- Stage 4 – More than 28 days

Where payment has not been received within 28 days of the relevant payment period expiring, the Parents/Carers must be advised by letter (Stage 4 – Outstanding Fees Final Reminder Letter) that if payment in full is not received by the service within 7 days from the date of the letter, the child's enrolment is to be suspended and formal recovery action instigated. This must be formally documented and forwarded to the respective person enrolling the child/children.

- Stage 5 – More than 35 days

Where payment has not been received within 35 days of the expiration of the relevant payment period, the Parents/Carers must be advised by letter (Stage 5- Outstanding Fees Suspension of Enrolment Letter) that their child's enrolment will be suspended until (dependent on availability of places) payment is made in full, a direct debit/credit card arrangement has been established and paid two weeks in advance and that formal recovery action may be instigated if payment has not been made within 7 days.

- Stage 6 – More than 60 days

Where payment has not been received within 60 days of the expiration of the relevant payment period, the Fees Payment Plan Agreement has not been followed and with no attempt to rectify this situation, Parents/Carers must be advised by letter that formal debt recovery action will be taken 2 weeks from the date of the letter, the cost of which will be passed on to Parents/Carers.

19. FORMAL RECOVERY/ACTION

19.1 The Director/Coordinator may take formal recovery action only after consultation with the Area Manager and in keeping with the Parish/school policy and procedures–

- Where applicable, investigate if the formal recovery action can be done in conjunction with the school or parish recovery system. If this is not possible or proves to be unsuccessful, assess whether it is practical to engage a local professional debt collection agency.
- Any further action utilising a debt collection company must be approved by the Director Catholic Early EdCare. Service staff members are not permitted to sign agreements with debt collection agencies.
- A review of this situation should include – likelihood of payment, expected debt collection fees, likelihood of fees being recouped and other difficulties etc.

20. WRITING OFF DEBTS

20.1 When all fee payment principles have been followed, the outstanding fee may be deemed to be unrecoverable and written off as a 'bad debt'. If this is the case, the following requirements apply:

- A 'Request to Write off bad debt' form should be completed and signed by the service Director/Coordinator and Area Manager and then provided to Centacare finance.
- Accounts with bad debts are permanently noted in the Service's childcare software
- Any future requests for attendance will not be booked until the previous debt is settled and an agreement is made with the Director/Coordinator that all fees are to be paid two weeks in advance.

21. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

21.1 Parent Payment Plan Agreement

- 21.2 Stage 2 Outstanding Fees Reminder Letter
- 21.3 Stage 3 Outstanding Fees Overdue Letter
- 21.4 Stage 4 Outstanding Fees Final Reminder Letter
- 21.5 Stage 5 Outstanding Fees Suspension of Enrolment letter
- 21.6 Stage 6 Formal Debt Recovery Letter
- 21.7 Debt Tracker form
- 21.8 Request to write off bad debts

COMPLIANCE

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under Centacare's misconduct provisions, as stated in the Employment Guidelines Code of Conduct.

IMPLEMENTATION

Centacare will place this policy on the Archdiocesan Intranet (AI). Directors and managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate communication of policies and supporting documents to staff has occurred. All staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy. Contact the Policy Sponsor for further interpretation of this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Staff Member	In relation to an education and care service, means any individual (other than a volunteer) employed, appointed or engaged to work in or as part of an education and care service, whether as an <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educator ▪ Director/Coordinator ▪ Nominated Supervisor; ▪ Or otherwise.
Educator	Educator means an individual who provides education and care for children as part of an education and care service.
Responsible Person	A Responsible Person is - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Approved Provider, or ▪ A person with management or control, or ▪ A Nominated Supervisor, or ▪ A Person in Day to Day Charge of a Service (PIDTDC)
Nominated Supervisor	Workers who have consented to the nomination by the Approved Provider to take on the responsibility and obligations under the National Law and National Regulations to manage a Kindergarten, Long day care, Outside school hours care Service.
Person in Day to Day charge (PIDTDC)	The PIDTDC is placed in day-to-day charge by the Approved Provider or a Nominated Supervisor of the education and care service; and the person consents to the placement in writing.
Approved Provider	Approved Provider is a person who holds a provider approval. A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions.

22. RECORD KEEPING

- 22.1 Catholic Early EdCare will maintain all records as required by Archdiocese of Brisbane (AOB) and Centacare policies and procedures relating to record keeping.
- 22.2 All Catholic Early EdCare Services are required to maintain all records in their Service folder on the L:\\ drive.
- 22.3 All Catholic Early EdCare Services will adhere to Division 3 – Information and Record Keeping Requirements, Education and Care Services National Regulations; specifically Subdivision 4 – Confidentiality and Storage of Records (181, 182, 183, 184).
- 22.4 Catholic Early EdCare will ensure all privacy provisions are implemented in relation to record keeping in accordance with the AOB privacy statement and AOB privacy policy available on the AI portal this extends to storing records in a secure and confidential manner.
- 22.5 Service records will be maintained (stored and preserved) in conditions suitable to the length of time they need to be kept and made available for use. This applies regardless of the format of the records or the media they are stored on.
- 22.6 Catholic Early EdCare will coordinate the removal, archiving and disposal of records as required.