

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Fees Policy

Policy Statement;

Yarrunga Early Learning Centre has 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. The setting and payment of fees takes into account all requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Australian Tax Office, Privacy Act and the guidelines contained within the Australian Government Child Care Service Handbook. All records held at Yarrunga will be maintained in accordance with Yarrunga's Confidentiality and Privacy Policy.

Families will be provided with accurate fee statements and clear information regarding fee payment processes.

Rationale:

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. Yarrunga's financial health and access to Yarrunga will be maximised by ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment.

Scope:

The policy applies to all members of the Centre's Committee, Director and Administration Assistant and is for the information of the staff and families using the Centre.

Relevant Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Regulations. 168 (2)(n)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.

Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), as amended 2011

National Quality Standards:

National Quality Standards (QA 7) Standard 7.3

Sources

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)- www.acecqa.gov.au

CCB Information – www.humanservices.gov.au

Location of Information:

This information is located in the Committee Handbook and extracts are also included in the Parent Information Booklet and Staff Handbook.

Date endorsed by Committee: June 2018

Date to be reviewed: August 2019

1. Fee Payable/Accounts

- The Management Committee will determine the required fee level to meet budget prediction for the year.
- The fee schedule and fee payment policy will be fully explained to families during the enrolment process.
- Fees payable will be based on either daily or weekly amounts.
- Families will be given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any fee increase.
- The same fee will be charged to all families for equivalent care arrangements.
- A statement of fees will be sent to parents/guardians weekly, in advance.

Date Ratified
,Jul 15, April 16, Feb 17,Aug 17,June 18

To be Reviewed
August 2019

- Families are required to pay fees in advance. Payments are reconciled with the bank statements and will appear on family's weekly statement. Families are required to pay fees on public holidays if the holiday falls on their regular booked day.
- Fee payment will be recorded according to Australian Government Guidelines. Families may also view details about their child care usage and total fees charged and the fee reductions calculated by the Centrelink office (FAO) on the View Child Care Attendance online statement available through the FAO website.
- Families should contact Yarrunga to advise of their child's inability to attend as soon as this is known. Fees will still be required on days the child would normally attend.

2. Child Care Benefit (CCB), Child Care Rebate (CCR) and the Child Care Management System (CCMS)

- Yarrunga will comply with the Australian Government requirements to be an approved education and care service for the purposes of Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the Child Care Rebate (CCR). The online Child Care Management System (CCMS) reporting requirements and any other requirements for claiming and administering CCB and CCR will be maintained by Yarrunga.
- It is the enrolling parent/guardian's responsibility to complete and lodge their CCB and CCR applications with the FAO.
- All fees are charged at the full rate and submitted to the CCMS office. Each family's eligibility for CCB and CCR is then calculated and Yarrunga is then forwarded these funds. Deductions may then be made to each individual family's accounts.
- Any changes in a family's financial circumstances may result in cancellation of CCB and CCR. It is the family's responsibility to contact the Centrelink office if they wish to dispute this or discuss it further.
- CCB and CCR will be deducted from a family's fees within 14 days of Yarrunga being notified of the amount via CCMS.
- Families will only be eligible for CCB and CCR if child care attendance records are accurately completed and signed by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult, and other eligibility requirements are met.
- Families are entitled to 42 absence days for each registered child in each financial year. CCB is paid for these days provided that the child would normally have attended on that day, and fees have been charged.
- Additional absences can be claimed when the first 42 days have been used. Supporting documentation may be required for approval of additional absences.
- All documentation pertaining to CCB and CCR will be kept for the specified period of time and made available to Australian Government Officers on request.

3. Payment of Fees

- Fees are payable from the agreed commencement date and must be paid two weeks in advance.
- **Banking details:** BSB 640 000
Account No: 375138516
Reference – surname.
- Fees may be paid by electronic funds transfer by direct deposit (internet banking) or a cheque or cash can be handed to office.

4. Overdue Fees

- Parents/guardians with overdue fees will be encouraged by the Director to discuss any difficulties they may have in meeting payments and make suitable arrangements to pay, including the option of a payment plan. If this is not done, or the agreed arrangements are not kept, the matter may be referred to a debt collector and/or cancellation of the child's booking may occur.
- In the case of fees falling into arrears the Office will:

- 1) A reminder letter placed in the family's' pigeon hole and either emailed or posted to the family, stating fees are overdue. The account holder will be given ten business (10) days from the date of that the letter to pay the account in full plus any additional daily fees accrued in the interim, or have initiated a payment plan with the office. If fees are more than two weeks in arrears, no occasional days will be offered to the family.
- 2) If payment has still not been received after the ten business (10) days from the date of the first reminder letter, or an agreed payment plan has not been initiated and signed, the office will issue a second letter of demand for full payment within five (5) business days.
In this letter, Yarrunga will notify the parent/guardian that if payment is not made by the due date, there will no longer be a place available at the centre for the child/children and the matter will be placed in the hands of the debt collector.
- 3) If payment has not been made by the final date stated in the second reminder letter (being five (5) business days from the date of the second reminder letter), a debt collector will be engaged. A third and final letter will be sent to the family at the same time notifying them that this action has commenced.

If a family is having difficulty paying at any time, a meeting can be arranged with the office and/or Treasurer, to discuss alternate payment options and to develop an agreed workable payment plan. An initiated payment plan must be agreed to, signed by the office and/or Treasurer and the parent/guardian as acceptance of its terms and conditions. The office will keep the original agreement and a copy will be issued to the parent/guardian to adhere to. If an initiated payment plan signed by both parties is not adhered to, the follow-up process will commence at the above step (2).

Debt Recovery

- Committee of Management reserves the right to take legal action to recover fees that have not been paid. The parent/guardian will be responsible for all expenses in relation to the collection of the outstanding amount including, but not limited to, all charges, fees and legal costs.
- Where a family has an existing unpaid debt to Yarrunga, no further placements in the centre will be provided to any child in the family, until all outstanding monies are paid.

5. Late Collection Charge

Yarrunga reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians have not collected their child/ren from Yarrunga before closing time. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Committee of Management and based on Yarrunga's need to recoup expenses incurred in employee overtime wages.

6. Membership Fee

A membership fee of \$11 is charged annually per family.

This is a requirement of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and Associations Incorporation Regulation 2010 and our Constitution, that all families are members of the association and on admission, pay to the association a fee determined by the committee.

7. Resource Levy

A resource Levy is charged annually per family.

The amount is to be agreed upon by the management committee at the AGM.

The levy is for the sole purpose of purchasing resources for the children / rooms (purchases will be easily identified and communicated).

This levy takes the place of fundraising events throughout the year with the exception of

1. Bunnings BBQ
2. Easter Raffle

3. Christmas Raffle

Community charity events (i.e cancer council) are excluded from this policy.

In the case of Yarrunga having a special project/event to undertake, there may be specific fundraising conducted.

In special circumstances, exception can be sought by application to committee.

7. Attendance Fee

- If a place has been reserved for a child since the beginning of the year, the position will be only held for 3 weeks. If a place has been offered and accepted a Holding Bond will be charged at the rate of 2 weeks' full fee by the number of days attending. This payment will be treated as your first 2 weeks' fee.
- If a child is withdrawn, 2 weeks' notice must be given, otherwise 2 weeks' cessation fees will be charged.
- Full fees are charged for all gazetted NSW Public Holidays (that fall on a week day) when the Centre is closed. No fees are charged during the Christmas/New Year period when the Centre is closed for 1-2 weeks.
- Normal fees will be charged for all absences (eg. including holidays/illness).
- After a period of two (2) weeks absence due to illness or exceptional circumstances, an application may be made to the Committee of Management in writing for adjusted fee payment. A discount of up to 50% may be offered and the situation reviewed monthly. Each case will be considered on an individual basis. Appropriate supporting documents (eg. Medical Certificate) will be required to support these applications.

8. Withdrawal

Two week's notice or two weeks' fees will be charged when withdrawing a child from care. If requested, parents may have an Exit Interview Procedure with the Director.

9. Confidentiality

The finance sub-committee and office will treat information it receives relating to parents/guardians financial situation and the payment or non-payment of fees as confidential.

10. Christmas Closure

From year to year, the Committee may elect to close the Centre for a period of time in December/ January. Parents will be notified in advance of the time period. No fees will be charged at this time.

The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure Yarrunga operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- Review the current budget to determine fee income requirements.
- Develop a fee policy that balances the parent's /guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining Yarrunga's viability.
- Consider any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Yarrunga and removing those barriers wherever possible.
- Provide parents/guardians with a weekly statement of fees and charges.
- Ensure that the Fee Policy is readily accessible at Yarrunga.
- Notify parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Ensure a notice outlining the fees charged by Yarrunga is displayed prominently in the main entrance to Yarrunga.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Provide parents/guardians with a monthly statement of fees and charges.
- Collect all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable.
- Notify parent/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fee charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Ensure a notice outlining the fees charged by Yarrunga is displayed prominently in the main foyer to Yarrunga.

Early Childhood Educators will:

- Refer parent'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisors.

Families will:

- Read this policy and refer any questions, queries or concerns to the nominated supervisor.
- Obtain a Customer Reference Number from Centrelink as soon as practical before or after enrolment at Yarrunga.
- Record the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending the centre on the ipads.
- Pay for any booked day of education and care which falls on a public holiday.
- Ensure all fees are kept two weeks in advance at all times.
- Provide documentation for additional absence days as required.
- Provide 2 weeks' notice of withdrawal from Yarrunga. If your child does not attend during this 2 week notice period full fees will be chargeable (i.e. no CCB reductions are possible).
- Notify the Approved Provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, Yarrunga will review this Policy every 18 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be give opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with Regulation 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Yarrunga will ensure that families of children enrolled at Yarrunga are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at Yarrunga; a family's alibility to utilise the Yarrunga; the fee charged or the way in which fees are collected.

This policy links to Confidentiality of records policy.