



Fees Policy - Preschool

STATEMENT

The Organisation is committed to:

- Providing responsible financial management, including establishing a fee structure that will result in a financially viable Service, while maintaining fees at an affordable level.
- Ensuring financial barriers are minimised for families wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/children.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of families/caregivers.
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts.

OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines for the setting, payment, and collection of fees.
- Ensure the viability of the Service by establishing and maintaining an appropriate and equitable fee structure.

IMPLEMENTATION

Fees and Charges

The Management Committee set fees and charges according to viability and affordability. Fees are reviewed annually and subject to change. Families are notified of any changes to fees and charges through direct correspondence, this includes being notified when this Policy is undergoing review.

Daily Session Fees

There is a range of Session fees outlined below:

1. 3-5 years
2. equity rate 3-5 years, for holders of a current low-income health care card (copy must be supplied to the Service)
3. 2 years (ie. turning 3 years after 31st July)

Further information in relation to fees and charges is provided to families prior to enrolment. This information is contained in the Information Handbook and can also be accessed on the website

<https://www.gallopngumnut.com.au/>

Additional Fees and Charges

Families are required to complete an Enrolment Form. On acceptance of a place families are invoiced for the fees, outlined below. These fees must be paid prior to their child/ren commencing with the Service.

1. **Enrolment/re-enrolment fees (upfront fee)**
\$50 per child.
PLEASE NOTE: This amount includes the purchase price of a Galloping Gumnut hat.
In subsequent years a re-enrolment fee of \$20 per child
2. **Membership of Association Fee (upfront fee). As an Incorporated Association this is a legal requirement.**
\$3.00 (GST inclusive) New Members. A renewal fee of \$2.00 (GST inclusive) is then charged annually at the beginning of each calendar year.
3. **Bond (upfront fee) – only payable if the child is not eligible to receive fee free Preschool**
\$50 per child – refundable upon leaving the Service when the required 2 weeks' notice has been given and all fees are up to date.
4. **Materials Levy**
A fee of \$10 for 1 day or \$20 for 2 days is charged per child each Term to help with the costs of providing basic materials, for example paints, paper, paper towel, etc.

Fee Free Preschool

As a Mobile Service, funded under the Mobile Preschool Funding program, our Preschools are eligible for fee relief payments. For a child to be eligible to receive fee relief the child will need to be:

- at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year and not in compulsory schooling; and
- attending an early childhood education program provided by the mobile preschool during that preschool year.
- Citizenship and residency status are not taken into consideration for child eligibility for funding.

Discounts

Please note, these are only applied if the child is not eligible to receive fee free Preschool.

Staff (permanent, contracted and casuals who work a regular weekly or fortnightly shift) and Management Committee members are provided with the following discounts. Discounts are applied four times a year, usually in line with the end of the Term school holiday period.

Permanent and Contracted Staff whose children are enrolled for Preschool Sessions will receive 50% off the daily fee. This appears on the account as 'Discount Staff and Committee'.

Casual Staff who work a regular weekly or fortnightly shift whose children are enrolled for Preschool Sessions will receive 25% off the daily fee. This appears on the account as 'Discount Staff and Committee'.

Management Committee Members whose children are enrolled for Preschool Sessions will receive 25% off the daily fee. This appears on the account as 'Discount Staff and Committee'.

PLEASE NOTE: If fees are outstanding at the end of the period in which discounts are applied, the discount will be forfeited.

Invoices, Receipts and Statements

- Invoices are sent out at the beginning of each Term. Any upfront fees and charges, along with the daily session fee for the Term are applied to the Invoice. If the child is eligible to receive fee relief, the family will receive a credit for all fees and charges **except** the Membership of Association fee.
- Invoices, receipts, and statements are sent to the email address provided on the enrolment form, listed under Parent 1.
- Invoices should be checked by parents/carers and any concerns or errors notified to the Director, either by email or phone (see contact details below).

- The preferred method of payment is by EFT into the Organisation's bank account (details are on the Invoice) referencing your child's name and stating that it is for Preschool.
- Families are encouraged to pay the full amount owing on their Invoice by the end of Week 4 of Term or arrange to pay weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. If this is the preferred method of payment it is recommended that families set up a Direct Debit weekly, fortnightly, or monthly.
- In Term 4, if your child will be ceasing their enrolment to start school, families are requested to pay all outstanding amounts by the end of November to enable the Finance Officer to reconcile accounts and refund any Bonds.

Outstanding Fees

- Fees should always be kept up to date and paid in full by the end of Term.
- Families will be issued a reminder there is an amount outstanding on their child/ren's account.
- A report will be generated at the end of each month. If a family has made no payments during this period, the family will be contacted via telephone or directly at the Service by the Responsible Person.
- Fees cannot be carried over to the following Term without approval/special consideration granted by the Director and a payment plan put in place.
- If at the end of each Term an account is in arrears, and a payment plan has not been put in place, a request for payment will be made in writing via email, text, or letter.
- If an account continues to be in arrears, and no payments are being made, one of the Directors will contact the family.

Financial Difficulties

If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a payment plan will be negotiated for enrolment to continue.

Payment Plans

Payment Plans can be established under the authority of the Directors.

If a family's account has become overdue one of the Directors will establish with the family an appropriate payment plan to repay the outstanding fees

- A regular payment amount will be required. Payments should be made weekly or fortnightly until the account is finalised.
- Failure to comply with the payment plan will result in the account being submitted to the Management Committee for instruction.

Once a family's account has been submitted to the Management Committee for review, the family will be given two weeks' notice to complete payment of all outstanding fees. If the family cannot comply with this request, the child's place may be cancelled. Once a child's place has been cancelled it will be given to the next eligible child on the waiting list.

The family will not be allowed to enrol any other children until all the outstanding accounts are paid in full. A child whose place has been cancelled may re-join the waiting list once payment of all outstanding fees has been received. However, this does not guarantee the child another place.

Bad Debts

The Organisation allows an amount in the budget as a 'bad debt expense'. The Organisation recognises that there will be occasions when, despite all efforts, an account will remain in arrears. This may occur when a family leaves the Service and has an outstanding account. In this instance the Bond will be used to offset any amount owing and the balance will be presented at a Management Committee Meeting for a decision. Bad debts will be either pursued or written off as a bad debt. If pursued, the cost of debt recover would be passed on to the family.

Outside Hours Fees

Due to the nature of operating a mobile service, staff members have an allocated amount of time each day for travel and preparation of the classroom. Children being dropped off early and/or picked up late has an impact on staff time frames and can cause overtime costs.

If a child is at the Service outside of operating hours, and staff have not been advised of extenuating circumstances, the following fees may be applied to your Invoice:

\$20.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$20.00 for each additional 15 minutes or part thereof.

Continued Early Arrival and/or Late Pick Up

If early arrival and/or late pick-up occur on more than two occasions, without adequate explanation, the outside hours fees (outlined above) will be charged. Outside hours fees will be added to your child/ren's account. If alternative arrangements are required regarding hours of attendance, please contact one of the Directors.

Cancellations

Two weeks' notice is required, or the equivalent payment of fees. **PLEASE NOTE:** Any bond will be applied to any outstanding fees.

Absences

All absences, including when children are unwell or on holidays must be paid for. Parents/Carers are responsible for informing the Directors or Responsible Person at the venue of their child's absence and the reason for that absence.

Service Closures

Fees are not charged for Pupil Free Days and School Term holidays, including the Organisation's Annual Close Down period during December/January – families are advised of these dates.

If a Session needs to be cancelled for a full day or days, due to unforeseen circumstances, families will be notified, and **no fees** will be charged.

If a Session needs to finish early, due to unforeseen circumstances, families will be called to come and collect their child/ren. In this circumstance the full daily fee will still be charged.

Confidentiality

All information in relation to fees will be kept in strict confidence. Members of staff and management will not discuss individual names and details openly. Information will only be available to the nominated persons required to take action, for example to set up a payment plan or to initiate a debt recovery.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- *Arrival and Departure Policy
- *Code of Conduct Policy – Families, Carers and Visitors
- *Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- *Governance Policy
- *Natural disasters/severe weather/road closures
- *New membership of association form
- *Preschool Enrolment Form
- *Preschool Information Handbook
- *Renewal of membership of association form

REFERENCES and SOURCES

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>

Childcare Centre Desktop

<https://www.childcarecentredesktop.com.au/>

Mitchell Early Learning Centre – Panorama Avenue, Bathurst 2795

Network of Community Activities – Sample Policies 2013

NSW Government – Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653>

LINKS TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD and REGULATIONS

QA 6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
6.1	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
QA 7	Governance and Leadership
7.1	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and the effective operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

National Education and Care Regulations	
168	<i>Education and care service must have policies and procedures</i>
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures <i>(2) The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that parents of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.</i>

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 12 months. Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service 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 the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Version: 3	Previous Versions Dated: June 2018 and December 2021	
Policy prepared by: Lisa Masters/Carol Drummond		
Date Reviewed: 30 November 2023		Projected Review Date: November 2024
Modifications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated to reflect changes related to 'fee free' Preschool. • Changes in upfront fees. • Changes to the way Invoices are sent. • Minor change to section on Bad debts. • Expanded 'Monitoring and Review' section to include reference to Regulations. 	
Policy adopted by Management Committee		
<p>Name: Signed:</p> <p>Title:</p> <p>Name: Signed:</p> <p>Title:</p> <p>Date: / /2023</p>		

