

Policy FIN:08

Fees – Child Care and Outside School Hours Care Services



Area – Finance

Document Control

Responsible Officer: Chief Financial Officer and GM, Corporate Services	Policy Number: FIN:08
Contact Officer: Accountant (Transactional Services)	Policy Area: Finance
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Scope

This policy provides a framework to guide all actions for The Crèche and Kindergarten Association Limited (C&K) and relevant stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to, the C&K board, C&K staff, C&K central, C&K branch services, C&K subsidiaries, children, families, volunteers, contractors and any visitors to C&K services.

This policy excludes C&K affiliate and associate members.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide transparency in the application and administration of fees. C&K aims to provide high quality education and care for children and to do this and to remain financially viable and sustainable C&K rely on parents / guardians paying their fees.

Policy Statement

1.0 General

C&K is a not for profit organisation that reinvests any surplus made back into the services and programs to better achieve outcomes for children.

Fees are based on operational and financial considerations to ensure sustainability of our services. Due to changes in economic, political, or legislative conditions, the C&K executive reserves the right to amend fees at any time.

2.0 Waitlist fee

C&K do not charge a fee to place your child's name on the wait list of a C&K branch service.

3.0 Enrolment fee

To secure your child's enrolment, a non-refundable, one-off enrolment fee is charged and is payable upon acceptance of an enrolment offer.

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The enrolment fee covers the cost of processing an enrolment, portfolio documentation, and other education resources.

Confirmation of a child's enrolment is made upon receipt of all documents as stated in the Enrolment Booklet and payment of the enrolment fee.

Enrolment fees are transferable if moving from one C&K branch service to another C&K branch service where bookings remain continuous.

Enrolment fees paid to an affiliate service are non-transferable, as they are separate legal entities.

4.0 Bookings

Once a booking has been confirmed, the account holder is charged and payment must be made whether the child attends the service or not.

4.1 Permanent

A child is enrolled per the enrolment pattern requested / negotiated with the account holder. A child is enrolled on a continuous basis until appropriate notice is given to change days or terminate care.

It is important to note that if (1) a child is enrolled in the kindergarten program of a Child Care centre and (2) they are of eligible age and (3) they have nominated this service for claiming Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS), that their bookings meet the required hours per week to be eligible for QKFS subsidies to be claimed. This is to maximise the appropriate subsidies that can be claimed from the Government to cover the cost of providing the kindergarten program at the service.

4.2 Casual

Account holders who have paid the enrolment fee may make casual bookings in advance. The service director will determine if a casual booking can be accommodated.

5.0 Public holidays, pupil free days and other service closures

C&K services are closed on public holidays. If a child's permanent booking falls on public holidays, fees are charged for those days.

If for any other reason C&K decides to close services, then families will not be charged for those days.

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6.0 Absences

Fees are payable on days when the child is absent for reasons; including but not limited to; illness or exclusion due to an infection and/or vaccine preventable disease or illness.

In certain circumstances a child care benefit may be paid for allowable absences. Should the child care benefit not be applicable, the account holder is responsible for the payment of full fees for the days the child is absent. It is important for families to consult the Department of Human Services website for further information regarding the child care benefit that may or may not be applicable for their individual circumstance.

Full fees are payable (CCB and/or CCR is not applicable) when a child is booked to first commence care but is unable to physically attend the service, or when a child is unable to physically attend during a notice period for termination of care.

7.0 Fee subsidies

Government subsidies may be applicable to assist with reducing the cost of fees.

At enrolment, information will be provided to families advising them of all available subsidies. However, families are responsible for researching subsidies that they may be eligible for.

Any applicable Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) subsidies that families may be eligible for are applied to families' account invoice / statements.

Where the calculation of a subsidy is dependent on an account holder's unique situation, C&K will refer the account holder to the appropriate Government department for more information or apply subsidies families are eligible for in line with Government guidelines.

Account holders must comply with C&K requests for supporting documentation, should it be required, to verify and validate an account holder's entitlement to receive a fee subsidy.

Account holders are responsible for updating details if their eligibility lapses. If the eligibility has lapsed, the fee reduction will no longer apply and full fees are payable.

Fee subsidies are subject to change. Should a fee subsidy be reduced or removed, or if the required documentation is not provided to enable C&K to claim relevant subsidies, the account holder will be responsible for payment of full fees.

Account invoice / statements outline how subsidies are applied to eligible accounts.

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8.0 Fees

C&K aims to keep fees affordable for families and has developed a fee system to maximise family access to available subsidies.

Fees are calculated daily and charged per week. An account invoice / statement will be provided to the account holder in the first day of each week.

Fees are set by C&K and you are required to pay fees in advance, on or before commencement.

For Child Care Services offering a Kindergarten Program the fees are displayed and explained to families at C&K services; this Statement of Fees can be accessed via the C&K website (www.candk.asn.au).

For information on all other room fees contact the service directly.

C&K reserves the right to change fees when necessary. C&K will provide families with as much notice as possible regarding fee amendments and will give families a minimum of fourteen days' notice in advance of any changes to fee structure and payment processes. Families will be notified by email or letter of any fee changes.

A Fee Payment Agreement is included in the enrolment pack provided to parents/ guardians along with information on available payment options.

9.0 Fee payment methods

Payments can be made on a weekly or fortnightly basis:

- Weekly billing cycle – payment due 1 week in advance (payment due every Friday paying for the following week);
- Fortnightly billing cycle – payment due 2 weeks in advance (payment due alternating Friday paying for the following two weeks);

10.0 Late collection of children

Service licensing dictates the service opening and closing hours and staff are employed to work specific shifts and are entitled to leave upon completion of that shift. The service must be telephoned if there is a delay beyond your normal booking. It is the parents' / guardians' responsibility to ensure the child is collected on time.

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If the service has not heard from parents / guardians, staff will attempt to contact the parents / guardians and the emergency contacts nominated on the enrolment form. Parents / guardians who are late collecting children after closing time will be charged the prescribed late fees. Account holders are unable to claim any Government subsidies for late fee charges.

11.0 Late payment of fees

Fees are considered overdue if amounts are not paid by 5pm on the payment due date. If, prior to the payment due date, the account holder becomes aware that they will be unable to meet their payment obligation, they must contact their Service Director immediately to discuss payment options.

The Service Director will work with the C&K Accounts Receivable team to determine alternative payment options. Acceptance of alternative payment arrangements are at the discretion of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) or delegate at C&K Central.

A late fee may be charged on all overdue accounts along with additional charges for all dishonoured payments. The account holder is not eligible to claim any Government subsidies on any late fee charges.

Where accounts remain unpaid, C&K reserves the right to act to recover the fees due, including referring the debts to C&K's appointed debt collection firm. The cost of recovering any debts owed to C&K (including legal or collection fees) will be added to the debt owed and will become payable to C&K by the account holder. The C&K Fee Collection Policy (FIN:05) will be followed for the collection of all overdue amounts.

C&K reserves the right to charge interest at commercial bank overdraft rates on all overdue accounts.

12.0 Suspension or cancellation of enrolment

C&K will not allow children to attend a C&K service where an account remains unpaid except where special arrangements for payment have been made for example via an application for a fee waiver (Form 08.03. F1) or an approved Payment Plan Agreement (Form 05.04. F1).

The Service Director and C&K Accounts Receivable staff will determine if a child's enrolment is suspended or cancelled. The Children's Services Manager (CSM) will be included in the suspension correspondence with the family.

If an account remains outstanding C&K reserves the right to cancel enrolment and to offer the place to another family on the waitlist.

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It is at the discretion of C&K as to whether a re-enrolment will be offered, where a place was forfeited due to non-or overdue payment of an account.

The outstanding account will remain a debt payable to C&K, irrespective of whether the enrolment is cancelled.

13.0 Account holder cancellation of enrolment

A minimum of two weeks' notice, in writing, must be provided to C&K to cancel an enrolment.

The two weeks' notice in writing is applicable to all families, whether the child has commenced with C&K or not.

Once written notice of cancelling an enrolment has been provided, C&K are only able to claim child care benefit (CCB) or child care rebate (CCR) for the days the child physically attends the service during the notice period.

Should the child not attend one or more days during the notice period, the account holder will be charged and be responsible for paying the full daily fee.

14.0 Fee payment record keeping

All correspondence, conversations, and messages with the account holder shall be recorded in the confidential notes area of the account holder record, within C&K's child care management software system, to ensure a written record of collection discussions, actions and credit history.

15.0 Refunds

C&K will transfer any funds payable to the account holder (e.g. overpayment) to their nominated account on the form 'Fee Payment Agreement'. The account holder is responsible for the accuracy of bank account details and any consequences arising from the failure to provide accurate bank details or failure to notify C&K of any changes to those bank details.

Links to associated documents

FIN:05	Fee Collection Policy
05.04. F1	Payment Plan Agreement Form
08.03. F1	Fee Waiver Application Form

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Revision record					
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