

# Policy FIN:08 Fees – Childcare, Outside School Hours Care, and Early Education Services Care



Area – Finance

## Document Control

Responsible Officer: Chief Finance Officer	Policy Number: FIN:08
Contact Officer: Financial Controller	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, parents, 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 highest quality education and care for children and to do this C&K rely on parents / guardians paying their fees to remain financially viable and sustainable.

## Definitions & acronyms

In order to make this document as efficient as possible relevant definitions and acronyms specific to this policy have been listed in the C&K definitions and acronyms glossary. All policies, procedures, quick reference guides and protocols should be read in conjunction with the C&K definitions and acronyms glossary.

## 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 all children and communities.

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.

C&K will aim to provide families with as much notice as possible regarding fee amendments and will try to give families a minimum of four weeks' notice. C&K aims to keep fees affordable for families and have developed a fee system to maximise family access to available subsidies.

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### **2.0 Waitlist fee**

C&K do not currently 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. The enrolment fee is payable via iDebitPro.

The enrolment fee covers the cost of processing the child's enrolment, portfolio documentation, and other education resources. Families must confirm their acceptance of an enrolment offer within the timeframe specified in the offer. Should a family not respond within the specified timeframe, the enrolment offer may become void and the enrolment place may be offered to the next family on the waiting list.

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 considered non-transferable, as they are separate legal entities.

### **4.0 Payment in Advance**

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

If paying by iDebitPro (direct debit/credit card):

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

### **5.0 Bookings - regular**

A child is enrolled according to the enrolment pattern requested / negotiated with the account holder.

It is important to note that if the child is enrolled in the kindergarten room of a long day care centre and they are of eligible age, C&K prefers a minimum booking of two days per week. This is in

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order to maximise the appropriate subsidies that can be claimed from the Government to cover the cost of providing the kindergarten program at the service.

### **6.0 Bookings – 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. Once a casual booking is made, the account holder is charged and payment must be made whether or not the child attends the service.

### **7.0 Public holidays**

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

### **8.0 Absences**

Fees are payable on days when the child is absent for whatsoever 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 DETE 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 attend, or when a child is unable to attend during a notice period for termination of care.

### **9.0 Fee subsidies**

Government subsidies may be applicable to assist with reducing the cost of fees. C&K will ensure that information is provided to families to advise them of the subsidies available however families are encouraged to research subsidies for which they may be eligible. 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 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. The account holder is responsible for updating details if their eligibility lapses. If the eligibility has

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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, the account holder will be responsible for payment of full fees.

### **10.0 Fees**

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.

C&K reserves the right to change fees when necessary.

C&K's Fee Payment Agreement is included in the enrolment pack provided to Parents/ Guardians.

### **11.0 Fee payment methods**

The only payment method is iDebitPro (direct debit arrangement). Account holders may be responsible for any costs associated with using these facilities, including any dishonoured fees.

### **12.0 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 parent / guardian's responsibility to ensure the child is collected on time.

If the service has not heard from a parent or guardian, staff will attempt to contact the parents or 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.

### **13.0 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) 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.

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

The C&K Fee Collection policy (FIN05) will be followed for the collection of all overdue amounts.

This may include forwarding the account to an independent collection agency. Normal commercial agency activities will be employed, including legal action to recover the full debt owed. The agency costs of recovering any debt owed to C&K will be added to the debt owed and will become payable to C&K.

### ***14.0 C&K Suspension or cancellation of enrolment***

During the first 14 days from the commencement of each enrolment, the Service Director and C&K Accounts Receivable staff will attempt to contact the account holders to ensure overdue accounts are settled or a deferred payment plan under iDebitPro or similar method is completed. If the account remains unpaid after 14 days from commencement of an enrolment and no application for deferred payment under iDebitPro or an alternative has been entered into, the child's place at the service may be suspended immediately.

If the account remains outstanding C&K reserves the right to offer the suspended place to another family in which case the child's place is forfeited and the enrolment is cancelled.

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

The service Director and Accounts Receivable will determine if a child's enrolment is suspended or cancelled. The CSM will be included in the suspension correspondence with the family.

### ***15.0 Deferred payments***

If fees cannot be paid by the specified or agreed due date (in accordance with the iDebitPro form), the Service Director is to be notified immediately. The Service Director will work with Accounts Receivable to determine an alternative short-term payment arrangement. The proposed arrangements must cover current and outstanding fees.

A deferred payment application must be made prior to the fee payment due date and approval is subject to the discretion of CFO or delegate. If the application is not approved, the account holder must ensure that payment is made by the due date.

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## **16.0 Account holder cancelation of enrolment**

A minimum of two weeks' notice, in writing, must be provided to C&K to cancel a child's enrolment by the parent / guardian.

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

## **17.0 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.

## **18.0 Statement of Fees**

A statement of current fees for each service can be accessed via the C&K website ([www.candk.asn.au](http://www.candk.asn.au))

## **19.0 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

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## Links to associated documents

FIN 05	Fee Collection

## Acknowledgements and references

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## Revision record

Version	Approval Date	Authorised by	Effective Date	Review Cycle	Next review date
1.0	24.06.15	Mark Stones	01.07.15	Annual	01.07.16
2.0	03.02.16	Nina Zhuang	03.02.16	Bi-annual	01.07.16
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