

## **Policy Statement**

We aim to provide a quality service to families at an affordable price. Fee levels will be set by Management each year in accordance with the annual budget, and to ensure that we adhere to laws and regulations set out by State and Federal Governments.

For parents to pay their fees on time to ensure that the organisation can meet its financial obligations.

## **Considerations**

- ✓ Australian Government Child Care Support System
- ✓ Family Assistance Law
- ✓ Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017
- ✓ Department of Human Services
- ✓ Maintenance of Records Policy

## **Procedures**

### **Setting fees**

- ✓ Fees are to be set on an annual basis by Management ensuring that the required income will be received to run the organisation efficiently.
- ✓ All fees and charges will be in accordance with the current fee structure.
- ✓ Current fee structure can be found on our web site [www.activitycentres.com.au](http://www.activitycentres.com.au)
- ✓ Parents will be given a minimum of fourteen days notice of any changes in the fees. (via a notice on parent notice board at each Service, on the Organisations Website and facebook page)

### **On enrolment**

- ✓ The current enrolment fee must be paid prior to the child attending, and is non-refundable once enrolment has been processed.
- ✓ The current bond for each child must be paid before the child's first day in care, the bond will be credited to your account once notice is given (see Refund of account on page 3).

### **Fees and Permanent Bookings**

*Note: Permanent bookings are defined as any booking where children attend the program regularly (weekly) on the same days. These bookings are automatically carried over each week. Changes to these bookings must be made in writing, with a minimum of 2 weeks notice.*

- ✓ Fees will be charged at the current permanent rate, for families who book a place for their children on a permanent basis.
- ✓ Permanent bookings secure a place for the child and must be paid for, even if the child is absent.

### **Fees and Casual Bookings**

*Note: Casual bookings are defined as any booking that is not a permanent placement for a child or any booking of an irregular nature. Casual bookings are to be made prior to 2:00pm on the day care is needed and are subject to approval of Service Coordinator to ensure appropriate ratios are maintained.*

- ✓ Fees will be charged at the current casual rate.
- ✓ The casual fee will be charged if the child is absent on an expected casually booked day.
- ✓ The casual fee will apply to all vacation care bookings received after the due date stated on booking form.
- ✓ The casual fee will be charged for extra days added to vacation care after the cut-off date stated on the booking form.

### **Child Care Subsidy**

Note: Child Care Subsidy is the regular payment that assists most families with the costs of child care. Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to ACI, to be passed on to families as a fee reduction.

- ✓ It is the parent's responsibility to obtain a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for themselves and their children.
- ✓ It is the parents responsibility to supply the service with the following 4 important pieces of information
  1. Parent Customer Reference Number (CRN) from Centrelink
  2. Parent Date of Birth
  3. Childs Customer Reference Number(CRN) from Centrelink
  4. Child's Date of Birth
- ✓ Some absences are allowable without affecting payment of Child Care Subsidy. If a child does not attend the session of care, or part of the session of care, the Service is still taken to have provided the session and Child Care Subsidy can still be paid, as long as the absence is allowable. An absence is allowable if the care was booked and an individual was liable to pay for that care. A child can have up to 42 allowable absences in a financial year, but more may be allowable in particular circumstances (such as due to illness).
- ✓ CCS entitlements will not apply after the child's last present day of care, as per legislation. Families will pay full fees if their child's last day/s are absent days, once notice of termination is given, in writing, to the Coordinator.
- ✓ If a child is enrolled and is absent before their first physical day in care, any absent days will be charged at full fees. CCS does not apply until a child's first physical day at the Service.
- ✓ Centrelink will not pay CCS entitlements before your child has physically started in care or after your child's last physical day in care, however as we are holding a place open for your child so we require fees to be paid in full.
- ✓ Parents and guardians should contact Centrelink if further information is needed for CCS.

### **Statements of Entitlement/Billing Cycle**

- ✓ ACI must provide a statement of entitlement to parents of children eligible for Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy enrolled in their Service, once every fortnight. This statement must include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts.
- ✓ Statements of entitlement can only be issued for care already provided, as they must include details of the child's physical attendance at the Service and actual fee reduction amounts. Statements of Entitlement cannot be issued in advance, based on estimates
- ✓ Statements will be issued fortnightly in arrears. (see fees tab on Organisation website for due dates for payments).
- ✓ Statement will be emailed to the parent/guardian who is registered to receive the Child Care Subsidy, this parent/guardian is the account holder.
- ✓ The account holder can request that a copy of the statement be sent to another parent/guardian in addition to themselves.
- ✓ Families who use our Service on a casual basis will be sent a statement in line with our current billing cycle.
- ✓ Receipts can be issued and a statement of account can be re sent/printed upon request.
- ✓ All records will be kept confidential and stored or destroyed appropriately.
- ✓ All financial records will be kept for 7 years, or as per Government legislation. (refer to management of records policy)
- ✓ It is the account holder's responsibility to inform the Service if they are not receiving statements and/or if contact and billing information changes.

### **Fee payment**

- ✓ All fees must be paid in full by close of business on nominated date each fortnight, as stated on the fees tab on Organisation website, information at sign in/out desk or information on front page of account statement.
- ✓ Fees are paid to hold a place for children even when the child is absent due to illness or holidays.

### **Methods of payment**

- ✓ Fees can be paid by:
  - Qikpay system- direct debit from nominated account (bank account or credit card). Account will debited on the Qikpay cycle.
  - All families will transition to Qikpay system by 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- ✓ Please see the Manager or Coordinator to make any alternative fee payment arrangements.

## **Refund of account**

- ✓ The final statement will be issued to the family as per normal billing cycle due date.
- ✓ If no payment is received then the debt recovery process is to start immediately and families forfeit their bond.
- ✓ Bond will be refunded once families account has been finalised as per CCS requirements which will be at least 14 days after your child's last day in care. Families need to request bond refund in writing, with BSB and account details.
- ✓ Bond will be taken as a donation 12 months after the child's last day in care if family have not requested a refund.
- ✓ Account credit will be taken as a donation 12 months after the child's last day in care if family have not requested a refund.

## **Overdue Accounts:**

- ✓ Families are encouraged to discuss any financial difficulties with the Coordinator or Management who will work with the families to arrange a suitable payment plan.
- ✓ If no previous arrangements have been made regarding overdue fees. Coordinator will flag the account to inform Management of the overdue account.
- ✓ A reminder email/letter will be sent out to all families flagged as an overdue account, reminding them to make payment within 7 days, or their place at the Service will be terminated.
- ✓ If payment is made, no further action will be required.
- ✓ If no payment is received after 7 days, the child's place at the Service will be terminated.
  - If the Service is currently operating a waiting list the family will not be placed on the waiting list until their account has been paid in full, the family will need to wait until a place comes available for their children to be placed back in care.
- ✓ The account will be lodged with our current external debt collection agency where the account holder will be charged the current debt collection fee.
- ✓ Fortnightly overdue account fee will apply each fortnight until account is paid in full.

## **Debt Recovery Procedure:**

- ✓ ACI reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the organisation. This can and will include the engagement of debt collectors to recover the monies owed.
- ✓ Families will have to pay any debt recovery fees incurred by any external debt recovery agencies.

## **Fees and charges explained as per fee structure:**

### Bond

- ✓ Bond is paid on enrolment and held as security, then refunded once 2 weeks notice is given to leave the Service and account has been settled.

### Debt Collection Fee

- ✓ After reasonable attempts to have an overdue account paid, the account will be lodged with an external debt collection agency and the debt collection fee will be applied to the account before lodgement with the collection agency.

### Enrolment fee

- ✓ The enrolment fee is paid on enrolment prior to a child's first day of care.
- ✓ The enrolment fee must be paid each time the child returns to care. (i.e. if 2 weeks' notice has been given prior, then they would like to return)
- ✓ The enrolment fee will not be charged for continued enrolment from one year to the next.

### Hats

- ✓ If your child arrives without a hat and children are required to wear one while playing outside (as per ACI Sun Protection Policy) and we have to supply them one.

### Late fee

- ✓ Any parent who collects their children after 6.30pm will be charged the current late fee for every minute after 6.30pm
- ✓ Wherever possible parents should advise the service when they will be late to collect their child.

## Non-notification fees

- ✓ Any family that fails to inform the Service of their child's absence by 2.30pm on the booked day for after school care, and before 8am on booked vacation care days, where Staff are required to search for your child, will incur a non-notification fee per day.

## Non sign out fee

- ✓ This fee will be charged for failing to sign your child/ren out of care, where Staff have to call to confirm when your child was collected and by whom.

## Overdue account fee

- ✓ Overdue account fee will be applied to accounts that have monies owing after the fortnightly due date.

## Rain Coats

- ✓ If your child is in care during wet weather and does not have wet weather gear, they will be given a disposable raincoat, the fee will be added to your account.

## Vacation Care only

### Vacation Care- Early Bird Fee

- ✓ Discounted rate when families return forms by early bird cut -off date.

### Vacation Care Normal Fee

- ✓ Applies when families return forms after early bird cut -off date and before closing date.

### Vacation Care booking fee

- ✓ On enrolment of vacation care a booking fee per family is applied to accounts for that vacation care period.

### Vacation Care late processing fee

- ✓ Vacation care forms will state a due date, if forms are returned after this date a late processing fee will apply.

### Vacation Care extras

- ✓ Water Bottle –if your child does not have a refillable water bottle for excursions, we will supply one.
- ✓ Lunch – if your child does not have lunch and we need to supply it.

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Policy is only endorsed if initialled by 2 members of the Management Committee

Endorsed by the Management Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Fee Policy is to be reviewed by the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2020