

1. SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Fairfield City Council Children and Family Services fees support our early education and care services, early childhood intervention and therapy services, and Fairfield City Family Day Care daily operations. All fees are adopted by Council and outlined in Council's fees, following a public exhibition process.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to educate and explain all Children and Family Services fees. To ensure families receive consistent and transparent expectations to meet their financial responsibilities.

SCOPE

This policy will ensure that Council staff will deliver effective and consistent administration of fees. This policy applies to the below services:

- Centre Based Services (Long Day Care, Multipurpose and Preschool services)
- Family Day Care
- Fairstart Early Intervention (Early Intervention Support , Inclusion Support)

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Child Care Subsidy (CCS)	The Child Care Subsidy is a Government subsidy to assist families with their child care fees. It is a means-tested subsidy and is paid directly to Children and Family Services to be passed on to families. Parent 1 on an enrolment form must be the same person who is claiming CCS.
Clear Business Day	A clear business day is any day (12:00am – 12:00pm) except any Saturday, and Sunday, or any day that is a federal legal holiday or any day on which Fairfield City Council are authorised or required by law or other governmental action to close.
Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)	A payment that provided additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. There are four different payments under ACCS: child wellbeing, grandparent, temporary financial hardship and transition to work.
Complying Written Agreement (CWA)	To be eligible for the new Child Care Subsidy, parents must have incurred a liability to pay for child care under a <i>complying written arrangement</i> with the provider. It is an agreement between a provider and an individual (one or both parents/guardians) to provide child care in return for fees.
Early Learning Centre (ELC)	Description of services that includes all Multipurpose, Long Day Care and Preschool services.
Family Day Care (FDC)	Description of services that includes all home-based early childhood education and care service for children.
Allowable absences	Under the CCS, families are allowed 42 absence days per child per financial year. These 42 allowable absences can be taken for any reason, including Public Holidays and when children are sick, without the need for documentation.
Parent 1	The Primary family contact is provided to Children and Family Services in all enrolment forms. Parent 1 is the primary contact person for all Children and Family Service communications. Parent 1 must be the legal guardian of the child or children enrolled.
Parent Administration Levy	Family Day Care Parent Administration Levy is a daily fee for families based on the number of enrolment days for their child/ren. Council determines the daily levy amount.
Educator Levy	Family Day Care Educator Levy is a weekly fee for Educators. The Educator levy amount is determined by Fairfield City Council and is payable by the Educator to the Council.
Fees	Fees are payable for every day the child is booked into care. This includes each day a

	child cannot attend care due to sickness, holidays or unforeseen circumstances. Fees are not payable when the Centre is closed for holidays and public holidays. Fees are payable two weeks in advance for the ongoing provision of care for all Centre-based early education and care services.
Targeted enrolment (Preschool services only)	Children who are four years of age on or before 31st July in the year of enrolment. Families with a health care card or pension card whose children turn three years old on or before 31st July in the year of enrolment.
Enrolment Fee	An Enrolment Fee is a non-refundable one-off payment for all new and previously enrolled Family Day Care and Early Learning Centre children's enrolment.
Centrepay	A free and voluntary service to pay bills and expenses as regular deductions from your Centrelink payments.
Salary Sacrifice	Payment of fees using an employee remuneration package. Salary sacrificing is done through an arrangement between you and your employer – meaning the items and services you can receive will depend on your employer.
NDIS	A federal government-funded scheme that provides financial support to people with an intellectual, physical, sensory, cognitive (such as defective short-term memory) or psychosocial (arising as a result of a mental health condition) disability and early intervention supports for children with developmental delay.
NDIA Managed	NDIA managed is when your plan is managed by the NDIA (sometimes referred to as Agency-managed): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can choose from a range of NDIS registered providers. Your providers claim payment electronically from your funding. You cannot use unregistered providers. You can look on the Myplace portal to see what claims providers are making against your NDIS funding and keep track of your budget. The NDIA will manage your book-keeping and records of your spending. https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/creating-your-plan/ways-manage-your-funding/ndia-managed-funding
NDIS Plan Managed	Plan management is when a provider supports a family to manage NDIS funding. These providers are known as plan managers. www.ndis.gov.au/participants/creating-your-plan/ways-manage-your-funding/plan-management
NDIS Self-Managed	Self-management is when a family manage their NDIS funding. www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/self-management
Service Level Agreement (SLA)	A service-level agreement is a commitment between a service provider and a client. Particular aspects of the service – quality, availability, responsibilities – are agreed upon between the service provider and the service user. www.ndis.gov.au/providers/working-provider/connecting-participants/service-agreements
NDIS Representative	For a participant under 18 years of age, a 'child representative' can be appointed. A child representative is only appointed where the NDIA is making a determination that a person other than the person or persons with parental responsibility should be the child representative. https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/families-and-carers/guardians-and-nominees-explained
Addendum	An addendum is a modification, addition or other change to the service provision in a Service Level Agreement. An Addendum is considered to be a part of a families Service Level Agreement.
Medicare	Medicare is the publicly-funded health care insurance scheme in Australia, operated by Services Australia. It guarantees all Australians (and some overseas visitors) access to a wide range of health and hospital services at low or no cost. https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/medicare

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Name

[Education and Care Services National Law \(Act\) Act 2011](#), National Regulations: Part 4.7 Leadership and

Service Management, Division Two

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#), 168 and 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

[National Quality Framework 7](#), Quality Area 7 Governance and leadership, Standard 7.1 Governance

Family Assistance Legislation:

1. [A New Tax System \(Family Assistance\) Act 1999](#)
2. [A New Tax System \(Family Assistance\) \(Administration\) Act 1999](#)
3. [Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017](#) (Minister's Rules)
4. [Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017](#) (Secretary's Rules)
5. Any other instruments (including regulations) made under the [A New Tax System \(Family Assistance\) Act 1999](#) and the [A New Tax System \(Family Assistance\) \(Administration\) Act 1999](#)
6. Schedules 5 and 6 to the [A New Tax System \(Family Assistance and Related Measures\) Act 2000](#).

STAKEHOLDERS

- Families who are receiving one or more services from Children and Family Services.
- Fairfield City Council and Children and Family Services staff who administer this policy.

SECTION 2 - POLICY

OBJECTIVE AND GOALS

- To ensure all families are aware of their financial obligations concerning payment of childcare fees to their provider.
- To ensure that all Children and Family Services staff support and implement the fee policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

Fairfield City Council, Children and Family Services will:

1. Apply this policy to all families reasonably to ensure consistency of fees charged.
2. Consider the effect the Fee Policy may have on families who demonstrate severe financial hardship.
3. Provide Fee Policy to families to ensure they understand their rights and responsibilities.
4. Will inform relevant stakeholders of any changes to fees and of any provide a minimum of 30 days' notice proposed modifications adopted by Council.

APPLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION

1. FEE TYPES

1.1. **Child Care Subsidy (CCS)** and the **Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)**

Subsidy may apply to eligible families who receive a Long Day Care, Family Day Care and a Family Day Care Before and After School Care (BASC). The subsidy is subject to approval from the Australian Government, Services Australia.

- Children and Family Services collect CCS/ACCS Directly from Services Australia.
- It is the family's responsibility to apply for CCS/ACCS and provide all relevant information to Children and Family Services. The family also must notify Children and Family Services of any CCS/ACCS related updates or changes.

- All families are responsible for understanding their subsidy entitlements and obligations. This subsidy is an agreement between the family and the Australian Government, Services Australia.

1.2. **Preschool fee subsidies** may apply for targeted enrolments. Subsidies may change at any time and are dependent on the allocation of funding from the NSW State Government. Preschool fees are updated annually. All new and ongoing families are informed of all Preschool fees and subsidies by Children and Families.

1.3. **NDIS** Funding may be available to families who receive a service from Fairstart Early Intervention. Funding is subject to approval from NDIS.

- Children and Family Services accept funding from families that are NDIA Managed, NDIS Plan Managed and NDIS Self-Managed.
- It is the families responsibility to apply for NDIS Funding and provide all relevant information to Children and Family Services. It is also the families obligation to notify Children and Family Services of any NDIS Funding related updates or changes.
- All families must sign and agree to a Service Level Agreement from Children and Family Services before any services are provided. Services will end upon the Service Level Agreement's completion conclusion date or when the NDIS funding plan end date comes into effect.
- Any Service Level Agreement created for new family's or the renewal of services for existing families will be considered in line with the [Children and Family Services Intake Policy](#), and any other Council policies that may be applicable.
- It is the families responsibility to ensure that all fees, including NDIS funds within their signed Service Level Agreement are available. The family is directly responsible for the payment of fees for any services provided to the family.
- Children and Family Services are responsible for providing all Plan Managed and Self-Managed families with an invoice via email for services delivered to families. A fourteen-day payment notice period for invoice payment will be provided. It is the families responsibility to keep their email address up to date with the Children and Family Services staff.
- Children and Family Services will notify Plan Managed and Self-Managed Families via email if fees are outstanding after the invoice due date.
- Plan Managed and Self-Managed Families are responsible for ensuring that their NDIS Funding is in place and are responsible for the payment of fees for services that are delivered to the family by Children and Family Services.
- Two consecutive non-payment for services delivered to a family will result in Children and Family Services withdrawing all future services for the family. Ten business days' notice communicated to the family via email.
- All Children and Family Services fees for NDIS services will be in line with the current [NDIS Price Guide](#). Any fee increase communicated to families via email. Thirty business days' notice of any fee increase communicated to the family via email.

1.4. Medicare

- Medicare benefits for Fairstart Early Intervention services are available for families.
- Children and Family Services will provide families with invoices for families to make a Medicare claim after the family has paid Fairstart Early Intervention for services received.

2. FEES AND CHARGES

2.1. Fairstart

- Two clear 'business days' notice before the day of your appointment is required for a non-billable cancellation. No evidence is needed.
 - *Eg 1: If your appointment is on Wednesday, the family must cancel on Friday the week before the appointment.*
 - *Eg 2: If your appointment is on Friday, the family must cancel on Tuesday.*
- Less than two clear business days' notice before your appointment date will result in a billable cancellation. Billable cancellations will be in line with the current NDIS and price guide guidelines.
- Three consecutive non-billable cancellations, or 75% of appointments within one month, may result in Children and Family Services withdrawing all future services for the family.
- Children and Family Services will provide five business days notice that your family's place is at risk. Ten business days' notice will be provided to the family if services are going to be withdrawn.
- If you are at risk of three consecutive non-billable cancellations or 75% non-billable cancellations within a month, families can request for their ongoing supports to be reviewed by the Children and Family Services management.
- Families can request an extended break in services. Ten-business days' notice must be provided to Children and Family Services. Fees are payable within the notice period. Extended breaks in services will be negotiated and accommodated where possible between the family and the Children and Family Services management staff.
- Families can request a discharge or withdrawal of services. Ten-business days' notice must be provided to Children and Family Services. Fees are payable within the notice period.

2.2. Long Day Care and Preschool

- An Enrolment Fee is payable for all new centre-based early education and care and Family Day Care family enrolments.
- Fee amounts will be charged by Fairfield City fees Price List, less any subsidies the family may be eligible for.
- Fees require two-week advance payment before the commencement of all new centre-based early education and care services.
 - CCS or ACCS cannot be used for the fee advance payment.
- Fees will be collected by direct debit, also known as 'iPay'.
 - Parent 1 enters an 'Acknowledgement of the iPay Request Service Agreement'.
 - Fees can also be collected through Centrepay or by salary sacrifice.

- An annual direct debit calendar of fee payment dates will be provided to Parent 1.
 - It is the responsibility of Parent 1 to ensure that sufficient funds are available and direct debit account details are accurate.
 - A non-payment of direct debit fees will result in a dishonour fee.
 - Parent 1 will be given five working days' notice prior to a direct debit collection of any outstanding fees and any subsequent dishonour fee.
 - Two consecutive dishonours of family fees will result in a service suspension until the outstanding account is settled.
 - Upon a third consecutive dishonour, the child's enrolment is at risk of termination. Children and Family Services will terminate the child's enrolment in line with:
 - [QMPR-CS-004a Exit process for Long Day Care families](#)
 - [QMPR-CS-004b Exit process for Preschool families](#)

3. FEE ARRANGEMENTS

3.1. Long Day Care and Preschool

- Payment Plans can be requested by Parent 1, who may demonstrate financial hardship or are experiencing extenuating circumstances, under:
 - [QMPR-CS-003 Fee account in arrears process](#)
 - [QMF-CS 043 Outstanding fees payment plan](#)
- Fairfield City Council Staff receiving early education and care services for their child/ren may pay their fees by salary sacrifice.
- Families may consent for fees to be collected by Centrepay.

4. FAMILY DAY CARE FEES AND CHARGES

- 4.1. Family Day Care Educator fees for families are based on an hourly rate that is set by the Educator.
- 4.2. Family Day Care Educators are responsible for charging family gap fees and providing invoices to families and, where applicable, Children and Family Services.
- 4.3. Family Day Care Educator requires a two-week 'security deposit' for all enrolments.
- 4.4. The Educator will provide receipts for payment of fees to families using the approved software 'HubWorks'.
- 4.5. Fees for families are payable directly to the Educator on a payment date that is agreed upon between the family and Educator.
- 4.6. Fees for families will be charged on all public holiday periods that fall on your child or children's enrolled day.
- 4.7. Fees for families will not be charged during service shutdown periods.
- 4.8. Hourly fees for families who require care on a public holiday may differ.
- 4.9. Fees for families are not payable when the Family Day Care Educator has closed their service. Educators will provide two weeks' notice to families if they are intended to take extended leave.

- 4.10. Fees for families are payable via the accepted payment methods as determined by the Educator.
- 4.11. Families using a temporary Educator will be required to pay the hourly rate that the interim Educator sets. Fees may differ.
- 4.12. Parent Administration levy is payable directly to the Educator either one week in advance or on a payment date that is agreed upon between the family and Educator.
- 4.13. Family Day Care Educator Levy is not payable when the Family Day Care Educator has closed their service for an extended period.

SECTION 3 - GOVERNANCE

RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Document / Number	QMF-CFS-046 Termination Warning Letter QMF-CFS-047 Termination Letter QMF-CS-043 Outstanding Fees Payment Plan QMF-FO-005 Payment Form QMPR-CS-003 Fee Account in Arrears Process QMF-FO-007 Sundry Debtor Advice
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RESPONSIBILITY

Policy Owner	Manager, Children and Family Services
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RISK

Failure of fees being paid may result in a loss of income for Children and Family Services.
 Failure of fees being paid will result in a debt collection process for the family.

VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Amendment
5	July 2015	Children and Family Services Manager	Inclusion of person-centred tools and links to controlled forms
6	January 2019	Children and Family Services Manager	Inclusion of new child care system information and process, Merged FDC fee policy to create one CFS Fee Policy
7	December 2019	Children and Family Services Manager	Inclusion of hardship rubric and fee account management procedure. Revision of notice periods and bond.
8	July 2020	Children and Family Services Manager	Inclusion of Family Day Care services. Discontinuation of bonds.
9	April 2021	Children and Family Services Manager	Inclusion of Fairstart Early Intervention and Support Services.

REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed every **five years** or when a change to governing legislation or business improvement occurs, whichever occurs sooner.

AUTHORISATION

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