

### FEES

#### Policy Statement

The objective of this procedure is to articulate Gowrie NSW's compliance with National Law and Regulations, including amendments from the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Income management is vital for Gowrie NSW to continue to provide a consistent level of quality regarding programs, resources and educators. Gowrie NSW aims to provide clear information to families regarding fee structures, monies owed and methods of payment.

The steps outlined in this procedure will assist Program Managers and other staff to inform families about fees and fee collection.

#### Responsibilities of Gowrie NSW Programs

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011, centres must comply with:

- Regulation 168; Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- Regulation 172; Notification of change to policies or procedures

Under the National Quality Standards, Programs must meet:

- Standard 7.1.2; Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

#### Procedure Strategies

##### Prior to Enrolment

The Program Manager, or their delegate, will:

- Advise families that the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is the main way the Government assists families with their child care fees.
- Advise families that CCS will be one payment made directly to the child care service which will be received as reduced fees.
- Provide the family with an estimated quote from QikKids reflecting the individual family's enrolment requirements and CCS eligibility.
- Advise families to contact Department of Human Services to arrange financial assistance and to create a MyGov account, if they have not already done so. Until the centre receives written confirmation of CCS entitlements, full fees will be charged. <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/centrelink>
- Explain the 'No Jab, No Pay' legislation regarding the ineligibility of financial assistance to non-immunised children. <https://beta.health.gov.au/resources/publications/no-jab-no-pay-new-requirements-fact-sheet>
- Provide all enrolment documentation including the Direct Debit Request – Authorisation Form

## Fee Payment Method

### 1. Payment of fees

Gowrie NSW's methods of payment is direct debit via Debitsuccess (debit or credit) or Centrepay. The signed Direct Debit Request – Authorisation Form nominates a financial institution account from which fees will be debited. Direct Debit assists families with a convenient and consistent way to pay, and helps Gowrie NSW avoid debts and lower administration costs. Direct Debits are processed on Thursday each week and deducted in accordance with the family's Direct Debit Request form. Families can elect to pay by Gowrie NSW's fortnightly debit cycle (which is in accordance to the Childcare Subsidy's fortnight – Gowrie NSW will direct debit on week 2 of the CCS fortnight), or weekly.

The Direct Debit Request – Authorisation Form provided to families prior to, is to be completed, signed and returned to the centre prior to the commencement of care to secure the booking.

### 2. Payment of fees prior to commencement of care

#### Outside School Hours Care

Gowrie NSW's methods of payment are, direct debit via Debitsuccess (debit or credit) or Centrepay, a payment of the first billing week will be required prior to commencement of care.

#### Early Education and Care

- To secure your enrolment, there is a non-refundable booking fee that is payable to Gowrie NSW

If the family opts to use Gowrie NSW's preferred method of payment, direct debit via Debitsuccess (debit or credit) or Centrepay, a payment of the first billing week will be required prior to commencement of care. The fees payable will be calculated in accordance with the family's nominated payment frequency.

### 3. Family Responsibilities

The 'Enrolment Form' and the 'Direct Debit Request – Authorisation Form' must be completed and returned prior to the commencement of care.

Fees are required to be paid a minimum of one period (depending on the family's choose of payment frequency of either week or fortnight) in advance.

If families are waiting for their CRN, full fees must be paid until the CRN has been issued. The family must notify the centre of their CRN once it has been issued. CCS cannot be applied until the CRN has been provided and the enrolment confirmed by the family with Centrelink. Once enrolled, if the child does not commence in the program, full fees paid will be retained and cessation of care will apply if the child does not attend. This results in full fees being charged for the booked days not attended.

If a child is absent on their first day(s) from the day they were supposed to start until the day they actually commenced this results in full fees being charged for the booked days in accordance to the government's legislation for commencing care.

### 4. Late Collection

Families are responsible for collecting their children prior to the centre's closing time. A late fee of \$30 per 30 minutes after closing time will be applied to the families account.

### 5. Failure to Notify (OSHC)

This is applicable to Outside School Hours Care only.

An administration fee of \$5 is charged to family's accounts who do not inform the Program Manager that their child will not attend a booked session of care.

The fee will be charged in addition to the day's session fee and will be invoiced the following billing cycle.

### 6. Vacation Care

Cancellation of Vacation Care Sessions requires 7 days written notice. In the absence of required notice regular session fees will be charged.

### 7. Statements

- Families will be issued with statements each billing cycle via displaying past and future charges.
- Families to review the amount being charged on the statement and bring any discrepancies to the attention of the Program Manager.
- If the family does not discuss any discrepancies with the Program Manager, it is assumed the account is correct.
- Fees are charged for every booking on every day the Program is operating, whether the child is in attendance or not.
- Fees are not charged for statutory public holidays.
- Fees are not charged when programs are closed.
- Families will be informed at least 14 days prior to any changes to fees or changes to in how fees are to be paid.

### 8. Management of Accounts in Arrears

Families will be notified in writing by the Program Manager if their account falls behind the one week in advance requirement. If an account falls into arrears, the family will be notified in writing including a request for payment.

Families with accounts in arrears will not be able to add any additional or casual days to their enrolment pattern.

A payment plan may be entered at the discretion of the Program Manager and General Manager. In the instance where the payment plan is not adhered to or where no payment is received, the centre will suspend the enrolment. Whilst care is suspended, the child/ren will not be able to attend the centre until the account is paid in accordance with policy

If fees remain in arrears, the matter will be referred to the General Manager and care will be ceased at the

discretion of Gowrie NSW. Outstanding amounts may also be passed on to an external debt collection agency at the discretion of Gowrie NSW.

### 9. Changes in Booking

Where vacancies allow, increasing the number of booked days, does not require a notice period.

The following notice period of changes apply:

- In OSHC Two (2) weeks' notice is required for: a reduction of booked days or withdrawal from the program.
- In EEC Two (2) weeks' notice is required for a reduction of booked days  
Four (4) weeks' notice is required for withdrawal from the service.

Any permanent changes to the child's booking must be communicated in writing to the Program Manager.

Fees will be charged as per original booking if the applicable notice has not been given, whether the child is in attendance or not.

**Where the family has cancelled the child's enrolment, and the child does not attend their final booked day or trailing days, full fees will be charged as per the Government's Cessation of Care requirement.**

### 10. Refunds

- Families may be eligible for a refund of credit balances.
- A written request for refund of credit balances is to be sent to the program manager who will forward the request to the finance team. Refunds will be processed when all CCS amounts have been cleared and not estimating (within a 4-week period).

### 11. Casual Bookings

#### 11.1 EEC

Where there are vacancies, families may book in a casual day of care, if required. Families will be charged their usual fee (with consideration to CCS entitlements) for casually booked days. Where a family no longer requires the casual booking, they may cancel the booking at no charge at least 24 hours before the casually booked day. Cancellations within 24 hours or on the day will incur the fee.

#### 11.2 OSHC

Casual rates are charged in accordance with the Program Fee Structure.

**Please note:** A casual booking is a non-recurring booking; a one-off booking for an extra day/s.