

BEECHWORTH COMMUNITY CHILDCARE CENTRE

FEES POLICY

Associated Policies: Casual Care & Bookings
Financial Management

Infectious Diseases
Immunisation Policy
Confidentiality/Privacy & Record Management Policy

Original: 4 June
2002

Reviewed:

Revised: March 2014

Ratified: 24th August
2011.

Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Act 2012
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.

Location/Ownership: POLICY MANUAL - ADMINISTRATION FINANCIAL

This Policy satisfies the following National Quality Standard Quality Area 7, Leadership and Service Management:

- 7.3.1 Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
- 7.3.2 Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Centre aims to provide a quality child care service at an affordable price to families. As a community based centre that relies on the prompt payment of fees, we have endeavoured to establish a mutually beneficial payment system which is convenient for our families and reliable in meeting the association's ongoing operation costs. Fee levels will be set by the Committee of Management (CoM) and according to the Centre's required income in order to provide quality child care. Our fee schedule is reviewed by the Management Committee at the end of each financial year.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Philosophy - all stakeholders at the Service will promote the highest standards in Early Childhood Education and Care by delivering quality services and providing financial stability. Children's needs -to receive a service that is focused on the individual needs of each child. To receive a service that is fully funded to provide quality service.

Parent's needs -to be assured that monies paid to the Centre will be used for the effective operation of the Service.

Staff needs -to work in a service that is financially sound, that staff payments and entitlements will be honoured at all times.

Management needs - to ensure that the Centre's financial position is stable and the CoM adhere to the relevant laws and regulations in relation to charging fees.

PROCEDURE:

Membership to the Association

A yearly membership fee of \$5.50 (includes GST) is paid by all families who nominate to become a member of the Association by completing the relevant section on the enrolment form. This membership fee enables families to become members of the Beechworth Community Child Care Centre Inc. Association. A list of current members is maintained by the Secretary of the CoM and is stored securely at the centre.

Fee structure.

There are two fee options available - a daily fee and short session fee. Full fees are charged for each day the Centre is in operation unless the child's position is permanently terminated. Half day bookings will not be accepted. The exception to this is a child who is new to the centre, who will be allowed 3 x half day bookings to allow a gradual orientation.

Registration /Bond

- At the commencement of a full time or permanent part time booking a bond of \$100.00 per family is required in addition to the first weekly fee payment. The bond guarantees a permanent booking for enrolled children, Late Fees Policy notwithstanding.
- This bond can either be:
 - Credited to the final account for the permanent booking for the year, or
 - Rolled over to the following year's registration.
- The bond is not applicable to casual care users.

- If the bond is not paid within 14 days of the commencement of care the booking for permanent care will be cancelled.

Childcare Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR)

In order to be eligible for CCB the service will ensure it is registered with the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority and participate in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System. The guidelines in claiming and administering CCB as directed by Government regulations will be followed.

- Information about the Federal Government CCB and CCR scheme is available from the Director and Family Assistance Office.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that a child care benefit and child care rebate application is lodged within 7 days prior to the commencement of care if families seek approval for these benefits. Failure to do so will result in the full fee being charged from the date of care commencing.
- It is the family's responsibility to ensure their CCB and CCR information is current with the Family Assistance Office (FAO) and that child immunisation requirements are maintained and the FAO is informed of these records.
- The FAO will notify BCCCC of any new and/or changes to a parent or guardian's CCB or CCR entitlements but BCCCC is not responsible for monitoring these entitlements and ensuring they are current and correct. It is the parents responsibility to ensure they maintain correct personal and financial information with the FAO at all time
- The Centre will provide accurate and up to date information to families regarding CCB and how to apply, and will ensure that CCB is administered according to the family's Assessment Notice and Government regulations.
- Families will only be eligible for CCB if childcare attendance records are accurately completed and signed by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult, and other eligibility requirements are met. (Refer to Child Care Service Handbook 2012-13, section 4.6)
- Eligibility for CCB will be maintained on fees paid when the child is absent and the absence meets the Allowable Absences guidelines in the Child Care Service Handbook 2012-13, and the details of the absence have been recorded and signed on the attendance records.
- Staff will have a basic knowledge of CCB requirements but will refer all specific queries to the Co-ordinator.

Payment of Fees

- All families are required to pay their fees on a weekly or fortnightly basis, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Coordinator.

- A weekly account is issued electronically and depending on family preference, will be emailed to a nominated email address or printed and placed in family communication pocket
- Please see Methods of Payment section below for details on how to pay your account
- **Any casual care used is to be paid for on the day of use**
- **The Coordinator will bank fee payments within 5 days of receiving the payment.**
- Details of an individual's account and all completed forms kept by the Centre will be confidential and stored appropriately.
- Fees will not be charged from the Christmas closure until the centre re-opens (usually for 2 weeks). Families will be charged the fee for their booking from their child's recommencement in the New Year, or Australia Day, whichever is earlier.

Methods of Payment

1. Direct Debit

As a community based program which relies on the prompt payment of fees to maintain the high quality of care, families are encouraged to establish a convenient direct debit system to maintain fee payments, unless an alternative system has been agreed in writing with the Director.

2. Cash / Cheque

???. accept cash payments cash/cheques at the Directors discretion??

Outstanding Fees

An account is considered overdue when:

- A payment has not been received by the Association by the account due date
- the account exceeds the bond amount

The following procedure is followed in the event of an overdue account or outstanding fees:

1. An electronic reminder of the account will be sent to the nominated email address.
2. A reminder sticker will be attached to a hard copy on the account and placed in the child's communication pocket.
3. The Coordinator or 2IC will contact the account holder by phone.
4. If there is no response to steps 1-3 of this procedure, a letter will be prepared by the CoM requesting settlement of the outstanding account or contact be made with the Coordinator within 7 days.
5. It is up to the discretion of the Coordinator to assist the parent or guardian in establishing a reasonable weekly payment arrangement
6. If payment is not forthcoming, action will be taken to recover the debt
7. The CoM will be informed of procedure outcome at the following Committee meeting.

Financial Hardship

Where a family is experiencing financial hardship it is requested that the Coordinator be contacted to discuss the situation and ascertain whether any special arrangements or assistance may be available. The CoM will be notified and reserves the right to make decisions regarding

any special / appropriate arrangements.

Absences

- Parents/Guardians should contact the Centre to advise of their child's inability to attend as soon as possible.
- All absences, whether due to illness or public holidays are charged at the full fee rate. If a child is absent for more than one week and not more than a maximum of four weeks due to an infectious disease, then half the fees will be charged. Refer to Infectious Diseases Policy.
- The Australian Government has introduced an accountability requirement for parents in receipt of CCB. 42 days of absence are allowed per year, anything over that will affect the CCB payment and families will be required to pay the full fee.
- Due to staff wage entitlements there is no reduction in fees for weeks that include public holidays. The Association does not allow families to swap their days of care if care is missed due to public holidays, absence due to child illness, or absence due to holidays.
- Notification of the Christmas closure period is made to all families during November. Fees are not charged during this period.

Holidays

From 1st January 2012, all families will be eligible for 2 weeks holidays (when the child is not attending the centre) at half the usual fee. 4 weeks notice is required in writing (including email) for this to apply.

Change of Booking and Public Holidays

- One full week's notice is required if there is any change to a full time or permanent part time booking, including cancellation of care.
- Where casual care has been booked and is not used, one working day's notice is required for any cancellation of this casual care - refer to Casual Care Policy for fees payable.

Swapping of care days

Where care is swapped due to parental reasons the following will apply:

- The care period being swapped to will be within one fortnight of the care not being utilised.
- Public holidays are not transferable.

Kindergarten fee agreement

In accordance with the agreement made in conjunction with the Beechworth Kindergarten and Montessori, parents can participate in a joint fee arrangement.

Parents must permanently book and pay child care fees (and attract their usual CCB) for the whole day on the days that their child attends the Beechworth Kindergarten. The BCCCC will pay the Beechworth Kindergarten fees for up to two days that the child attends the Beechworth Kindergarten. That is, BCCC pays \$270 for 2 days of 4yo kinder and the parent is responsible for paying the difference.

Resources

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/child-care-benefit/claiming>

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-rebate>

<http://education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook>

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