

## Policy Overview

The Centre aims to provide a quality childcare 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 childcare. Our fee schedule is reviewed by the Management Committee at the end of each financial year.

## Who does this Policy apply to?

This policy applied to Families and Management.

## Policy Guidelines

### **Payment of Fees**

All families must have a completed Direct debit form upon enrolment. Fees are charged weekly or fortnightly at the end of each week. Families must be up to date with payments at all times, otherwise late fees will be charged.

Fees are to be paid either via **direct debit** or **credit card**. For credit card payments, a 2.4% surcharge applies for MasterCard, Visa and Bankcard.

No surcharge applies for direct debit payments.

Completed forms will be kept confidential and stored in accordance with our policy. Individual families may access their own account records at any time by contacting the Centre Director.

Statements will be emailed to families on Tuesdays, prior to the direct debit. Any queries or concerns should be raised by contacting the Centre Director prior to the debit day to ensure these can be amended.

### **Orientation**

All Families will be eligible for a minimum of three orientation sessions.

The initial 1 hour orientation is free of charge.

The two ½ day orientations will incur a fee equal to 50% of the daily fee. CCS can be claimed on these sessions.

## Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment made by the Australian Government to help families with the cost of quality child care and early education. This is paid directly to the service to reduce your weekly fees.

Three things will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy:

1. A family's combined income will determine the percentage of subsidy they are eligible to receive.
2. An activity test will determine how many hours of subsidised care families can access, up to a maximum of 100 per fortnight.
3. The type of child care service will determine the hourly rate cap.

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy.

These include:

- The age of the child (must be 13 or under and not attending secondary school).
- The child meeting immunisation requirements.
- The individual, or their partner, meeting the residency requirements.

The number of hours of subsidised child care that families will have access to per fortnight will be determined by a three-step activity test.

In two parent families both parents, unless exempt, must meet the activity test.

In the case where both parents meet different steps of the activity test, the parent with the lowest entitlement will determine the hours of subsidised care for the child.

Low income families on \$66,958 or less a year who do not meet the activity test will be able to access 24 hours of subsidised care per child per fortnight without having to meet the activity test, as part of the Child Care Safety Net.

Step	Hours of activity	Maximum number of hours of subsidy per child*
1	8 – 12 hours	36 hours
2	More than 16 hours	72 hours
3	More than 48 hours	100 hours

\*Per fortnight. Source: [www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-activity-test](http://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-activity-test)

### **Absences and Sick Days**

Once your child is settled into our program we would request that if your child is absent for the day the centre is notified as soon as possible. This allows Wingate Avenue enough time to notify parents who may be requiring extra care days or make up days.

Fees are payable for all absences and swap days are not available.

Families are entitled to 42 subsidised absences per financial year. After this time, a proof of absence such as a medical certificate may be required. More information can be found on the Centrelink website.

### **Public Holidays**

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative will be closed on all Victorian Public Holidays including:

- Australia Day
- Labour Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Anzac Day
- Queens Birthday
- Melbourne Cup Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Years Day

Families are required to pay for public holidays.

A make-up day will be offered to part-time families for each Public Holiday which can be booked in with the centre Director.

The day is only redeemable within a 3 month period, and is subject to availability.

### **Late Pick Up Fee**

Children are required to be collected from the centre by 6:00pm.

A late fee of \$20 will be charged to families for collection of children within 15 minutes of closing time. After this it will be charged at \$1 per minute.

Fees will be added to your account and will be charged with the next billing cycle.

### **Canceling or altering permanent bookings**

Any change to booked days or cancellation of care must be done so in writing, with a minimum of 2 weeks notice provided.

### **Cancellation of care and Centrelink rebates**

As stated above, 2 weeks written notice is required to cancel a child's place at Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative.

As per government regulations, it is important to note, CCS will only be paid until the last the day a child attends.

This means if your child does not attend during their notice period, cessation of care will be applied and full fees will be charged.

### **Late payment of fees**

In the event a direct debit is dishonoured; families will be given notice of the dishonoured direct debit. A \$14.95 fee will be charged from the direct debit company and a \$10 administration fee will be charged from the centre.

Families must pay the outstanding fee within 7 days of being notified, failure to pay the dishonoured fees within the 7 days may result in the family losing security access to the centre.

Failure to pay the dishonoured fees within the 14 days may result in the family being asked to leave the service

Should families be experiencing financial hardships, we ask that the family notify the Centre Director. The Director will assess whether a payment plan can be arranged.

### **Debt recovery**

Wingate Avenue reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the service. The cost of this action will be passed onto the family.

Where a family owes money to the Centre, no further childcare will be provided to any child in the family, until all outstanding monies are paid or a payment plan is agreed to and signed by both parties.

## **Child Care Subsidy (CCS) - The Centre**

The Centre will comply with the Commonwealth Government requirements to be an eligible Child Care Subsidised service.

The Centre will provide accurate and up to date information to families regarding Child Care Subsidy and how to apply and will ensure that CCS is administered according to the family's Assessment Notice and the Commonwealth Handbook.

The centre will keep parents informed about the Child Care Subsidy by

- Advising new families to complete their MyGov or Centrelink registration
- Drawing attention to the fact that all Child Care Subsidy and Declaration forms are legal documents and that it is a criminal offence to give false information
- Charging full fees when the family does not have a current Child Care Assessment Notice for the Child Care Subsidy
- Advising parents of any relevant changes through notices and the centre newsletter
- All documentation pertaining to Child Care Subsidy will be kept for the specified period of time (3 years) and made available to Commonwealth Officers on request.
- In order to be eligible for Commonwealth Child Care Subsidy the service will ensure it is registered for accreditation with the Child Care Quality Assurance Systems (CCQA) to achieve the National Quality Framework (NQF) Rating

## **Child Care Subsidy - The Family**

It is the parent's responsibility to complete and lodge their Child Care Subsidy application with MyGov or Centrelink. Families must also accept their booking through their MyGov app before any subsidies will be applied to their bookings.

The Child Care Subsidy cannot be deducted from families fees until the centre receives the notification from Centrelink that families have accepted their enrolment.

Parents need to register for each type of care at each venue they will use i.e. Long Day Care, Before School Care, After School Care, Vacation Care.

Families seeking The Child Care Subsidy for the first time will be required to meet the Commonwealth Government's immunisation requirements. The Centre will provide information to these families in regard to this requirement.

Families will only be eligible for The Child Care Subsidy if child care attendance records are accurately completed and signed by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult, and other eligibility requirements are met.

Eligibility for Child Care Subsidy will be maintained on fees paid when the child is absent and the absence meets the Allowable Absences guidelines in the Child Care Services Handbook, and the details of the absence have been recorded and signed on the attendance records.

It is the responsibility of families to check their statements to ensure child care subsidy is being applied correctly.

Date created	2 <sup>nd</sup> of November 2021
Last reviewed	2 <sup>nd</sup> of January 2022
Date for review	23 <sup>rd</sup> of March 2023
Relevant Policies	Enrolment Policy Privacy Policy
Relevant Legislation	<p>Education and Care Services &amp; regulations 2011 National Quality Standards Guide 2018 Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria update 2008 Victorian Privacy Act 2002 Health Records Act 2001 (State)</p> <p><b>National Quality Standards Guide 2018</b></p> <p>6.1.3 Families are supported Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.</p> <p><b>Education and Care Services National Law 2010</b></p> <p>172 Offence to fail to display prescribed information</p> <p><b>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</b></p> <p>158 Children's attendance record to be kept by approved provider 170 Policies and procedures to be followed 173 Prescribed information to be displayed 177 Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider 181 Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider</p>