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## FEES POLICY

### QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

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#### National Quality Standard (NQS)

##### Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

7.1	<b>Governance</b>	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	<b>Management Systems</b>	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

#### Education and Care Services National Regulations

##### Children (Education and Care Services) National Law Act

<b>168</b>	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
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Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) financial health, and access to the service, will be maximised by ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment, as well as changes to these that will occur from time to time.

### Introduction

To enable WECC to provide ongoing, high quality early education and care for children, we need to ensure we are financially viable at all times. Prompt payment of fees allows us to plan with certainty. We have a commitment to ensuring our fees are as affordable as possible and that all families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce these fees. WECC will advocate with governments for all children's right to access early education and care regardless of their family's financial situation

## Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

## Goals – What are we aiming to do?

WECC's financial health and access to our service will be maximised by:

- ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment
- keeping fee increases to a minimum
- ensuring the cost of administering fee collection is kept to a minimum
- following the appropriate priority of access requirements
- following all legal requirements required by our access to government funding
- managing fee collection to avoid bad debts
- families being notified as far ahead as possible and no less than 14 days prior to any changes to fees or the way fees will be collected

## Strategies – How will it be done?

### *Priority of Access*

Please refer to the *Priority of Access* policy for information

### *Attendance records*

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- ensure records of attendance are kept for each child as required under family assistance law
- pass all fee reductions to families, as advised by the Department of Education and Training, against an Attendance Record Report within 14 days of being advised of the amount
- ensure WECC submits online weekly Attendance Record Reports to the Australian Government's Department of Education and Training for each child utilising the education and care service

Families will:

- obtain a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for Centrelink as soon as practical before or after enrolment at WECC, and will provide this number to the Nominated Supervisor or Director
- record the arrival and departure times of their child/ren for each day that they attend the education and care service

### *Financial viability, statements and fee review*

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- comply with any Australian Government funding agreements as required
- aim to ensure WECC remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due
- charge no more than the usual fee for fees being paid by the Government such as Child Care Subsidy (CCS)
- issue statements for all children in respect of whom fee reductions are provided to ensure families have a complete record of the CCS and/or other fee reductions that have been provided by WECC at least every

- three (3) months
- only collect and disclose personal information about children and families to the Family Assistance Office (FAO) and the Australian Government's Department of Education and Training where the disclosure is legally required
- ensure all families are made aware of service fees and the CCS on enrolment, as well as the need to pay for care on the days that their child is absent from care
- ensure statements of fees are electronically distributed to all families no less than every two (2) weeks
- submit attendance records to the Australian Government's Department of Education and Training on a regular basis and ensure subsequent fee reductions are passed onto families as soon as possible
- ensure the Management Committee reviews fees twice annually in line with CPI and market forces. These reviews will be in October (to take effect 1 January the following year) and April (to take effect 1 July)
- participate in advocacy actions designed to reduce the cost of early education and care fees for families wherever appropriate and possible

#### *General fees*

- fees are charged daily and vary depending on the CCS. The CCS will be paid directly to WECC
- basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive CCS for a child include:
  1. the age of the child (must be 13 years or under and not attending secondary school)
  2. the child meeting immunisation requirements
  3. the individual, or their partners, meeting the residency requirements
- family's level of CCS will be determined by:
  1. combined family income
  2. activity level of parents
  3. type of education and care service
- fees are payable for every day that a child is enrolled at WECC. This includes public holidays days, sick days and family holidays but excludes the two (2) weeks annual end of year shut down
- fees are charged at full days only (no matter what the attendance hours are)
- casual days may be offered to families if available within WECC's license

#### *Payment of fees*

- fees are set up using *Debitsuccess*. Families enrolling at WECC will be expected to sign up for this payment method. Fees are not able to be paid in cash to ensure the educators safety
- families will be issued with a fee statement on a fortnightly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements
- a dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees

#### *Failure to pay*

If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued after one (1) week and then again after two (2) weeks, where the fees are still outstanding. A child's position will be terminated if payment has not been made after three (3) weeks, to which they family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time WECC will initiate its debt collection procedure, following privacy and conditional requirements.

#### *Late fees*

- apply a late fee of \$50 per fortnight to any invoice not paid by the due date
- levy a late fee for families who arrive after WECC's closing time of 6:00pm. This fee is set at \$15 for the first five (5) minutes with and additional \$1 for every minute thereafter
- ensure families are aware of late fees on enrolment
- a review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late

### *Public holidays*

Families will pay for any booked day of care at WECC which falls on a public holiday. This does not apply to the public holidays that fall during the annual end of year shut down

### *Absences*

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- ensure families are informed of the current numbers of allowable absences allowed under CCS legislation and the procedures that are in place for claiming additional absent days

Families will:

- notify the Nominated Supervisor or Director of their child/ren's absence from WECC no later than 10:00am on the day of the absence
- notify the Nominated Supervisor or Director of future absences if these are known in advance (for example, holidays)
- provide copies of medical certificates if their child/ren is absent due to a condition for which medical attention has been sought
- provide documentation for additional absence days as required
- keep track of their child/ren's absences via the fortnightly statement, which includes the number of absences for each child in the current financial year

### *Withdrawal from WECC/Termination of enrolment*

- Parents are to provide two weeks written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the centre.
- If termination from the Service is required without notification, families can lose their Child Care Subsidy, resulting in the payment of requirement for full fees to be charged.

## Evaluation

Families pay fees on time and collect children on time. Fees are kept as low as possible whilst ensuring WECC's financial health and sustainability.

- *Arrival and departure*
- *Enrolment and orientation*
- *Governance and management of the service*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality*
- *Withdrawal and termination of enrolment*

## Related policies/documents

## Statutory legislation and considerations

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- The Education and Care Services National Law
- The Education and Care Services National Regulations

## Sources and references

- The Business of Child Care, Karen Kearns
- National Quality Standards
- Child Care Subsidy - <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

## Authorisation

*Meng Wang*

President

2018-19 WECC Management Committee