

POLICY NO 06: PAYMENT OF FEES & EDUCATOR REMUNERATION POLICY & PROCEDURE

Key Policy Contact Person: Manager, Our Village Family Childcare

POLICY STATEMENT:

Our Village Family Childcare Service is a not-for-profit organisation. The service is eligible to offer Childcare Subsidy (CCS) subsidies to families. Educators are eligible to set their own fees for the education and care provided to the children. Each fee schedule is developed in conjunction with the Coordination Unit following the guidelines of the Our Village Family Childcare Fee Tier Checklist.

CRITICAL INFORMATION:

Our Village Family Childcare will ensure families are aware that it is their responsibility to contact Centrelink to:

- Register their child and to obtain a Customer Reference Number (CRN) in readiness to use a Childcare Service
- Follow up on Childcare payment questions directly with Centrelink.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy>

- The family member nominated by Centrelink to receive the CCS payment is the person responsible for ensuring payment of fees to the service.
- In line with the Family assistance Law, Our Village Family Childcare will apply Child Care Subsidy (CCS) (Depending on each family’s eligibility) for fees paid for each absence due to illness of a sick child, parent, or sibling. Sick leave absences are unlimited with medical certificates.

[See Allowable Absences](#) – Ref. Department of Education Absences from childcare.

Contents

POLICY STATEMENT: 1

PURPOSE: 2

SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES: 2

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY 2

DEFINITIONS: 2

PROCEDURES: 2

APPENDICES: 7

REFERENCES: 7

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES/ WORK INSTRUCTIONS: 7

VERSION CONTROL AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS / LEGISLATION: 7

PURPOSE:

This policy ensures consistency and accuracy in relation to the completion and submission of accurate Timesheets, administration of fee payments and remuneration to Educators.

SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES:

This document applies to all Educators, Families and Coordination Unit Staff of the Our Village Family Childcare Service.

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY

Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health is committed to improving the health of our community and being accessible to all, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, people with a disability, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQA+) people and other socially vulnerable groups and supporting their communities across the lifespan from birth to older age.

DEFINITIONS:

<p>Child Care Subsidy (CCS)</p>	<p>Is a payment made by the Australian Government to help all families with the cost of childcare <u>(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy)</u> </p>
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PROCEDURES:

Educators will set their own Fee Schedule with the Coordination Unit following the guidelines of the Our Village Family Childcare Fee Tier Checklist. Educators Fee Schedule is provided to parents/guardians on enrolment. The Parent Agreement is signed by the parent/agreement to acknowledge the Fee Schedules guidelines, the period of notice for termination of care, the regularity of payment of fees e.g., weekly, or fortnightly.

Each Individual Fee Schedule includes:

- Care within core hours
- Regular non-core hours
- Regular booked weekend care
- Casual care – Core hours
- Casual non-core hours
- Public holiday

As well as other charges:

- Transport
- Laundry
- Late Fee
- Meals
 - Breakfast
 - Lunch
 - Dinner

- Morning/afternoon tea
- Fees are charged according to the booked care (permanent or casual) for each child at the service, regardless of attendance.
- Full normal fees will be charged for all child absences including sickness, holidays, gazetted public holidays (even if a child does not attend care on that day) and any other leave that requires the childcare place to be kept open for that child.
- If care is used on a Public Holiday, the care is charged at the Public Holiday rate (Public Holidays are not deemed personal leave)

Gazetted Public Holidays: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year’s Day, Australia Day, Labour Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, Kings Birthday, Melbourne Cup Day, Friday before the AFL Grand Final.

- Educators may review their fee schedule annually with the Coordination Units annual fee review.
- Parents are given a minimum of 8 weeks’ notice regarding any proposed changes to the Educators fee schedule and administration levy.

Our Village Family Childcare will ensure families are aware that it is their responsibility to contact Centrelink to:

- Register their child and to obtain a Customer Reference Number (CRN) in readiness to use a Childcare Service
- Follow up on Childcare payment questions directly with Centrelink.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy>

- The family member nominated by Centrelink to receive the CCS payment is the person responsible for ensuring payment of fees to the service.
- In line with Family Assistance Law, Our Village Family Childcare will apply Child Care Subsidy (CCS) (depending on each family’s eligibility) for fees paid for each absence due to illness of a sick child, parent, or sibling. Sick leave absences are unlimited with medical certificates.

[See Allowable Absences](#) – Ref. Department of Education Absences from childcare.

Child Care Subsidy CCS

- It is the responsibility of each individual family to apply for the CCS to maintain a current assessment.
 - Applications for CCS are lodged directly with Centrelink by attending their office, by telephone or by logging onto the following: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy>.
- All information provided to the service for CCS is kept strictly confidential and is available to families upon request.

Educator and Parent Agreement

- Parents must sign a Parent and Educator Agreement (a contract for hour/days of care required) with their Educator prior to care commencing.
- Fees are payable according to the Agreement and the actual hours booked. It is expected that parents adhere to the agreed hours of care.
- If children arrive or leave outside the agreed hours of care, the Educator may charge a late fee.

- Any changes to the care hours are to be made with the Educator through the Harmony program. **Two (2) weeks'** notice of the change must be provided to the Educator. i.e., 14 days from first day of notice

24 Hour Care

The Coordination Unit must be consulted for any request for overnight care and a Risk Assessment be completed and documented on the sleep area. Twenty-four-hour care may be available in special circumstances. Application is to be made with Coordination Unit.

Pre-School Care

- Educators are paid for the hours a child attends a pre-school (kindergarten) session under the following conditions:
 - The Educator regularly delivers the child to and collects the child from the pre-school.
 - The Educator is available for the child, should the Educator be contacted whilst the child is at pre-school.
 - The Educator is available to provide education and care for booked hours when pre-school is not operating e.g., school holidays.

Rostered Care

- Upon the availability of an Educator, the service can provide rostered care providing a roster is provided to the Educator in advance, as negotiated.
- The family will be liable to pay for the care that has been booked according to the booking provided to the Educator, regardless of the child attending care.
- A normal booking fee would apply for this absence which would form part of the allowable absence number for that financial year.
- In the event of parental annual leave, a holding fee averaging the preceding four (4) weeks care would apply to hold your place with the Educator.

Travel

- When an Educator is requested to transport a child to pre-school or school, the travel costs will be met by the parents.
- A charge will apply according to the educator's individual fee.

Fees for Absences

- In the event of an absence from education and care, the parent/guardian must notify the Educator that the child will not be in care that day/s.
- When the child returns to care the parent is to note the absence on the Harmony program retrospectively for the day/s that the child was not present, before signing in the arrival time for the first day back in care
- The Educator will record the absent booked hours on the timesheet for payment.
- Fees for absences will attract CCS for a maximum of 42 days per financial year, per child, as long as the child is booked in for that day.
- When all 42 absent days are used, CCS can be paid for additional absence days for the following reasons:
 - An illness (with medical certificate)
 - An outbreak of an infectious disease when the child is not immunised (with written evidence)

- Rostered days off/rotating shiftwork of the parent/guardian (with written evidence)
- Temporary closure of a school or pupil-free days
- Periods of local emergency
- Shared care arrangements due to a court order, parenting plan, or parenting order (with copy of documentation)
- Attendance at preschool
- Exceptional circumstances
- There is no limit to the number of additional days for which CCS will be paid, so long as they are for the reasons specified above, have supporting documentation and these are days in which the education and care would have normally been provided.
- Such documentation is to be provided to the Coordination Unit.
- If all 42 days have been used and there is no evidence to support additional days as outlined above, **full fees for the absent day/s will apply.**
- If a child has two (2) weeks of absences and the parent/guardian has not contacted the Educator and/or not made any changes to their booked care, then absences cannot be paid beyond the two (2) weeks. In this case full fee would apply, unless the child returns to Family Childcare at a later date after the parent/guardian has first contacted the Coordination Unit

Change in Care Arrangements

Any changes to the care hours are to be made with the Educator through the Harmony program. **Two (2) weeks'** notice of the change must be provided to the Educator. i.e., 14 days from first day of notice

Termination of Care

See Appendices Section – Our Village Family Childcare Fee Schedule.

Timesheets

The Australian Government guidelines require that all details of attendance are recorded, including:

- The child's arrival and departure times are time stamped by the Harmony program when the child is signed in and out. The parent/guardian, who receives Childcare Subsidy (CCS), must use their assigned PIN (Harmony Personal Identification Number) to sign the electronic attendance record when the child arrives at the Educator's home and again on departure.
- If another authorised nominee drops off or collects the child, **that person must use their assigned PIN to sign the electronic attendance record.**
- The Educator must ensure that these entries occur daily at the appropriate times. (If an absence fee is to be applied, the parent/guardian must record the absence using their assigned PIN for the relevant day and record the absence upon the child's return to care).
- In some cases when technology may be offline a paper timesheet may be used
- In this instance of a paper timesheet being used the parent/guardian or authorised nominee must sign the timesheet for arrival and departure of the child using their full signature
- This information will be transferred to the electronic system by the educator once the internet is accessible.
- This is a contractual and legal requirement of a child's participation in the Family Childcare service.
- **At the conclusion of the fortnight cycle the Timesheet *is* to be completed including hours of care, meals, and travel before being provided to the parent/guardian to be signed off. Parent/guardian signs the Timesheet using their assigned PIN before it is submitted to the service for payment. In doing so the parent/guardian acknowledges that the hours plus any additional charges recorded**

for processing are in accordance with the agreed booked hours and that this will be what the Educator is paid and will also reflect what the parent will be charged.

- **Educators are to ensure that they submit Timesheets to the** Coordination Unit for processing on time and within the fortnightly pay cycle.
- All children who have been in education and care during the fortnightly period must have a Timesheet.
- When the child returns to care the parent is to note the absence on the Harmony program retrospectively for the day/s that the child was not present, before signing in the arrival time for the first day back in care.
- Each day the child attends Family Childcare for outside school hours care, parents will be required only to sign the child into the Educators home in the morning (for before school care) and to sign the child out of the Educators home in the afternoon (following after school care)
- In these circumstances, the Educator will sign the child out of the Educators home in a before school hours care situation and into the Educators home in an after-school hours care situation.
- Where approval has been given by the parent/guardian for the service to administer the CCS claims will be made on behalf of the parent and shown as a deduction on their account
- Payment summary reports will be generated and filed with the corresponding timesheets.
- At the end of each fortnight, Educators forward the completed Timesheet to the Coordination Unit for processing.
- The Timesheets are then submitted by the service to the Childcare Management System (CCMS) for calculation of CCS entitlements.
- Once processed, *Timesheets* are required to be kept by the Coordination Unit for at least 36 months from the end of the calendar year in the original form.

Educator Remuneration

- Timesheets are processed each fortnight according to the information submitted by the Educator.
- Our Village Family Childcare will submit Timesheets that have been authorised by families to Centrelink for approval after processing.
- After fortnightly processing, the Educator will be paid directly from Our Village Family Childcare according to the hours of care claimed together with a Payment Advice which outlines the hours of care used by each child in their care for that processing period.

It is the responsibility of all Educators to arrange their own income tax payments to the Australian Taxation Office.

Repayment of Incorrect Remuneration

Any incorrect remuneration made to the Educator by the service in the way of errors or omissions will be made to the Educator as an adjustment as soon as practicable but no later than the following fortnight after CCMS processing.

Payment of Fees

Tax Invoices to Families:

- Each fortnight families will be issued a Tax Invoice outlining the childcare costs for the previous fortnight.
- Payment is to be made within eight (8) business days unless specific arrangements have been made with the Manager or finance officer.

Non-Payment of Fees:

- Our Village Family Childcare will implement recovery methods for any accounts not paid by the due date.
- The service reserves the right to terminate care if all attempts to negotiate the recovery of fees are not met by the family.

APPENDICES:

- Our Village Family Childcare Fees and Conditions Range

REFERENCES:

- Australian Government <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy>
- Child Care Provider Handbook, (current version 3 August 2022) <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook>
- Education and Care National Regulations, (current version July 1, 2023)

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES/ WORK INSTRUCTIONS:

- Engagement & Registration of FDC Educators – 13
- Inclusion - 23
- Enrolment and Orientation – 31
- Provision of Information, Assistance and Training to FDC Educators – 34
- Educator Professional Development Work Instruction
- Orientation of FDC Educators Work Instruction
- Educator Remuneration Work Instruction
- Payment of Fees and Educator Remuneration Work Instruction

VERSION CONTROL AND LEGISLATION:

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