

Fees Policy

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

National Education and Care Regulations

168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
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PURPOSE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the Service fee structure ensuring children's fees are paid on time and that there are consequences for failure to pay fees on time.

To enable our service to provide 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 ensure that all families have access to any Government subsidies that are available to reduce these fees.

SCOPE

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

IMPLEMENTATION

The fee structure of the Service includes:

Enrolment Fee & Bond Payment

- An enrolment bond of \$700 is charged for each child upon confirmation of enrolment. This fee must be paid prior to commencement at the Service.
- ***Should you decide to withdraw after accepting a position at our service but have not yet commenced the enrolment, the bond will be forfeited.***
- The Bond payment will be refunded back to families when the enrolled child leaves the Service, provided six (6) weeks' written notice is given to the centre Director and there is no outstanding fees owed. This notice period does not apply after the commencement of the school 4th term period for that calendar year. If you do not provide the appropriate written notice the bond will be retained.

General Fees

- Fees are charged weekly for every day that a child is enrolled at the Service through a direct debit system.
- Families may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) which is a Government entitlement that replaced the Child Care Benefits (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) from 2nd July 2018. The Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to the Service and applied to your account.
For further information on Child Care Subsidy please visit
<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>
- Fees are payable in advance for each child's enrolment pattern at the Service, therefore fees will be charged one week in advance at all times. Fees are charged for public holidays, pupil free days (OOSH), sick days and family holidays that fall on a day that is your child's normal enrolment pattern. Fees are not charged when the Service has forced closure e.g. through the Christmas period for the Preschool and OOSH only.
- ***Weekly fees will be charged 2 days prior to a public holiday falling on a Friday or Monday to allow for our normal 2 business day processing and deposits of funds.***
- Fees are charged for the service's whole day session only, not charged based on the hours that your child attends the service. (Nursery = 11 hours, Preschool = 11.5 hours, OOSH = 3 hours).
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the Service's license and need to be booked through the "My Family Lounge" application. A casual day is charged after the child has attended the service for that casual day. ***Children will not be allowed casual days or to participate in extra curricular activities if account is in arrears with money owing.***
- Families will pay full fees for new enrolments until the child physically attends the service after enrolment commencement date. Likewise, full fees are charged if you have given the centre written notice of termination and your child does not physically attend their notice period as this is otherwise known as "Cessation of Care" and Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is not payable under CCMS / DEEWR regulations

Payment of fees

- The only method of payment accepted for payment of fees is via the 'Direct Success' form which is included in the online enrolment form via the 'My Family Lounge' application. Direct Debit or payment by credit card are the only two (2) options available on the 'Direct Success' form. All credit card transactions will incur a transaction processing fee, which is payable by the client, which is outlined on this form. Fees will not be accepted in cash to ensure our staff's safety.
- Families will be issued with a fee statement on a weekly basis which will highlight all fees charged in advance, CCS payments received and children's attendances. This is in accordance with Regulatory requirements. These statements will change every time a payment has been made.
- A **dishonour fee of \$20** will apply for any transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees and the transaction declines or if a selected account closes without notice, from January 2019 onwards.

Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the Approved Provider.

Failure to Pay

- Any overdue accounts will be submitted to a debt collector after 14 days. An interest charge of 10% will be charged to the account. All charges associated with recovering the debt including but not limited to debt collectors, legal fees or any other charges will be charged and borne by the family. This may also result in immediate termination of your child's enrolment if the matter is sent to the debt collector or no agreement can be made with 14 days to rectify your account.

Late Fees

- Our Service is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises before or after our licensed hours. This is a breach in the Education and Care Regulations.
- A late fee of \$50 per 15-minute block will apply for all services where children are not picked up prior to closing time. This late fee will also be applied if the service closes early on the last business day prior to or actual day being Christmas Eve/New Year Eve. Email communication will be sent to families notifying them of the centre closing early on these specific days.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late.

Absences

- Families are allowed forty-two (42) allowable days absence per child each financial year, under the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) legislation and procedures. For further information please click on the following link - <http://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/1/1/a/05>
- ***After School Care only*** – OOSH Director will issue "Failure to Notify Absence" on parents who fail to notify the OOSH Director via email in advance if their child/children will not be attending After School Care on a confirmed day of attendance. A "Failure to Notify Absence" fee of \$10.00 non-notification administration fee to be charged for that day.

Change of Fees

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of four weeks written notice is given to all families.

Termination of Enrolment

- ***Long Day Care Centres*** - Parents are to provide six (6) weeks written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the service or decrease their child's days of attendance/enrolment. Notice of withdrawal from our service cannot be given after the 4th term of that school calendar year and that paid attendance will be up to the last week of centre operations as per a child's attendance pattern.

- **After School Care** – Parents are to provide two (2) weeks written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the service or decrease their child's days of attendance/enrolment in Terms 1,2 & 3 of the calendar school year, and six (6) weeks written notice in Term 4.

Responsibility of Families

- Obtain a Customer Reference Number (CRN) and provide it to the centre Director prior to a child's enrolment.
- Record the arrival and departure times of their child/children attending care daily via the KIOSK application.
- Ensure that monies are available in your nominated bank account to honour the Direct Debit or Credit Card payments payable to Balmain Care For Kids Pty Ltd.
- Ensure that they notify the centre Director as soon as possible of any changes to their Direct Debit bank account or Credit Card by completing a new '*Direct Success*' form.
- Provide documentation for additional absence days as required.
- Pay for any days of standard attendance if children are away for any reason e.g. holidays, sick or any other absence.

Responsibility of Management

- Comply with the Family Assistance Law regarding Child Care Subsidy.
- Ensure vacancies are filled under the appropriate priority of access guidelines.
- Ensure adequate records of attendance are kept for each child as required.
- Ensure the service submits weekly Attendance Record Reports to DEEWR for each child using care.
- Comply with Australian Government or NSW Government funding agreements as required.
- Ensure the service remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due.
- Ensure families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment.
- The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for the billing and chasing of fees.
- Should families wish to discuss fees, they will need to speak with the Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director.
- Ensure fees are in line with consumer price index (CPI) and market forces.
- Only collect and disclose personal information about children and families to DEEWR/The Family Assistance Office (FAO)/Department of Education and Communities where the disclosure is legally required.

Source

- The Business of Child Care, Karen Kearns
- National Quality Standard
- Revised National Quality Standard
- Australian Government – Family Assistance Guide
- Australian Government – Child Care Subsidy

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
March 2017	Minor changes made to ensure compliance with regulations and government requirements.	March 2018
March 2018	Changes made to comply with Regulations and changes to Child Care Subsidy Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard Changed Dishonour fee amount	March 2019
May 2019	Updated 'Ezi Debit' to 'Direct Success' form Amended "General Fees" section	February 2020