

Fees

Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership

Policy Statement

Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten has 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. The setting and payment of fees considers all requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Australian Tax Office, Privacy Act and the guidelines contained within the Child Care Provider Handbook. All records held at the service will be maintained in accordance with the service Confidentiality and Privacy Policy. Families will be provided with accurate fees statements and clear information regarding fee payment processes.

Goals

To enable our service to provide high quality early education and care for children we need to ensure we are always financially viable at all times. Our service'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.

Strategies

Fee Payable/Accounts

- The approved provider will determine the required fee structure to meet budget projection and *priority of access guidelines* for the year.
- Fees are set incorporating *Start Strong Fee Relief Funding* for eligible families.
- A *fee schedule* will be provided to families on enrolment.
- Families/carers will be required to read and acknowledge the *Fee Policy* document on OWNA prior to commencement.
- Families/carers will be given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any fee increase.
- An invoice for the entire term will be issued to account holders at the commencement of each term. This shows charges (e.g. attendances, bus fees) and credits (e.g. fee relief) for the invoice period.
- Fee balances can be found in OWNA app at any time (statements/invoices) and QPK strongly encourage families/carers to make regular payments.
- Fees are payable *weekly in advance*.
- Payment of fees is *due before the enrolled child's first session of attendance* for the week. Failure to do so will result in the suspension of the child's enrolment until the outstanding balance is paid.
- No casual days of attendance will be offered to families/carers until all outstanding fees are paid in full.
- A dated transaction receipt, in accordance with Australian Government Guidelines, will be issued for each payment and can be found in OWNA app
- Families/carers are not charged a fee on public holidays if the holiday falls on their regular booked day or in the event of a centre closure
- Families must contact QPK to advise of their child's absence as soon as reasonably practicable. Attendance fees will apply if a child is absent

Payment of Fees

▪ Fees may be paid by the following methods:

- Cash/cheque - in the office
- EFTPOS via Square Reader - in the office (1.6% transaction fee for card & 2.2% manual entry eg. over the phone)
- OWNA app - one off payment or set up regular direct debit (charges for failed payments or insufficient funds will be passes onto account holder)
- Bank transfer - Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten
BSB: 062594
ACC: 00900901
Ref: *Surname* Fees
- Centrepay via Centrelink

Overdue Fees

- All fees must be paid in prior to *the enrolled child's first session of attendance* for the week. Overdue fees will result in suspension of child's enrolment until the outstanding balance is paid.
- Families/carers who are experiencing difficulties in meeting their payment obligations are encouraged to engage in a confidential discussion with the Director or Office Staff regarding options for payment plans or applying for additional funding
- Where payment/catch up plans are agreed upon by the account holder and director, failure to adhere to the payment/catch up plan will result in the cancellation of the child's enrolment and referral of the matter to a debt collection agency. Seven (7) days written notice will be given in the event QPK proceeds to cancel the child's enrolment

Late Collection Charge

- Our service reserves the right to implement a late collection charge in the event families/carers have not collected their child before closing time (3.30pm). Our service is licenced to operate until 3.30pm, beyond this time, QPK is breaching its Service Approval terms. The late collection charge will be set at a level determined by the Management Committee & Director, based on the service's need to re-coup expenses incurred in overtime wages

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011. ▪ Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements. ▪ Developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability. ▪ Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at the service and removing those barriers wherever possible. ▪ Providing parents/guardians with a regular statement of fees and charges. ▪ Ensuring that the Fees Policy is readily accessible at the service. ▪ Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service.
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing parents/guardians with a regular statement of fees and charges. Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable. Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected. Ensuring a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service.
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Administration Staff or Nominated Supervisor.
Families/ Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading & acknowledging the Fee Policy in OWNA Referring any questions, queries, or concerns to the Nominated Supervisor. Record the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending care. Ensure all fees are paid <i>before the enrolled child's first session of attendance</i> for the week. Provide 2 weeks' notice of withdrawal from service. If child does not attend during this 2-week notice period full fees will be chargeable. Notifying the Director or Office Staff if experiencing difficulties with meeting payment obligations.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 12 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership–Standard 7.1

Sources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) –www.acecqa.gov.au
- Community Early Learning Australia CELA

Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), as amended 2011