

AO – Out of School Hours Fees

Effective from: 6 December 2018
Contact officer: Coordinator of Children Services
Next review date: 2 - 4 Years / as required
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Related Policies/Local Laws/Legislation:

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: CI168 (n) & 172

National Quality Standard: QA 6. And QA 7

A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 as amended by the Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017

A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999 as amended by the Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017

Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017.

Related Documents:

ACECQA (2018) *Guide to National Quality Framework*.

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training, Child Care Provider Handbook 2018

Wingecarribee Shire Council's Fees and Charges
<http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/services/fees-charges>

PURPOSE

To enable our service to provide high quality care for children we need to ensure we are financially viable at all times. Prompt payment of fees allows us to plan with certainty. Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Care is committed to ensuring our fees are as affordable as possible and that families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce the costs of care. Fees are charged on a sessional basis per child and are reviewed at least annually to cover any necessary increase in costs. Fees are determined and ratified by Wingecarribee Shire Council and any increase will usually come into effect in the first week of July each year.

Our services 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;
- endeavoring to keep the cost of administering fee collection is minimised;
- 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;
- notifying families, no less than 14 days of any changes to fees or the way fees will be collected; and
- ensuring we issue statements of fees on a regular basis.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Staff employed by Wingecarribee Shire Council
- Children and Families accessing care with Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Service – inclusive of the Before School Care, After School Care and Vacation Care Services

DEFINITIONS

CCSS: Child Care Subsidy System

CCS: Child Care Subsidy

MyGov: Is the website where families interface with the government to set up their Child Care Subsidy (CCS) accounts.

Department of Human Services - often referred to as the FAO: Family Assistance Office

Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) – an agreement between a child care provider and an individual, to provide child care in return for fees) that includes required information under the family assistance law for subsidised care

Statement of entitlements: A fortnightly statement from the service to the family giving details of the sessions of care provided, the child's attendance and resulting fee reduction amounts.

"Gap" payment – the fee charged by the Educator (acting as an agent of the FDC Service) which is the difference between the family's subsidy and the fee charged for care.

PROCEDURE

1. Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS)

- 1.1 The Service will comply with the Australian Government requirements to be an approved education and care service for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The online **Child Care Subsidy System** (CCSS) reporting requirements and any other requirements for claiming and administering CCS will be maintained by the service.



- 1.2 Child Care Subsidy (CCS)** replaces, as of 2 July 2018, the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR). To be considered for eligibility it is the expectation that all families make a co-contribution to the cost of child care and have met with immunisation requirements.

There are three things which determine a family's level of child care subsidy:

1. Combined family income – a family's annual adjusted taxable income will determine the percentage of subsidy they are eligible for
 2. Activity level of parents – the number of subsidised care families can access, will be determined by an activity test. The higher level of activity, the more hours of subsidised care families can access, up to a maximum of 100 hours per fortnight.
 3. Type of child care service – it will be calculated using various hourly rates depending on the Service type. E.g.: Family Day Care, Outside School Care, Centre Based Care.
- 1.3** Families are responsible for transitioning or providing information and details for eligibility using their centrelink online account through the MyGov website.
- 1.4** Families enrolling in a Wingecarribee Children's Services program will complete a "**Complying Written Arrangement**" (CWA) with the Service.
- 1.5** The Service will submit an enrolment notice through the CCSS which incorporates the type of enrolment – routine, casual or routine sessions, with casual care permitted.
- 1.6** Families are responsible for ensuring that correct Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth of the parent claiming the subsidy and the CRN and date of birth of the child are provided to the Service.
- 1.7** To increase transparency of payments, parents will be required, through the MyGov site to:
- Confirm enrolment details
 - Indicate if details are incorrect
 - Indicate if the child is not enrolled
- 1.8** Any changes to the arrangement must be in writing and updated through the CCSS within seven days of a change.
- 1.9** Families who are eligible for CCS are required to pay the "gap" payment to the service in line with this procedure to ensure ongoing care for their child.
- 1.10** Registered Children are entitled to 42 absence days in each financial year, inclusive of all approved service types the child may attend. CCS is paid for these days provided that the child would normally have attended on that day, and fees have been charged. Additional absences can be claimed when the first 42 days have been used, however supporting documentation is required for approval of these additional days



- 1.11** A “**Statement of Entitlement**” will be issued by the Service to each family each fortnight. It will include details about the Service, Sessions of care provided, actual attendance and fees.
- 1.12** **Priority of Access** – As vacancies in a service arise priority is given to children who are:
- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
 - a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.
- This reflects the Australian Government's intention to help families who are most in need, and support the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.
- 1.13** **Child Care Safety Net** – Included in the Child Care Safety Net is an additional Child Care Subsidy. It will, in most cases, cover all of a child's fees. It is designed to support:
- Families who require practical help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
 - Grandparents who are primary carers
 - Families experiencing temporary financial hardship
 - Families transitioning from income support to work

2. Bookings and Cancellations

2.1 After School Care Bookings and Cancellations

- 2.1.1** Parents/guardians are to complete a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) at the time of Enrolment. Placement is not necessarily automatic but dependant on factors such as:
- CCSS eligibility criteria (see Child Care Provider Handbook)
 - Licensed places available
 - The capacity of the Service to cater for the needs of the child/ren requiring care
- 2.1.2** Bookings will only be confirmed when families have completed the Service Enrolment form in full and made the bond payment.
- 2.1.3** Any changes to the “Complying Written Arrangement” (CWA) must be made in writing one week (7 days) prior to the new arrangement commencing. A new CWA will be confirmed through the software system.
- 2.1.4** Fees will be determined based on the days booked. All booked days are to be paid for whether used or not. (see absences).
- 2.1.5** Casual days are only available on days where vacancies exist. Casual bookings must be made through the Coordination Unit or Service Supervisor.



2.1.6 Children who present to After School Care without an active booking will be referred to Mittagong Public School Office (where applicable) or parents/guardians contacted to collect immediately.

2.1.7 At least one week (**7 days**) written notice is to be given to the Supervisor or Administration Officer for any changes to the days of care or cancellation of care. Families are required to pay fees to cover this period.

Families will be charged the full fee for any absences immediately prior to their termination becoming effective as last day absences do not attract Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

2.2 Vacation Care Bookings and Cancellations

2.2.1 The dates for each Vacation Care will be advertised on the Council Web page approximately one month before the end of each school term.

2.2.2 Current and active families of the Service will be advised of upcoming Vacation Care Services via email prior to Vacation Care Bookings opening. Where resourcing permits the upcoming program will be attached.

2.2.3 Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the Coordination Unit to make their bookings as of the date advertised. Early bookings are not accepted.

2.2.4 New enrolments will be encouraged to complete the enrolment paperwork at the Coordination Unit Office. Existing families will be sent the re - enrolment paperwork either by mail, email or through the Service.

2.2.5 Parents/guardians are to complete a "Complying Written Arrangement" (CWA) at the time of Enrolment/ re - enrolment.

2.2.6 All paperwork and payment requirements must be met prior to Vacation Care commencing. Children with incomplete paperwork or payments will not be accepted at Vacation Care. Full fees will be charged to families who take a position but do not fulfil these requirements.

2.2.6 Any changes to bookings must be made in writing or by email.

2.2.7 Cancellations or changes to vacation care bookings **less than a week before the relevant vacation care period but before vacation care commences** will be charged a cancellation fee (see council's fees and charges) per day, per child for the places no longer required. Once vacation care commences all cancellations/non-attendance will be considered an absence and charged accordingly. Such fees will be reflected in the final statement of account issued for that Vacation Care period.

Note: For the January Vacation Care Period cancellations must be received by the close of business on the final day of Council operation prior to the Christmas Shutdown period. Any cancellations after this will be considered an absence and charged accordingly.

3. Bond – Before and After School Care Only



- 3.1** Upon being offered a place and a CWA signed with the Service, the family is required to pay the equivalent of two (2) weeks full fee for their booked days, as a security bond.
- 3.2** The bond secures a child's placement at the service, and is refundable at the termination of the child's place, provided there are no outstanding fees. The bond can be used to cover and/or settle any final account with the Out of School Hours Service (including any outstanding Vacation Care fees).
- 3.3** The Children's Services Coordinator at their discretion may;
- Waive the bond,
 - Reduce the bond,
 - Develop a payment plan for the bond, where they believe the bond may create hardship or an unreasonable barrier to a family enrolling in the service.
- 3.4** Bond payments paid by direct debit must be referenced with BDWOOSH – Surname so they can be identified and allocated to the correct Council Ledger.
- 4. Enrolment Fee**
- 4.1** There is an Enrolment fee payable upon enrolment per child & thereafter upon re-enrolment at the beginning of each calendar year.
- 5. Payment of Fees**
- 5.1 Payment of Fees – Before and After and Vacation Care**
- 5.1.1 Fees will be charged in arrears.** The Service will invoice families for the "gap" payment at the **end of each week of care**, once the Service has submitted attendance data and the fee subsidy calculations have been completed by the Child Care Subsidy System.
- 5.1.2** Invoices must be paid by families a per the due date on the invoice. Fees must be no more than 1 week in arrears at any time. Failure to meet this condition will void a family's CWA with the Service.
- Where invoices are not paid in accordance with this procedure parents/guardians will be notified that the child may not return until such time as the fees are paid and a payment arrangement is agreed upon with the Children's Services Coordinator to ensure the fees are maintained in a timely manner. Re entrance to the Service will depend on the availability of a position.
- 5.1.3** Subsidies will only be applied once they are approved through the Child Care Subsidy System and formalised through our software system. It is the family's responsibility to contact the Department of Human Services to set up their account and determine eligibility.
- 5.1.4** Receipts will be issued by the Service upon payment.
- 5.1.5** A "**Statement of Entitlement**" will be issued to each family with a CWA each fortnight providing they have attended care during that fortnight.



- 5.1.6 Fees may be paid in advance, however, it is the family's responsibility to review statements of account to ensure they are making the correct payment.
- 5.1.7 Fees are determined and ratified by Wingecarribee Shire Council and any increase will usually come into effect in the first week of July each year, after a 28-day period of exhibition.
- 5.1.8 A number of different methods are adopted for informing families of Service Fee Schedules including: newsletters, handbook, email and notice board.
- 5.1.9 The Service reserves the right to refuse a booking where families have a bad payment record history with any Child Care Services offered by Wingecarribee Shire Council.

6.2 Additional Fee Information - Vacation Care

- 6.2.1 Families can request a fee estimate with their vacation care package and make payment prior to Vacation Care and this will be provided within our capacity. The Service encourages families to make a contribution prior to the commencement of care. The estimate is based on the most recent information available from the Child Care Subsidy System which is linked with the Service Software. The estimate will take into account the daily fees, the child's booking and any CCS entitlements.
- 6.2.2 The Service reserves the right to request a prepayment from families in the following circumstances:
 - New Families using the Service where a record of payment history has not yet been established
 - Families who have a negative or bad payment history record with the ServiceIn these instances, bookings are not confirmed until such time as the prepayment has been paid.
- 6.2.3 Receipts will be issued and sent upon payment.
- 6.2.4 A statement of Account will be issued to each family within seven (7) days of the conclusion of the relevant Vacation Care Period, indicating any amounts owing or any credits.
 - Invoices must be paid by families a per the due date on the invoice.
 - Families can request their credit to be paid out at any time.
- 6.2.5 Future Vacation Care bookings will not be accepted until both Vacation Care and where applicable Before and After School Care Fees are settled in full.

7. Methods of Payment

7.1 Fees can be paid by:

- 7.1.1 **Direct Debit** – from your bank account or credit card to Wingecarribee Shire Council's bank account.



BSB: 082 723 Account Number: 509793007

It is imperative that all deposits are referenced correctly with - WOOSH – and the family surname

Note: the payee is responsible for providing the Service of proof of payment, as it is noted that direct debit payments can take a period of time to transfer between banks and get noted on the WOOSH ledger at Council

- 7.1.2 **Cheque and Cash payments, including bond payments** – will only be accepted in the correct money at the Coordination Unit Office. This is for security reasons. Note: Cheques are to be made out to Wingecarribee Shire Council
- 8.2 Enrolled families will be provided at least 14 days' notice of any changes that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.
9. **Debt Recovery**
- 9.1 The Approved Provider reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to Council's Children's Services. This can include the engagement of debt collectors to recover the monies owed, including expenses incurred from the recovery of debts.
- 9.2 Families who are experiencing difficulty in paying their accounts are encouraged to contact the Coordinator of Children's Services to discuss a mutually agreeable payment plan.
- 9.3 Parents/guardians who have not finalised their Before and After School Care Accounts by the end of each term will jeopardise their child/ren's place for the following term and be subject to debt recovery action.
- 9.4 Vacation Care Accounts which are not finalised after 14 days of the Final Account being issued will be forwarded to Council's Finance Department for further action, in line with Council payment and debt collection policy.
- 9.5 Where a family does not adhere to the conditions of an agreed payment plan the outstanding balance of the account will be forwarded to Council's Finance Department for further action, in line with Council's payment policy.
10. **Late collection fee**
- 10.1 Hours of operation
- 10.1.1 – **Before School Care** – 6.45am - 8.45am daily during the school term.
(Excluding public holidays and Department of Education pupil free days)
- 10.1.2 - **After School Care** – 3.00pm – 6.00pm daily during the school term.
(Excluding public holidays and Department of Education pupil free days)
- 10.1.3 - **Vacation Care** – 8.00am – 6.00pm during the majority of advertised school holiday periods. (excluding public holidays and school holiday period in December)
- 10.2 Parents/guardians are to observe the Service operation hours as staff are unable to accept children in the relevant service outside these hours. Where children are



present after the closing time, a late fee may be applied. (See council's fees and charges).

- 10.3** In circumstances that are beyond the control of the families, for example, weather and traffic accidents, which may result in arriving out of hours, it will be at the discretion of the Supervisor to decide if family will be charged the late fee. Families are encouraged in these circumstances (if achievable) to organise someone else who is listed on the enrolment form as authorised to collect the child/ren and/or contact the Service to notify them of the late collection.
- 10.4** Families who are continually late collecting children, without a valid reason, may jeopardise their child's place at the service.

11. Absences

- 11.1** Fees are payable for all absences on the day a child is booked into care, including but not necessarily limited to, family holidays and sick days.
- 11.2** A message can be left on the Service mobile at any time during the day.
- 11.3** Failure to contact the service to report your child's absence causes unnecessary stress and time-wasting for staff at the beginning of a session of care. A fee may be charged at the Services discretion to a parent/guardian who fails to contact the service to report an absence. This fee does not attract CCS and is applied with the sole purpose of encouraging parents/guardians to keep the service informed in regards to their child's absences.
- 11.4** Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is not payable before a child has physically attended care or after a child has physically ceased care at the service. In these instances, the service will charge the family full fee.
- 11.5** There will be NO fee charged for Public Holidays
- 11.6** There will be NO fee charged for Pupil Free Days at Mittagong Public School unless the Service is operational and care is provided as a Vacation Care day. (This would usually be the 1st day of terms 1, 2, and 3)
- 11.7** There will be NO fee charged to families whose children attend St Michaels or any other private school on their assigned pupil free days, where the child does not attend and where the Service has been made aware in advance.

Approved By:



Danielle Lidgard
GROUP MANAGER CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY

