

PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

Ashby Out of School Hours Care provides quality education and care for primary school-age children outside school hours and during school holidays. Our OSHC Service supports children to engage in play and leisure activities, develop new skills and build relationships with other children and educators whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our OSHC Service is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

As an approved childcare service, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to reduce fees to eligible families. Our fee structure is based on our ability to provide the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations, Family Assistance Law, the Australian Taxation Office and guidelines contained in the Child Care Provider Handbook.

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, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

PURPOSE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the Outside School Hours Care Service fee structure, payment requirements and Child Care Subsidy benefits prior to enrolment. This policy explains process of fee payment and the necessity of ensuring children's fees are paid on time and consequences for failure to pay fees on time.

SCOPE

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

Our OSHC Service aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for education and care to be provided for their child. We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all Child Care Subsidy legislative requirements. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure childcare funding is administered appropriately. Our OSHC Service ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family.

IMPLEMENTATION

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- Payment arrangements are negotiated with families experiencing difficulties.
- Direct Debit payments are compulsory.
- Accounts falling more than 1 week in arrears are to be sent notification to pay within one week. This letter will state date payment is required and processed, which will be followed up if payment is not received.
- Accounts falling 2 weeks in arrears (who have not contacted the service or arranged alternative payment arrangements) receive a phone call, excluding the child from care until payment is made and \$25 a fortnight added to the account as a late fee.
- Accounts falling more than 2 weeks in arrears will be contacted and a meeting will be arranged between the Business Manager, Coordinator, Principal and the Parent/Guardian.
- Families excluded from the service due to non-payment of fees will be provided with information regarding family support and financial advising services available in the local community.
- The Principal has the ability to waive fees under special circumstances.

The fee structure of the OSHC Service includes:**General Fees**

- Fees are charged for each session for before and after school care.
- Fees payable by families vary depending on the amount of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rebate each family receives:
- CCS is paid directly to the Service and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family's statement).
- Families are required to pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount- the 'gap' amount.
- Fees are to be paid weekly through a direct debit system.
- Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day).
- Families are requested to contact the Service or school if their child is unable to attend a particular session. If families notify the School before 2pm they will not be charged for the After School Care Session, If families notify the School before 6pm the day prior they will not be charged for Before School Care.
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the OSHC Service's license.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their [myGOV](#) account linked to Centrelink and provide supporting documentation.
- Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy.

The child must:

- Be a 'Family Tax Benefit child' or 'regular care child' and
- Be 13 or under and not attending secondary school and
- Meet immunisation requirements.

The person claiming the Child Care Subsidy or their partner must:

- Meet residency requirements and
- Be liable to pay for care provided under a Complying Written Arrangement (their written agreement) with their childcare provider.
- Childcare must be provided by an approved provider
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
 - Combined family income
 - Activity test of parents
 - Type of early learning and childcare Service.
- Child Care Subsidy will be provided directly to the Service and this amount deducted from the parent/family account.
- Families must regularly check their details are correct and report a change in circumstance to Centrelink- (family income, activity levels, relationship changes or any other changes to their circumstances).
- Any disputes with CCS payments is the responsibility of the family.

Payment of fees

- Fees are set up using the OSHC Service's direct debit system.
- Families will be issued with a fee statement on a weekly 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.

Absences from OSHC Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session before 2pm on the day to avoid being charged for the After School Care session and before 6pm the day prior to not be charged for Before School Care session
- Under the Child Care Subsidy families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances. (See Child Care Subsidy Handbook).
- Records will be kept by the Service for each absence.
- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via [myGov](#).

Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the approved provider.
- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink if they are in temporary financial hardship. ACCS provides extra assistance for up to 13 weeks.

Failure to Pay

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued after one week and then again with a phone call after two weeks if the fees are still outstanding.
- A child's position will be terminated if payment has not been made after three weeks, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the OSHC Service will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.

Late Fees

- Our OSHC Service is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. This is a breach in the Education and Care Regulations.
- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the OSHC Service. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time. Currently, a fee of \$1.00 per 1-minute block or part thereof will be incurred by the family.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late with fee payment.

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

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

Responsibility of Management

The Nominated Supervisor and Business Manager are responsible for:

- Ensuring all families are aware of our Payment of Fees Policy.
- Ensuring enrolment information includes the parent/guardian's Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth and the child's CRN and date of birth.

- Providing families with regular statement of fees payable.
- Notifying families of any overdue fees.
- Providing families with reminder letters as required.
- Terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid.
- Discussing fee payment with families if required.

Resources and information for families

[New Child Care Package Information for Families Resources](#)

[Child Care Subsidy](#)

[Child Care Package Overview](#)

[Centrelink Customer Reference Number](#)

[Absences from childcare- Australian Government](#)

SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/child_care_provider_handbook_0.pdf

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Early Childhood and Care*

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-0>

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs*

Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	School Council		
POLICY REVIEWED	July 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	July 2023