

## Summary of Key Points

Including but not limited to:

### **Alteration to attendance days for care - notification**

Ten (10) business days' written notice is required to reduce and/or increase your child's days of care for both Before/After School Care and Vacation Care.

### **Casual Care Bookings**

- Casual bookings are subject to availability.
- Absence notification cut-off times:
  - *Early Years Learning – Casual bookings*: Notify by 6:00 pm the day before.
  - *After-School Care*: Notify by 9:00 am on the day.
  - *Before-School Care*: Notify by 7:00 am on the day.
- Cancellations not made before the above times will be charged in full.

### **Vacation Care Bookings**

All alterations, cancellations, and absences for Vacation Care follow the same notice and fee guidelines as permanent bookings.

### **Non-notification fee**

- Absences should be marked via the OWNA app (instructions provided in the app).
- *After-School Care*: Absences must be notified by 9:00 am on the day.
- Failure to notify the program of an absence will result in the full session fee being charged.
- A \$20 non-notification fee applies if the program is not informed that a child will be absent from After-School Care.
  - This charge reflects staffing requirements based on the ACECQA ratio obligations.

### **Extended Absences**

- Under the Family Assistance Law, each child is allowed 42 allowable absence days per financial year to retain CCS eligibility.
- If you require additional absences, supporting documentation must be provided for submission to Centrelink.
- Please speak with your Program Director to make suitable arrangements.
- *Example*: If your child takes a two-week holiday during the term, all missed permanent bookings will be marked as absences, and fees will still apply.

### **Late fee**

If a child is collected after 6:00 pm, the following late fees apply:

Time Late	Fee
First 15 minutes	\$30 flat fee
16 to 30 minutes	\$3.00 per minute
After 30 minutes	\$4.00 per minute

*Note: Late fees apply per service account, up to a maximum of two children.*

### **Termination of Care**

- Ten (10) business days' written notice is required to terminate enrolment for Before/After School Care.
- Under Centrelink CCS rules, CCS will only be paid up to your child's last day of physical attendance.
- If your child is absent after their last day of attendance and notice is not provided, those days will not be subsidised and will be charged at full fee.

## Policy Introduction

Weldon Children's Services is committed to delivering high-quality care, education, and leisure programs. To sustain this standard, it is essential that we remain financially viable. Prompt payment of fees enables us to plan effectively and fulfil our operational commitments. Our goal is to keep fees as affordable as possible, while supporting families to access all available subsidies to help reduce the cost of care. We also actively advocate to the government for every child's right to access early education and school-age care, regardless of their family's financial circumstances.

## Purpose

This policy provides families with a clear overview of Weldon's fee structure, payment expectations, and the benefits available through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) prior to enrolment. It outlines the payment process, the importance of paying fees on time, and the consequences of delayed or unpaid fees.

## Strategies for policy implementation

Weldon is committed to ensuring families understand the fee schedule and the payment processes that support the delivery of high-quality programs for their children. We uphold our responsibility to maintain financial sustainability and comply with all legislative requirements related to the Child Care Subsidy. Our robust compliance systems ensure that childcare funding is administered correctly. We also maintain the highest standards of confidentiality and privacy regarding all personal information shared with our programs about enrolled children and their families.

### The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure compliance with all obligations under Family Assistance Law.
- Fill all vacant places in accordance with Weldon's Priority of Access policy (refer to the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* for details).
- Pass on all fee reductions to families, as advised by the Department of Education, within fourteen days of receiving the relevant attendance record or child sign-in/out data, as required under Family Assistance Law.
- Submit weekly online attendance record reports to the Department of Education for each child accessing care.
- Adhere to all applicable funding agreements with the Australian Government and/or NSW Government.
- Maintain Weldon's financial viability by ensuring it can meet all debts and financial obligations as they fall due.
- Conduct an annual fee review, taking into account the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and market conditions.
- Not charging additional fees where families are receiving assistance through the Government's *Additional Child Care Subsidy*.
- Provide families with a detailed weekly account via the OWNA portal, outlining all applicable Child Care Subsidy (CCS) amounts and other fee reductions.
- Collect and disclose personal information about children and families only when legally required and solely to the Department of Education and/or the Family Assistance Office

### Our nominated supervisor will:

- Ensure all families are clearly informed of program fees and bond deposit requirements at the time of enrolment.
- In collaboration with the Approved Provider, support families experiencing financial hardship or extenuating circumstances that impact their ability to maintain current accounts and explore reasonable solutions to ease financial burden.
- Maintain accurate attendance records for each child in accordance with legislative and funding requirements.

### Families will:

- Obtaining a Customer Reference Number (CRN) from Centrelink for both the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the child prior to, or at the time of, enrolment.
- Signing their child/children in and out of care each day and recording accurate arrival and departure times.
- Paying all fees as they become due, including during periods of absence due to illness or injury.

## Fee Structure

Our fee structure includes.

### Administration fee

An annual administration fee is charged per family upon initial enrolment and/or when bookings are confirmed for continued care in the following year. This fee applies to all permanent booking schedules.

**Note:** The administration fee is charged once per family, regardless of how many children are enrolled. For example, if the administration fee has already been paid for a Before and After School Care program, it will not be charged again for Vacation Care within the same calendar year.

### Bond deposit

A bond (security deposit) equivalent to two full weeks' fees is required upon confirmation of a permanent booking. This bond must be paid before care commences and is held separately from general accounts. The bond may be adjusted if fee charges or booking requirements change (e.g., an increase or decrease in booked days).

### Non- Notification of an Absence fee:

A fee will be charged if a child is booked into an early childhood learning or before/after-school care program and the parent/guardian fails to notify the program of the child's absence by the required cut-off time.

### Late Fees

Weldon understands that unforeseen circumstances may occasionally arise. While we aim to work with families compassionately, late fees will be applied when necessary and in line with the following:

- Weldon is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. Doing so constitutes a breach of the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*.
- A late fee will apply when a child is collected after the program's closing time.
- Persistent late pickups may result in a review of the child's enrolment and ongoing placement within the program.

### Commencement of care

Before care can begin, a payment equal to two weeks' fees is required—this covers the current week and one week in advance.

*Please note: Cash payments are not accepted.* All fees must be paid via **Fat Zebra**, a secure direct debit system integrated with our OWNA childcare management software.

### Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Parents/guardians must register for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) through their *myGov* account, which must be linked to Centrelink. Supporting documentation must be provided where applicable.
- In most cases, CCS is paid directly to the service and applied as a fee reduction, which will be reflected on the family's weekly invoice.
- If a child does not attend for 14 consecutive weeks, Centrelink will automatically end the enrolment.
- Families are **not entitled to receive CCS** for any days the child is absent **before** commencing care. CCS is only payable from the **first day the child physically attends** the service and ends on the **last day of physical attendance**.

### Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)

Families may be eligible for additional support through the **Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)**, which is administered by Centrelink. There are four types of ACCS payments:

- **ACCS (Child Wellbeing):**  
Provides extra support for children identified as at risk of serious abuse or neglect. The Approved Provider plays a role in identifying and supporting these children.
- **ACCS (Grandparent):**  
Available to grandparents who receive income support and are the primary caregivers of their grandchildren. Eligible families must apply directly through Centrelink.
- **ACCS (Temporary Financial Hardship):**  
Offers short-term assistance to families experiencing financial hardship. Applications must be made directly with Centrelink.
- **ACCS (Transition to Work):**  
Supports low-income families moving from income support into employment. Families must contact Centrelink directly to access this payment.

### General Fee Information

- **Session fees** vary according to the child's age and the family's *Child Care Subsidy* (CCS) entitlement.
- **CCS** is paid directly to Weldon and appears on the family's invoice as a fee reduction.
- Families are responsible for the remaining **gap fee** (session fee minus CCS).
- All fees are collected **weekly in advance** via **Fat Zebra** direct debit (cash is not accepted).
- Fees apply to **every booked session**—including absences for illness, family holidays, or other reasons.

### Public holidays

- *Early Years Learning*: Permanent bookings are charged on public holidays, except those within Weldon's annual shutdown.
- *Before- and After-School Care*: Permanent bookings are charged on public holidays unless the day falls during Weldon's shutdown, Vacation Care, or a pupil-free day.

### Pupil-free (staff-development) days

- No fee is charged for a standard Before-/After-School Care booking on a pupil-free day.
- If Weldon offers a dedicated pupil-free-day program and the child attends, the advertised daily fee for that program applies. (Pupil-free days attached to school holidays are **not** classed as Vacation Care.)
- Fees are charged for the **full session booked**, regardless of the actual hours attended; **late-collection fees** apply after closing time.
- When two or more siblings hold permanent bookings in the same week, a **5 % discount** is applied to the eldest child (or children).

### Payment of Fees

- **Direct-debit only:** All fees are paid via **Fat Zebra**, Weldon's secure direct-debit partner, through the **OWNA** parent portal. Families must enter their debit/credit details in OWNA at enrolment; cash payments are not accepted.
- **Up-front disclosure:** Every charge—including Fat Zebra processing fees—is itemised during enrolment.
- **Dishonour fee:** A flat fee applies to any transaction that fails due to insufficient funds.
- **Regular statements:**
  - **Weekly tax invoice** — lists sessions attended, CCS applied, and family payments.
  - **Fortnightly statement of entitlement** — provides a summary of sessions, total fees, CCS/subsidy amounts, and recorded absences (see <https://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/4/6/1/40>).
  - Invoices and Statement of Entitlements are generated in OWNA and comply with Family Assistance Law.

### Fat Zebra

Payment method	Fee to family	Notes
EFT from an Australian bank account	<b>No charge</b>	Weldon absorbs Fat Zebra's transaction fee.
Visa / Mastercard	Percentage of transaction value	Charged by Fat Zebra.
Failed / returned transaction	Flat fee per attempt	Charged by Fat Zebra.

**Note:** Processing fees are retained entirely by Fat Zebra; Weldon receives no portion. A current schedule of charges is displayed at each program, itemised on invoices, and re-issued annually when fees are reviewed.

### Outstanding fees

Weldon recognises that families may occasionally encounter financial hardship and will work cooperatively to establish a manageable repayment plan. When an account is **not one week in advance**, the Nominated Supervisor—together with the Approved Provider—will commence the **overdue-fee process**.

- **Process:** The Nominated Supervisor will contact the family to:
  - discuss the arrears,
  - negotiate a payment plan, or
  - if necessary, **suspend care** until the account is up to date.
- **Escalation:** If no arrangement is reached, or an agreed plan is not maintained, **debt-collection procedures** may begin **30 days** after the original due date.

### Change of Fees

- Fees may be revised at any time; **families will receive a minimum of 14 days' written notice** of any change.
- At the start of each financial year, indexation of CCS hourly-rate caps by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) may occur. Any CCS cap changes are applied automatically through Weldon's CCS software.

### Absences

- **Notify the service:** If a child cannot attend a booked session, families must inform the program—preferably via the **OWNA** app/portal (phone, email, or SMS also accepted).
- **Cut-off times for absence notification:**

<u>Program type</u>	<u>Permanent booking</u>	<u>Casual booking</u>
Early Years Learning	By 10 am on the day (earlier if possible)	By 6 pm the previous day
After-School Care	By 9 am on the day	By 9 am on the day
Before-School Care	By 7 am on the day	By 7 am on the day

- The **gap fee** remains payable for all permanent sessions, even when the child is absent.
- A **non-notification fee** applies when an absence is not advised within the required timeframe (Early Years Learning and After-School Care).
- Under CCS, each child is allowed **42 absence days per financial year**; additional absences may be approved in specific circumstances (see CCS Handbook).
- Weldon retains records and evidence for any additional absences.
- Families can monitor their absence balance via their Centrelink online account, weekly tax invoices, and statements of entitlement.

### Withdrawal of Enrolment

- Families must give **10 business days' written notice** of withdrawal and submit a termination form via OWNA.
- If withdrawal from the program is made without notification, CCS is payable only until the child's **last day of physical attendance**; full fees are charged for subsequent booked days the child is absent.
- The child must **attend on the final day of the notice period** for CCS to apply.
- Bond refunds are issued only when all fees are up-to-date **and** the child attends on the last day of care.
- Failure to provide the required 10 days' notice may result in forfeiture of the bond.

### Bookings and Enrolments:

Bookings for Vacation Care are accepted and confirmed **ONLY** in the following circumstances:

- No outstanding fees for any other program one week before the commencement of vacation care
- A relevant vacation care booking is undertaken via the Casual Booking process in OWNA
- All booking confirmations are subject to availability.

### Changes to Permanent Bookings:

- **Increase or swap days:** Submit a written request; changes are accommodated as soon as places permit.
- **Reduce days:** Provide **10 business days' written notice**.
- **Cancel or amend Vacation Care:** Provide **10 business days' written notice**.

### Annual Re-enrolment Process

#### Families will:

By **mid-October** each year, families must:

1. **Confirm re-enrolment** for the following year *or* submit written withdrawal notice.
  - Withdrawal after mid-October incurs full fees until the end of the current operational year (late December).
2. **Advise any reduction** in permanent days for the next year.
  - If no notice is received, full fees apply from January until the **second week of March**.
3. **Settle outstanding fees** and provide bank details for bond refunds.
  - Bond refunds are processed once final attendance is reconciled.

### Definitions:

**Approved provider:** The legal entity that holds the service approval and is responsible for the overall management and operation of the program. *Weldon is the Approved Provider for all programs it delivers.*

**Nominated Supervisor:** The individual appointed by the Approved Provider to manage the day-to-day operation of the service. This person must provide written consent for their nomination. In Weldon's programs, the Nominated Supervisor is typically the Program Director or Coordinator.

**Permanent Booking:** A recurring booking for the same specific day(s) or session(s) each week or fortnight, with no defined end date. These bookings are considered ongoing.

*Note: For Early Years programs, the minimum requirement for a permanent booking is two days per week, preferably consecutive.*

**Casual/Non-Permanent Booking:** A booking made on an ad hoc or short-term basis that is not part of an ongoing schedule. It includes additional or one-off sessions with a defined start and end date. A family may have both permanent and casual bookings concurrently.

*Unless there is an ongoing commitment, a casual booking surcharge will apply.*



### Links to other policies:

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy

### Sources

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority.
- Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider [Handbook](#)
- Australian Government Department of Education <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood>
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2023)

*Weldon Children's Services reviews this **Fees Policy annually in June**. Families will be provided with **at least 14 days' written notice** of any changes via email and the OWNA platform.*