PAYMENT OF SERVICE FEES AND PROVISION OF A STATEMENT OF FEES CHARGED BY THE SERVICE

1. Policy statement

Weldon Children's Services are committed to providing all families with the opportunity to enrol their children at our service, with a clear, transparent, fair, and inclusive fee structure. Weldon Children's Services strives to provide high-quality care, education, and leisure programs. To achieve this aim, we need to be financially viable at all times. Prompt payment of fees allows us to plan with certainty and meet our commitments. Our approach is to ensure our fees are as affordable as possible and that all families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce the cost of care. We will advocate with governments for all children's rights to access early education and school-age care regardless of individual families' financial situation. We will ensure that families are given an estimate of fees payable prior to enrolment. Once enrolment is confirmed on the Child Care Subsidy System the family will then be notified should the actual fee be different to the estimate given. This policy provides clear guidelines for families, ensuring a transparent process for collecting fees for children attending our programs. This policy details our commitment to:

- collecting fees
- equitable and efficient payment processes
- unpaid fees
- supporting families in hardship.

Weldon Children's Services must notify families at least 10 business days before any changes are made to the policies or procedures if the changes will affect the way in which fees are charged or collected.

2. Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service which is communicated to families.

Australian families receive help with the cost of child care through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Providers must be approved by the Department of Human Services to receive CCS. All providers that receive CCS must follow the rules under Family Assistance Law. State and territory governments are responsible for the health, safety, wellbeing, and educational outcomes of children. The Australian Government considers that immunisation is an important health measure for children and their families, as it is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against harmful and often deadly diseases. To meet the Childcare Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the National

Immunisation Program - vaccination schedule, be on an eligible catch-up vaccination schedule or have an approved exemption from being immunised.

CCS is paid directly to approved providers and passed on to families as a fee reduction.
Additional Child Care Subsidy provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. This support recognises the preventative and protective influence of quality education and care on a child's health, wellbeing and development, and the importance of continuity of care.
There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
• Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)—to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren.
• Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship.
• Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work)—to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.
The Community Child Care Fund is designed to help eligible child care providers address barriers to child care participation, particularly in disadvantaged communities, including Indigenous communities.

3. Legislative requirements

Section/Regulation	Description
Regulation 111	Administrative space
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Child Safe Standard 1	Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture
Child Safe Standard 4	Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
Child Safe Standard 10	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

4. Principles informed in this policy:

- We are committed to providing all families with the opportunity to enrol their children. We aim for our fee structure to be fair, and we accommodate payment plans for families facing financial hardship.
- Weldon ensures that there is responsible financial management of our services, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable service, while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level.
- All families will be informed of applicable fees at the time of enrolment. Weldon aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for high-quality care, education, and leisure programs to be provided for their child/ren and we provide at least ten business days' notice of any changes to the fee structure.
- Keeping families informed is paramount. Our families are part of the service decision-making process, and we facilitate open, two-way communication. Our educators encourage positive, respectful, and warm relationships between children, families, and educators at the service. Building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children.
- We prioritise good governance and quality management. Our fee structure is clear and transparent, and our systems and practices ensure that payments are processed correctly, and receipts and statements are provided to families.
- We provide a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment or inability to pay fees and outstanding debts and maintain confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents and guardians.
- We are committed to meeting our obligations to maintain financial viability and comply with all Child Care Subsidy (CCS) legislative requirements.
- Weldon ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to our services about the enrolled child and family.
- We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure childcare funding is administered appropriately.
- We value the important role our staff play in children's education and care. We equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills through resources, support, and relevant training to assist families with fee payments.
- Weldon Children's Services actively anticipates children's diverse circumstances and pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children with disability. This is also relevant for those families receiving CCS through the activity test for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

5. Key terms

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority	The national body responsible for regulating early childhood education and care services, overseeing the National Quality Framework, maintaining approved educator qualifications, and supporting continuous	acecqa.gov.au

	improvement in service quality and child safety.	
Casual/non-permanent booking	A casual booking is a booking that is made on an ad hoc, non-permanent basis, not on an ongoing basis. The booking has a start and end date and may be for an additional day or session that is not part of a permanent booking or for a one-off day as required. A family may have a permanent booking for some days and a casual booking for other days. Unless there is an ongoing commitment for a booking, the casual booking surcharge will apply.	
Child care subsidy	The main Australian Government payment to assist families with the costs of education and care for their children. It is, with some exceptions, paid directly to providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families make a co-contribution to their fees and pay the provider the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.	https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/child-care-subsidy
Notice period (fees)	The length of time stipulated by a service to notify families before making any changes that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected. The notice period must be at least 10 business days.	National Regulations (Regulation 172)
Permanent booking	A permanent booking is a booking for the same specific day/s or session/s each week or fortnight, with no defined end date on the booking. A permanent booking is ongoing. Please note that the minimum number of days for a permanent booking in an Early Years program is two days (consecutive days are preferred).	

6. **Links to other policies**

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Enrolment and orientation
- Governance and management

7. **Induction and ongoing training**

- Induction and ongoing training will be implemented, focusing on this policy and related procedures.
- Information will be shared with relief/ casual and educator assistants on induction and as relevant to the environments that they are working in, their shift responsibilities and the children in their care.
- Procedures and clear expectations about conducting assessments are part of Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person induction training, and regularly reviewed at staff meetings.

8. 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 two years.

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 10 business 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.

Policy created:		
Review Date	Assignee	Notes
1/12/2025	Lauren Roberts	
10/07/2026	Lauren Roberts	Adjustment made to late pick up fees.

PAYMENT OF SERVICE FEES AND PROVISION OF A STATEMENT OF FEES CHARGED BY THE SERVICE PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

1. Title

Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service procedures.

2. Reference to policy and philosophy

Refers to the Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy. These procedures will also reflect the service philosophy, the Child Safe Standards and evidence-based quality practice guidelines.

3. Procedures

These procedures will be kept at the service for family and staff access.

Templates and documents that might be required and/or used as a part of the procedures include:

- child enrolment record
- attendance record report/child sign-in sign-out record

Systems to monitor the implementation of the procedures include:

- accessibility - policies and procedures are readily available and accessible to staff as required.
- induction and training – staff are given adequate onboarding and ongoing support to ensure up-to-date knowledge and skills with a thorough understanding of responsibilities.
- quality assurance and governance - policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and maintained.
- monitor and audit compliance - implementation of policies and procedures is regularly monitored to ensure staff are following them correctly.
- reformative action - non-compliance with policies and procedures is promptly addressed.
- resourcing and support - adequate resources and time are allocated to enable staff to comply with policies and procedures.
- communication with families - parents will be made aware of the requirements of the policy and the importance of keeping medical management plans up to date.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved Provider	• ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met. • set fees for children to enroll at the service and ensure policies and procedures are in place relating to the fee schedule and payment options. • take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy and procedures. • ensure the organisation complies with Family Assistance Law. • ensure vacant places are filled under the appropriate priority of access policy for the services we offer (refer to priority of access guidelines – Enrolment and Orientation Policy). • as required under family assistance law, pass all fee reductions to families as advised by the Department of Education against *an attendance record report/child sign-in sign-out record* within fourteen days of being advised of the amount. • ensure the organisation submits online weekly *attendance record reports* to the Department of Education for each child accessing care. • comply with Australian Government or NSW Government funding agreements as required. • ensure the organisation remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due. • review fees annually in line with CPI and market forces. • where assistance is provided by the Government's "Additional Child Care Subsidy", Weldon will not be charging any additional fees. • issue accounts, to provide families with a complete record of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and or other fee reductions that have been provided by the organisation, weekly. • only collect and disclose personal information about children and families to the Department of Education and/or the Family Assistance Office as legally required. • ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers, and available for inspection. • notify families at least 10 business days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: • affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or • significantly impact the service's education and care of children. • significantly impacts the family's ability to utilise the service.
Nominated Supervisor	• ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to payment of fees. • implement procedures for the payment of service fees. • ensure all families are made aware of service fees and bond deposit requirements. • in conjunction with the Approved Provider, work with families to find a

	solution where families are experiencing hardship or where there are extenuating circumstances preventing families from keeping their accounts current or where the implementation of the policy creates an unreasonable financial burden.
	
	• ensure adequate records of attendance are kept for each child as required.
	• communicate with families at enrolment about fees, including:
	  • the amounts charged.
	  • payment periods and methods.
	  • how the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy will be applied.
	  • notice periods.
	  • how they can access copies of statements/receipts.
	  • financial hardship considerations and payment plans.
	• ensure families receive receipts for fees paid.
	• ongoing communication with families about their account.
	• monitor the application of the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy.

Educators	• be familiar with the Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy and procedures. • support families to approach the person whose role it is to collect fees with any fee-related questions.
Families	• ensure they understand the service's fee requirements and expectations at enrolment and any ongoing changes. • meet the fee requirements. • obtain a Customer Reference Number (CRN) from Centrelink for the parent(s) and the child as soon as practicable before or on enrolment at the service. • sign in and out and record the arrival and departure times of their child/children attending care. • pay fees as they are due, even if a child is absent due to illness or accident. • raise any fee-related questions with the person responsible for fee collection at the service.

Procedures

Fee structure	
Legislation Quality Areas Child Safe Standards	**Act:** **Regs**: 168, 170, 171, 172 **QA:** 6.1, 7.1 **CSS:** 3, 6
Steps	**Fee Structure** Our fee structure includes: **Administration fee:** • An annual administration fee is payable for each family, upon initial enrolment and/or as bookings are confirmed to continue the care into the following year. Administration fees are payable for all program types. • The administration fee is an annual fee per family, irrespective of the number of children attending the various programs noted above. e.g. where children are already booked into a Before and After School Care program and the administration fee has been previously paid to a program, no administration fee will be charged for Vacation Care. **Bond deposit:** • On enrolment of a permanent booking, a bond (security deposit) equal to the sum of two full weeks' fees is required. • The Bond is due and payable upon confirmation of enrolment. Bonds are held separately from general accounts. • The Bond may be adjusted from time to time based on changes in fee charges or changes in booking requirements, for example, decreases or increases in days booked. **Commencement of care:** • A payment equal to the sum of two weeks of care is payable before the commencement of care i.e., the current week and a week in advance. • We do NOT accept cash for any payments - fees are payable only by Fat Zebra, with Fat Zebra being a debit system that works in conjunction with our OWNA software (the childcare management system). **Child Care Subsidy (CCS):** • Parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their myGov account linked to Centrelink and provide documentation to support the CCS payment. • CCS is paid directly to the program, and this is used as a fee reduction

(visible on a family's tax invoice).

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS):

- Families can apply for ACCS through Centrelink for fee assistance.
- There are four different payments under the Additional Child Care Subsidy:
  - ACCS (child wellbeing)—to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect. The approved provider is involved in determining children who may require additional support and who are at risk of harm.
  - ACCS (grandparent)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment.
  - ACCS (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment.
  - ACCS (transition to work)—to help low-income families transition from income support to work. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment.

Non- Notification of an Absence fee:

- A non-notification fee is charged where parents have booked their children into a placement for a before or after-school care program and do not advise the program of an absence by the set times.
- The Non-Notification fee is $20.00
- For an After school care session, notice must be provided by 9:00am that same day.
- Where a child is sent home from school during the day, the fee may be waived where a medical certificate is provided.

Late Fees:

- Weldon recognises that there can be unforeseen circumstances that families experience, and we will work with families to ensure late fees are only applied in the appropriate circumstances.
- Weldon is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. To have children on the premises after hours is a breach of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.
- A late fee will apply when children are not picked up before closing time.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late collecting children.
- $15.00 for 1-15 minutes

- $30.00 for 16-30 minutes
- $45.00 for 31-45 minutes
- $60.00 for 46-60 minutes

General Fee Information:

- Fees are charged for each session of care and vary depending on the age of the child in care and the family's eligibility for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
- CCS is paid directly to the program, and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family's tax invoice).
- 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 Fat Xebra, a direct debit system.
- Fees are payable in advance for every session that a child is enrolled for. This includes absent days and family holidays.
- If a session of care falls on a public holiday, Early Years Learning families are required to pay for that day for a permanent booking unless it is a public holiday that falls within Weldon's close-down period.
- If a session of care falls on a public holiday, before and after school care families are required to pay for that day for a permanent booking unless it is a public holiday that falls within Weldon's close-down period or falls during a vacation care period or on a pupil free day.
- Fees are not charged for any before and after-school care programs that fall on a pupil-free day (staff development day), however, they are required to pay a fee if they attend a program provided on a pupil-free day. The fee charged will be set based on the program and activities provided. A pupil-free day is set by an educational institution. On a pupil-free day, students do not attend school. Pupil-free days attached to school holidays are not deemed to be vacation care.
- Fees are charged for the full sessions booked (regardless of the actual hours attended). Late fees do apply for families who arrive after the program closing time to collect their children.
- Where a family has two or more children attending a program with permanent bookings in a normal week of care, the older sibling (or older siblings if there are three or more children) will receive a 5% discount.

Payment of Fees:

- Families are required to pay fees a minimum 1 week in advance.
- Families are required to pay fees using Fat Zebra. Fat Zebra is a direct debit system that works in conjunction with our OWNA software. On enrolment, the family is required to complete their Fat Zebra details within OWNA.

- All fees and charges including those associated with the direct debit system are outlined upon enrolment.
- A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees.
- Dishonour fees are $2.50
- Families will be issued with a tax invoice weekly as per the fee payment and regulatory requirements.
- Families will be issued with a statement of entitlement fortnightly per the fee payment and regulatory requirements.
- The tax invoice will include details of the sessions of care provided, associated CCS payments received, and payments received from the family.
- The statement of entitlement will include details of the sessions of care, care summary, fees and subsidy summary, year to date absences. More information can be found here: https://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/4/6/1/40
- The tax invoice and statement of entitlement are generated using our OWNA software which meets all requirements per Family Assistance Law legislation.

Fat Zebra:

- When paying by Fat Zebra, the following charges apply:
  - when paying from a bank account (EFT) – no fees are incurred. (In this case, there is a charge per transaction by Fat Zebra, that is paid for by Weldon).
  - Visa/Mastercard percentage (calculated on transaction value).
  - Failed Transaction charge (per failed or returned transaction attempt).
- The above fee types are charged to the benefit of the Fat Zebra service provider. Weldon does not receive any of the above fees for this Fat Zebra service.
- The current list of these fee charges is made available at the service, is noted on the tax invoice, and is provided to families each year as fees and charges are reviewed.

Outstanding fees:

- Weldon recognises that there can be unforeseen circumstances that families experience, and we will work with families to agree on an arrangement to assist where there are circumstances of undue financial hardship.
- Where there are outstanding fees, the Nominated Supervisor will, in

conjunction with the Approved Provider, implement an overdue fee process with any families where fees are not a week in advance.

- The Nominated Supervisor will follow up on late payment accounts to organise a payment plan or, as a last resort, suspend care.
- Arrangements for debt collection processes to commence will be made where no arrangement is agreed to, or an agreed arrangement is not maintained.

Change of Fees:

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of 10 business days written notice is given to all families.
- CCS hourly rate caps may be increased by the CPI at the commencement of each financial year, Any CCS hourly rate changes are governed by CCS and are automatically adjusted through our CCS Software.

Absences:

- Families are requested to contact the service if their child is unable to attend a particular session. The preferred method of contact is by email.
- The latest time required to notify your absence is 1 business day for all bookings and enrolment types.
- Families must still pay the 'gap' fee to the service if their child is unable to attend any permanent bookings
- Under the Child Care Subsidy, families are entitled to 42 allowable absence days per child, each financial year and in some circumstances, may be entitled to additional absence days. Refer to the Child Care Subsidy Handbook.
- Records and evidence will be kept by the service for each additional absence, where required.
- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via myGov and the weekly tax invoice and statement of entitlement.

Cancellation of casual bookings:

- Parents are able to provide 1 business days' notice of intention to cancel a casual booking for a before or after school care session.
- Parents are able to provide 10 business days' notice of intention to cancel a casual booking for a vacation care session.

Withdrawal of Enrolment:

- Parents are to provide 20 business days' written notice of their intention

to withdraw a child from the service.

- If withdrawal from the service is made without notification, the Child Care Subsidy may only be paid up until the child's last physical day of attendance. In this instance, full fees will be charged.
- The child needs to attend the service on the last day of the notice period to receive CCS.
- The full bond will only be refunded if fees are up to date and the child attended the last day of care
- Withdrawal from the service without the required 20 business days' notice, may result in the 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 Booking system in OWNA.
  - All booking confirmations are subject to availability.

Changes to Permanent Bookings:

- A change to increase specific days on an ongoing basis or swap permanent days requires notice in writing and will be accommodated as soon as possible, subject to availability.
- 20 business days' notice in writing is required to reduce days on any permanent booking.
- 20 business days' notice in writing is required to cancel or change a Vacation Care booking.
- Business days' notice refers to Weldon's normal operating days and does not include annual closures.

Annual Re-enrolment Process:

Families will:

- Provide a written notice for withdrawal in a calendar year no later than mid-October or during the re-enrolment process (whichever occurs sooner).
- If families are not re-enrolling for the coming year, the last opportunity to provide withdrawal notice will be at the end of October. Late notice penalties will be applied if notice is given after mid-October. The late notice penalty will require full fees to be paid until the end of the current operational year (i.e. late December), regardless of the date of withdrawal

	if after mid-October. • Provide written notice to withdraw or to reduce permanent placement days for the start of the following calendar year, no later than mid-October (dates are advised on the re-enrolment form). When written notice to withdraw or to reduce permanent placement days is not received by the required date in mid-October, full fees are to be paid for the new calendar year until the second week of March (dates to be advised on the re-enrolment form). • Ensure any outstanding fees are paid in full and provide bank account details for the refund of bond monies. • Bond refunds will be made as soon as practical after final attendances have been confirmed and processed.
	• Make sure your policy and procedures are available for all to access. • Ensure procedures are part of Nominated Supervisor and educator induction training and are regularly reviewed at staff meetings. • Ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and maintained. • Nominated supervisors are to regularly monitor to ensure staff are implementing policies and procedures correctly. • Non-compliance with policies and procedures is promptly addressed. • Make sure your policy and procedures are available for all to access. • Ensure the fee structure is part of the discussion with families at enrolment. • Develop a reminder system to inform families of the fee structure around public holidays, family holidays and absences. • Develop a communication plan for ensuring all families are aware of how much notice they must give. • Develop a communication plan for informing families if and when fees are to be changed. • Ensure your digital and accounting systems can effectively process payments, support the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy, and provide statements/ receipts for families. • Develop a system for families who do not pay their fees, e.g. a template reminder for overdue fees, debt collection, payment plans. • Adequate resources and time will be allocated to enable staff to comply with policies and procedures. • Meeting agendas and minutes show child safety is a standing agenda item.
Related policies/ procedures	Policies: • Enrolment and orientation • Governance and management

	Procedures: • Enrolment record • Enrolment procedures • General governance management • Records and confidentiality
Implemented by:	Approved Provider Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person Educator
Created/ reviewed: 03/12/2025	Review responsibility: Leader Quality, Compliance and People Development