



POLICY: FEES

INTRODUCTION

To enable Mudgee Community Preschool to provide high quality early education and care for children it must remain financially viable at all times. The setting and payment of fees takes into account all requirements of the Educational and Care Services National Regulations, Australian Tax Office, Privacy Act and the guidelines contained within the Department of Education Funding Agreement . Mudgee Community Preschool has a commitment to ensuring fees are as affordable as possible and that all families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce these fees. Mudgee Community Preschool will advocate with governments for all children's right to access early education and care regardless of their family's financial situation.

GOALS

Mudgee Community Preschool's financial health and access to our service will be maximized by:

- ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment;
- keeping fee increases to a minimum;
- ensuring the cost of administering fee collection is minimized;
- following the appropriate priority of access requirements;
- following all legal requirements required by our access to government funding;
- managing fee collection to avoid debts;
- notifying families as far ahead as possible and no less than 14 days of any changes to fees or the ways fees will be collected;
- minimizing cash held on premises (for security and administrative purposes) and
- ensuring statements of fees are issued on a regular basis, at least once per term.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Board of Management will:

- a) set the annual membership fees of Mudgee Community Preschool in accordance with the Rules of Mudgee Community Preschool Inc (the "Constitution");
- b) set fees that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability;
- c) determine required fee levels to meet the budget prediction for the year and to be in accordance with the NSW Government, Department of Education Funding Agreement;
- d) offer reduced fees for Equity families (low-income, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families; children with disabilities)
- e) set separate fees for children who attend the Extended hours Service;
- f) ensure vacant places are filled under the Priority of Access Policy guidelines
- g) ensure adequate records of attendance are kept for each child as required;

- h) comply with The Department of Education funding agreements as required;
- i) ensure the service remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due;
- j) review fees at least annually in line with CPI and market forces;
- k) only collect and disclose personal information about children and families to the Department of Human Services and/or the Department of Education where the disclosure is legally required and consent has been provided;
- l) set other fees as required e.g. library fees, excursion fees;
- m) determine how and when fees are to be collected

2. The Director/Nominated Supervisor will:

- a) ensure all families are made aware of any fees and available subsidies on enrolment;
- b) ensure that the Fee Policy is readily available at the Preschool;
- c) notify parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected;
- d) ensure a notice outlining the fees charged by the Preschool is displayed in the main entrance to the Preschool;
- e) collect all relevant information and maintain relevant documents regarding those with entitlements to reduced fees, where applicable;
- f) ensure that all families are provided with a statement of outstanding fees on receipt of notification of withdrawal of a child from the service.
- g) ensure families are aware of fee payment options which may change from time to time and which may include: Direct Deposit, Direct Debit or payment by credit card/eftpos; Centrepay;
- h) ensure families are aware that credit card/eftpos transactions carry a charge;
- i) ensure cash or cheque payments are made at the office at Mudgee Community Preschool, Lovejoy Street. No payment of fees is accepted at the South Mudgee Campus;
- j) ensure statements of fees are given to all families at least once per term;
- k) implement an overdue fee process with any families whose fees are 2 weeks behind, reminding families that their child may be excluded if fees are unpaid.
- l) Undertake other fee options to pursue un-paid fees in consultation with the Board;
- m) join in advocacy actions designed to reduce the cost of early education and care fees for families wherever possible.

3. Families will:

- a) ensure that one or both parents/guardians are financial members of Mudgee Community Preschool;
- b) provide relevant documentation if entitled to reduced fees;
- c) pay a bond of 2 weeks fees which will be reimbursed when the child leaves Preschool if fees are paid up to date;
- d) ensure that Fees are paid at least 2 weeks in advance;
- e) record the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending Preschool;
- f) provide 2 weeks' notice of withdrawal from the Preschool. If the child does not attend during this 2 week notice period full fees will be chargeable.
- g) make alternative payment arrangements with the Director or Administration Officer if they are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to pay the fees.

4. Fee payment procedures

- a) The annual Association membership fee is payable at the time of enrolment.
- b) A bond of 2 weeks fees is payable at the time of enrolment.
- c) Fees will be paid fortnightly/monthly by Direct Debit/Centrepay **OR** termly in advance by any other method, excluding cash payments..
- d) A statement of fees is sent home with the children or emailed to the family each term.
- e) No payment of fees is to be made for public holidays, school vacations or pupil-free days.
- f) Fees will be charged when a child is absent from preschool or the extended hours service. Absences cannot be "made up" on other days.
- g) Additional fees, as set by the board, will be charged for the extended hours service
- h) Families will be contacted by the Preschool after one week of unexplained absence.
- i) In extenuating circumstances e.g. in the case of a hospitalized child, alternative fee payment arrangements may be made at the Director's discretion.
- j) The Director and Office Administrator are to maintain confidentiality in regard to fees information.
- k) In the event of disputes about outstanding fees, parents must produce fee receipts as evidence of payment.

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 Preschool will review this Policy every year.

In accordance with R172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the Preschool will ensure that families of children enrolled at the Preschool 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 utilize the Preschool; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Fees are kept as low as possible whilst ensuring the service's financial health. Families pay fees on time.

Sources: Community Early Learning Australia Model Policies accessed from <https://www.cela.org.au> , 1 November 2018

Statutory and Legislative Considerations:

National Quality Standard 7.1.2: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

Legislation: Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 168 (n) 172; Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Date Effective: November 1994

Last reviewed: October 2019, June 2020

Review: 2021