



CHILDREN'S &  
FAMILY SERVICES

# **Fees Policy**

## Kindergartens

POLICY TYPE: SERVICE OPERATIONAL

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## KINDERGARTEN FEES POLICY

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## KINDERGARTEN FEES POLICY

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## KINDERGARTEN FEES POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. National Quality Standards

- QA7 – 7.3.2 Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.

#### 1.2. Purpose

For any persons responsible for the payment of accounts incurred when utilising a Warrnambool City Council Early Years' Service to understand the expectations of payments.

#### 1.3. Scope

This policy applies to educators, management, parents/guardians, ancillary staff and service visitors or any other professional organisation that is responsible for payment of fees.

#### 1.4. Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Registered Care</b>	Is child care provided by nannies, grandparents, relatives or friends who are registered with us. In some circumstances it can also include child care provided by individuals in private pre-schools, kindergartens and some outside school hours care services. Your child's carer must be registered with us for you to claim Child Care Benefit.
<b>Commonwealth Child Care Benefit (CCB)</b>	Child Care Benefit is a Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Benefit.
<b>Fees</b>	A charge for a place within a program at the centre.
<b>Levy</b>	A payment made in lieu of parents/guardians involvement in specific activities, for example, fundraising, maintenance.

#### 1.5. References

National Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</li> <li>• Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care) Act 2010</li> </ul>
Early Years Learning & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years Branch at Warrnambool City Council – relating to Kindergartens, Childcare Centres, Family Day Care and Preschool Field Officers.</li> </ul>
Warrnambool City Council	WCC Debtor Policy

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### 1.6 Background and legislation

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per capita funding as a contribution toward the cost of operating a kindergarten program for children in the year before school. The kindergarten itself is responsible for all operational costs.

Fees are necessary because there is a shortfall between the level of government funding and the costs of operating a viable kindergarten.

There is no funding for other programs such as three-year-old programs or playgroups, with the exception of a subsidy for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Children aged 3 years who are unable to gain a placement in a 4 year old program and the Early Start Program for children known to Child Protection or Child First.

Parents/guardians need to be aware that kindergartens are not a free service and rely on prompt payment of fees to meet costs. All parents/guardians must pay fees or complete application for the fee subsidy if eligible; WCC has the discretion to withdraw service for non-payment of fees.

#### Legislation

- **Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010**
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011**

Regulation 168(2)(n) requires Centre's to have a Policy and provision of a statement of fees in relation to fees charged by WCC.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION

### FEE SCHEDULE

Payment of fees – 4 yr old kindergarten fees **are paid by termly installments**. Kindergarten is funded by the State Government and user fees. Council sets the user fees payable by families.

#### Kindergarten Fee Subsidy – Health Care Card Holders

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides a kindergarten fee subsidy for each child who meets the following criteria. The child:

- **Is eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program; and**
- **Individually holds, or has a parent or guardian who holds, a Commonwealth Health Care Card or a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card or Visa (200-204; 786 or 566)**
- **Does not have “approved” Commonwealth Child Care Benefit applied to the fee paid for the time spent in the funded kindergarten program at that location. (Note – WCC kindergarten fees attract Child Care Benefit for “registered” care only.)**

The subsidy is paid to the kindergarten to directly reduce fees paid by families. To obtain the subsidy 'A Fee Subsidy Application Form' must be completed and the supporting documentation

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(Health Care Card /Pensioner Concession Card/Visa (200-204, 786 or 566) must be sighted by WCC administration staff.

### **Kindergarten Fee Subsidy for Triplets and Quadruplets**

Triplets or quadruplets who are eligible kindergarten children attending a funded kindergarten program are each entitled to receive an additional kindergarten fee subsidy. This subsidy provides financial assistance to offset the costs of kindergarten fees for families who have three or more four year old children attending a kindergarten program in the one year. The additional subsidy is paid regardless of whether the family is also entitled to receive the kindergarten fee subsidy based on the criteria outlined earlier. Some families may be entitled to both the kindergarten fee subsidy and the kindergarten subsidy for triplets and quadruplets.

**A child is eligible to attract the kindergarten subsidy for triplets and quadruplets if they meet the following criteria. The child:**

- **Is eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program; and**
- **Is identified on the birth certificate as a triplet or quadruplet; and**
- **The other two or three children on the certificate are attending a funded kindergarten program.**

**Original or certified birth certificates will need to be sighted by WCC administration staff prior to the start of the year.**

### **Payment of fees – 3 Year Old Kindergarten**

Fees are paid by termly installment. Fees will be set for the first 6 months of the year, and then parents will be notified of the fees for terms 3 and 4 when set through the Council budget process.

### **Children turning three during the year**

Children can commence the three-year-old program when they have turned three, otherwise full fees will need to be paid until this time to hold the child's place at the kindergarten. If the parent doesn't wish to pay full fee to hold the placement, an older child will be placed in the vacancy and the younger child will be offered a vacancy, if available, once the child turns 3.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and "Early Start" Children**

Children identified by parent, carer or legal guardian at enrolment as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, aged at least 3 years on 30<sup>th</sup> April of the year she or he is enrolled to attend and the child individually holds or the child's family or carers hold a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card of Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card or children know to Child Protection or Child First can attend a 4 year old program at no cost provided the relevant card is sighted by WCC administration staff prior to commencement.

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### Holding a Placement

A placement will be held vacant for a child at any kindergarten for a maximum of one term only. Fees must be paid to hold the place or application for the fee subsidy made for this period. If a child does not commence or return to the kindergarten after an absence of one term, the enrolment will be cancelled.

### 2.1. Overdue Fees

Not paying fees will result in the enforcement of the Warrnambool City Council Debtor Policy. Families can contact the WCC Finance Department on 55594800 regarding payments if there is a need to do so.

## 3. GOVERNANCE

### 3.1. Owner

The Service Manager Early Years Learning and Development is responsible for this policy and for ensuring it is implemented, and ensuring the policy is reviewed as appropriate.

### 3.2. Review

The Service manager of Early Years Learning and Development will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than 3 years after its formulation or in the instance of an incident occurring, and WCC will within 28 days of making any change, notify the parents/guardians of the children attending the services.

#### 3.2.1. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the Service Manager of Early Years Learning and Development will:

- Take into account feedback from staff, parents/guardians regarding the policy
- Monitor compliance with the expectations and procedures set out in the policy

### 3.3. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

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