

Early Years Policy – QA7.8 Payment of Fees

TRIM Reference:	D15/15748	Due for Review:	24 December 2027
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Early Years		

Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to provide a clear process for the payment of fees for the Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Kindergartens, Occasional Care Services and hire of community facilities at Kurrambee Myaring Community Centre and Torquay Children's Hub.

We prioritise good governance and quality management. The fees structure is clear and transparent, and our systems and practices ensure that payments are processed correctly and receipts and statements are provided to families.

Policy Principles

Evidence of link to Education and Care Services National Law: Section 3(3)(c); 175

Evidence of link to Education and Care Services National Regulations: 75; 158-159; r168 (n), 172

Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020

Scope

This policy applies to all Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services – Kindergarten and Occasional Care and families accessing these services, and individuals, groups, or organisations hiring the community facilities at Kurrambee Myaring Community Centre and Torquay Children's Hub.

Policy

General

- Each Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years' Service will have a Statement of Fees charged by the service (r168 (n)).
- The fee schedule and fees payment policy is explained to families during the enrolment process or hire application process.
- The approved provider must notify families at least 14 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 (regulation 172).

Kindergarten Fees

- Kindergarten families that attend additional hours outside of the 15 hours of free kinder, will be invoiced each term in advance.
- Children from 2026 launch priority cohorts through Best Start Best Life can access between 16 and 25 hours of Pre-Prep per week in 2026 – 2029, then between 16 and 30 hours from 2031 statewide.
- Fees are not refundable in part however consideration may be given in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of Council. This request must be in writing.
- Fee subsidies do not apply to additional hours outside of the 15 hours of free kinder
- A statement and invoice will be issued by Council's Finance department and overdue fees reminders are sent accordingly. Overdue fees accrue interest charges based on the Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983.

Community Centre Hire Fees

- Casual hirers must pay the full hire fees in advance, as invoiced to secure booking.
- Regular hirers will be invoiced monthly in arrears and must make full payment within 30 days.
- A bond of \$300.00 is payable for hiring outside of the centre's business hours, this is to cover any additional costs, due to loss of keys/swipe card and/or damage to facility/equipment and overstaying the agreed hire time. This is fully refundable when keys/swipe cards are returned at the conclusion of the hire and conditions of hire have been met.
- A valid credit card and photo ID are required.
- A cleaning fee may be charged for weekend/multiple day hire.

Overdue Fees – Kindergarten and Community Centre hire only

If no payment is received by:

30 days

- Accounts Officer sends out an account with a friendly reminder.

60 days

- Accounts Officer informs Early Years Coordinator/relevant Team Leader detailing clients who have an account with overdue fees.
- Accounts Officer sends out statement with an overdue reminder on the clients account.
- Accounts Officer generates letters indicating that the client has an overdue account which may result in services being cancelled if payment is not made and forwards to Coordinator Early Years for signing and sending.

90 days

- Same process as 60 days

120 days or at the end of the program

- Accounts Officer sends out statement with an overdue reminder on the clients account.
- Accounts Officer informs Early Years Coordinator/relevant Team leader of all clients who have an account with outstanding fees of 120 days.
- Coordinator liaise with Team Leaders of relevant programs who provide information to Accounts Receivable/Revenue Officer of clients that are to be processed through debt collection agency nominated by the Surf Coast Shire

Occasional Care Fees

- Surf Coast Shire Council issues families with a fortnightly invoice, two weeks in arrears.
- Payments are made via direct debit or Pay Now on the Xplor app.
- Families must have a zero balance of fees before accessing the program.
- Families are given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any fee increase.
- Parents/guardians should notify us via the Xplor app to advise of their child's inability to attend as soon as this is known. Fees will still be charged for the child's booked hours if the place cannot be filled by another child.
- The same fee will be charged to all families for equivalent education and care arrangements.
- A Statement of Care, in accordance with Australian Government Guidelines/Surf Coast Shire Council Guidelines, will be provided fortnightly.
- Fee payment will be recorded according to Australian Government Guidelines/Surf Coast Shire Council Guidelines.
- Public Holidays are not charged to families.
- Two weeks' notice must be given to terminate care arrangements.
- If a user is two weeks in arrears future care may be suspended until payment is made or a fee payment plan is organised through Surf Coast Shire Council.

Child Care Subsidy (applicable for Occasional Care services only)

- Council complies with the Australian Government requirements to be an approved education and care service for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy
- The on-line Child Care Subsidy System reporting requirements and any other requirements for claiming and administering Child Care Subsidy is maintained by council.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to lodge a claim for Child Care Subsidy with Centrelink or through their myGov account.
- Parent/guardians must confirm their child's enrolment at a service through their myGov account (Centrelink) before Child Care Subsidy can commence.
- Child Care Subsidy cannot be claimed in bulk at the end of the financial year.
- Families with children under 7 years seeking Child Care Subsidy will be required to meet the Australian Government's immunisation requirements. To finalise enrolments for a child in Occasional Care, parents/carers have to provide the service with a current copy of their child's immunisation history statement.
- The No Jab, No Pay legislation requires families to vaccinate their children in line with the national immunisation schedule to be eligible for certain family support (Centrelink) payments, including childcare subsidies.
- Families will only be eligible for Child Care Subsidy if child care attendance records are accurately completed and signed by the parents/guardians or other authorised person and all eligibility requirements are met.
- Families are entitled to 42 absence days for each registered child in each financial year. Child Care Subsidy is paid for these days provided the child would normally have attended on that day, and fees have been charged.
- Additional absences can be claimed after the first 42 absence days have been used and these are called 'additional absence days'. There is no limit on the number of days for which Child Care Subsidy may be paid, as long as they are for the reasons specified in the current Child Care Provider Handbook. Supporting documentation is required for approval of 'additional absence days'.
- All documentation pertaining to Child Care Subsidy will be kept for the specified period of time and made available to Australian Government Officers on request.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will not be paid for absences where:

- A child who has not yet received care or who has ceased receiving care.
- A provider charges a family to reserve a place for a child who has not physically started care.
- A child is booked in to start at a service on a particular date, and does not start on that day; no CCS will be paid until the child physically attends a session of care.
- When ceasing care, the child must attend the last booked day or your CCS may be rescinded to the last day your child attended.
- A child is absent for more than fourteen consecutive weeks.
- Further Child Care Subsidy information can be found at:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>
- If your child identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (note: the parent, carer or legal guardian should not be asked to provide verification of this).
- if your child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more).

Late Collection of Children Fees – (Occasional Care only)

- Early Years Services will work in partnership with families to avoid the need to apply a late pick up of children fee wherever possible.
- Special circumstances i.e. traffic accident or vehicle breakdown, will be given consideration in relation to the administration of late pick-up fees.
- Whenever possible the parent(s)/guardian(s) are to phone the service to advise they will be late to collect their child.
- For repeated late collection of child/ren the following steps will apply:
 - Teacher/Team Leader will speak to parent and inform them in writing of our late fee as stated in the policy. Policy will be provided to family.
 - If late collection continues, a late collection fee of \$15 per 15 minutes or part thereof will be charged per child. This charge is not eligible for CCS.

Overdue Fees – Occasional Care only

Fees are direct debited from families nominated bank account each fortnight on a Thursday. If this fails to be processed the following will apply;

- A notification will be sent to the family via the Xplor Communication Centre, asking them to pay via the 'Pay Now' option in the Xplor App.
- Debit Success will still attempt to direct debit outstanding payments each fortnight. Each failed payment may incur a failed payment fee of \$19.95 directly from Debit Success.
- If payment is not made by 30 days, a text message is sent to the family asking them to make payment by certain date to avoid care being cancelled.
- If contact has not been made or an attempt to rectify the failed payment attempt, care will be cancelled.
- Families must have a \$0 balance to re-enrol or attend other Surf Coast Shire Early Years operated services

Definitions

Not applicable

Records

Records shall be retained for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention/Disposal Responsibility	Retention Period	Location
Early Years Collection of Fees Letter	Council	7 years	Electronic file
Family Day Care Enrolment Agreement	Council	7 years	Electronic file
Fees and Charges Schedule	Council	7 years	Electronic file
Attendance records	Council	Until the child turns 25 years	Electronic file
Statement of Entitlement	IT	Until the child turns 25 years	Electronic file
Complying Written Arrangement	Council	7 years	Electronic file

Related Procedure

Nil.

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

- D14/94973 Early Years Delivery of children to, and Collection from, education and care service premises
- D15/54262 Early Years Governance and Management Policy
- D22/217989 Early Years Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- D15/16286 Early Years Access and Inclusion Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Work Instructions and Forms

- D14/28876 Early Years Services Collection of Fees Work Instruction
- D25/115654 Community Facilities Conditions of Hire

Other References

Education and Care Services National Law 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Child Care Provider Handbook 2018 (Department of Education and Training)

A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 2000

The Kindergarten Funding Guide 2023

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/no-jab-no-play>

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/what-are-immunisation-requirements?context=41186>

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
Approval Date	1 April 2014	General Manager Culture and Community
1	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Aged and Family 1 June 2015
2	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Aged and Family 21 February 2017
3	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Aged and Family 3 October 2018
4	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Community Strengthening 1 April 2020
5	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Community Strengthening 31 August 2021
6	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Community Strengthening 11 April 2023
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8	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Community Strengthening 24 July 2026