

Fees Policy

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

Standard 7.1: Governance supports the operation of a quality service

Standard 7.2: Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

POLICY STATEMENT

Arabanoo is committed to providing quality education and care that is affordable and accessible for families. We are an Approved Provider that offers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to eligible families to reduce fees. We also have compliance systems to ensure funding is administered and utilized appropriately. Strict confidentiality is maintained by staff when dealing with personal information regarding fees.

Arabanoo sets fees in accordance with its annual budget to meet the income required to develop and maintain a quality service for children and families. The budget is monitored, and fees are adjusted (with notice to families) throughout the year if necessary.

RATIONALE

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require Approved Providers to have a policy detailing their fee structure.

This policy provides a clear understanding of our:

- Fee structure,
- Payment requirements,
- CCS benefits,
- Fee payment process,
- Necessity of paying children's fees on time, and
- Consequences of not paying fees on time.

Fees Policy

CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
Education and Care Services National Law: 227, 261, 301 Education and Care Services National Regulations: 33, 168, 172, 173, 235, 236	7.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment Form • Enrolment & Orientation Policy • Delivery & Collection of Children Policy • Confidentiality Policy • Governance & Management Policy • Parent Handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Management System • Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) • Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017 (Cth) • A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 (Cth)

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

Approval date: Sept 2024

Date for Review: Sept 2026

Policy History

Version 1.0

December 2005, May 2006, March 2007, May 2007, February 2009, August 2010, May 2011, March 2012.

Version 2.0

Overhaul of policies following regulatory changes in 2012. Drafted from the Network template and using the Current Arabanoo Policy Handbook by Sarah Evans. Reviewed by Jane Ellis and Michael Scheepers, May 2013.

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3.0	12 August 2015	Brendan Williamson, Vanessa Williamson, Constandina Shackleton and Nicole Torrance	Various	Changed the wording of a few sentences	Kerry Sinclair 12 February 2016
4.0	17 August 2016	Craig Dent and Cameron Grant.	Slight wording changes throughout. Fees Structure	Increase of fees, added in Hubdebit fees	Belinda Edmunds 30 November 2016
5.0	27 June 2017	Rowan Friend and Belinda Edmunds		Split Policy from Procedure	Belinda Edmunds 27 June 2017
6.0	3 May 2019	Rowan Friend and Kate Sellick	Standards	Updated to the new NQS	Kate Sellick – 8 May 2019

Fees Policy

7.0	May 2024	KW OSHC Consulting	Rationale	added - explains why the policy is needed, evidence from legislation & NQS. Outlines what is included in policy / procedure	
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Fees Procedure

IMPLEMENTATION

At Arabanoo, staff must adhere to this policy in conjunction with the other policies outlined in the section above.

Staff working at the Service and members of the Parent Management Committee (PMC) have various responsibilities under this policy to ensure fees are managed and paid properly. Families are also responsible to ensure they understand the Arabanoo's fee structure and familiarise themselves with this policy.

PROCEDURE

(a) Fee Structure

General fees

Fees are charged per child for each session of before and after school care and vacation care. These fees vary depending on the family's amount of [Child Care Subsidy \(CCS\)](#) they receive.

Termination fees

See section (d) of this procedure for more information on termination fees.

Late fees

See sections (i) and (j) of this procedure for more information on late fees.

(b) Membership

The Service is an Incorporated Association and as such, families enrolling their child in the service are bound by the rules of the Association for the period of the child's enrolment.

As a member of the Incorporated Association, one representative of the child's family is entitled to voting rights at any General Meeting held by the Service and may be nominated (with consent) for a position on the Management Committee at the Annual General Meeting.

All fees current and due must be paid for the representative to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

(c) [Child Care Subsidy \(CCS\)](#)

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is the main way the Government assists families with their child care fees. Once a family has enrolled their child at Arabanoo they must log into their MyGov account to confirm care with Arabanoo.

These requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive CCS for a child:

- The age of the child (must be aged 13 or under and not attending secondary school, except in certain circumstances where an individual may be eligible for a child who does not meet this criteria, such as children with a disability or medical condition in certain circumstances),
- The child meeting immunisation requirements, and
- The individual, or their partner, meeting the residency requirements listed in the [legislation](#).

In addition, to be eligible for CCS, the individual must be liable to pay for care provided, the care must be delivered in Australia by an approved childcare provider, and not be part of a compulsory education program.

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CCS entitlement amount

There are three factors that determine a family's level of CCS:

- Combined annual family income,
- Activity test – the activity level of both parents, and
- Service type – type of childcare service and whether the child attends school.

The Child Care Subsidy is generally paid directly to service providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families make a co-contribution to their childcare fees and pay to the Provider the **difference** between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.

Families can get an estimate of what they may be entitled to by entering their details into the [Department of Human Services Payment and Service Finder](#).

(d) Bookings and terminations

Each family is expected to make bookings **in advance** for the sessions they require. **Bookings will only be accepted when families have completed the Service's online Enrolment Form in full.**

Parents/carers are encouraged to make **casual** (one-off) bookings via The My Family Lounge.

(e) Termination of enrolment

Families wishing to terminate their child's place at the Service are required to provide at least **two (2) weeks** written notice to the Nominated Supervisor, or they are liable to pay the equivalent of two (2) weeks childcare fees to the Service.

Note: during the first week of each term, families can terminate **permanent** bookings **without** the two (2) week notice period.

(f) Absences

Fees are payable for family holidays and sick days if those days fall on a day the child is booked into the Service.

The Service will provide families with information about approved and allowable absences, and will adhere to the Child Care Management System (CCMS) in relation to absences.

Parents/carers are encouraged to notify the Service of absences. Absences can be notified via the CCMS app, phone call or email.

Note: during a local or national emergency, e.g. natural disaster or pandemic, the Service may temporarily close due to public health advice. Families may be provided with additional absence days under Family Assistance legislation in these events.

(g) Service closure

No fee is charged whilst the Service is closed.

(h) Payment of Fees

Fees Procedure

Term fees are debited fortnightly in arrears by direct debit (through CCMS program), using either a nominated credit card or bank account. A statement is sent one (1) week prior to each fortnightly billing. **Families are encouraged to check their statements to keep track of all direct debits and any extra charges that may have been added.**

Failure to pay unpaid fees may result in debt recovery action being taken and discontinuation of care for the child unless the family has initiated a repayment schedule for the unpaid fees with the Nominated Supervisor or Centre Administrator.

(i) Financial difficulties

Arabadoo acknowledges that families can sometimes experience financial difficulties, but this shouldn't eliminate the chance for their child to receive quality care.

If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, Arabadoo will collaborate with them to establish a suitable payment plan. This process will be facilitated by the Operations Manager and tailored to each family's circumstances on a case-by-case basis

Families can also apply for the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink if they are experiencing temporary financial hardship.

(j) Debt recovery

Arabadoo reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the service. This may include the engagement of debt collectors to recover the monies owed.

Where a family owes any overdue fees to the service, the child's place may be suspended until all outstanding monies are paid, or both parties agree to a payment plan.

Fees not paid by the due date (**14 days after invoice date**) will be followed up:

1. Day 14 – The invoice is resent to the family with a **late fee added**. A further 7 days is allowed for payment.
2. Day 21 - If payment is not received, a letter via email stating fees are overdue will be sent, giving a further 14 days for payment.
3. Day 35 - If payment is not received, an **additional late fee** will be added to the invoice. Families will be invited, by telephone & email, to attend a meeting with the Nominated Supervisor or the Centre Administrator and the Treasurer within 7 days to discuss a payment plan.
4. Day 49 - Failure to attend the meeting and continued non-payment for a period of 7 days will result in a **final late fee** and a final letter notifying the family that unless payment is made within 7 days (Day 56 / 8 weeks), or a payment plan entered into, their child will be unable to attend the Service.
5. If a signed payment plan (agreed to in Point 3) is not adhered to, the follow-up process will commence as per Point 3.
6. The Approved Provider reserves the right to employ the services of a debt collector and the family will be responsible for all fees associated with recovering the debt.

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(k) Late collection fee

Staff are unable to accept children in the Service outside of Arabanoo opening hours, and children are not to remain on the premises after hours. These are breaches of the Education and Care National Regulations as the Service is not insured or licensed outside the hours of care.

Current opening hours are available by contacting the Service and are displayed prominently within the Service. ([Regulation 173](#)). Should children be present after the closing time, a **late fee** will apply.

In circumstances that are beyond the control of families, e.g. traffic accidents, which may result in them arriving late to collect their child, the Nominated Supervisor will exercise discretion to decide if families will be charged the late fee.

Families who are continually late collecting their children, without a valid reason, may jeopardise their child's place at the Service. Should this be the case, the Nominated Supervisor will meet with the family to discuss this.

(l) Methods of Payment

Fees can be paid by:

- CCMS Program Automatic Direct Debit System – Funds are debited fortnightly.
 - Parent/carer contact details are to be added by contacting Arabanoo.
 - Alternative payment methods are available with prior arrangement from the Nominated Supervisor.

(m) Confidentiality

All information regarding fees will be kept in strict confidence. No members of Arabanoo staff or members of the parent management committee will discuss individual names and details openly. Information will only be available to the nominated persons required to take necessary action, for example, to initiate debt recovery.

Families may request previous statements via email.

(n) Increase/change of fees

The fees are set by Arabanoo to meet the budget for each financial year. There will be ongoing monitoring of the budget and, should it be necessary to amend fees, families will be given a minimum of fourteen (14) days' notice of any fee increase ([Regulation 172](#)).

Families will be given a minimum of fourteen (14) days' notice of any changes to the way in which fees are collected ([Regulation 172](#)).

(o) Acknowledgement of responsibility to pay fees

Families are required to read and sign *Section 9: Payment of Fees* and *Section 10: Disclaimer/Informed Consent* of the Service's Enrolment Form.

(p) Vacation Care

Non-members (families who aren't registered with Arabanoo) are welcome to use Vacation Care.

The Parent Management Committee (PMC) will ensure the following:

- All families are aware of Arabanoo's Fees Policy

Fees Procedure

- Enrolments are submitted correctly
- Provide families with regular statements of fees
- Notify families of overdue fees
- Provide families with reminder letters
- Discuss fee payment with families

Families will ensure the following:

- Provide the Service with the correct enrolment details to trigger CCS claims, including:
 - Centrelink Reference Numbers for child and CCS claimant
 - Date of Birth for child and CCS claimant
- Payment of fees on time and as per this policy
- Notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect CCS entitlement
- Confirm their child’s enrolment through myGov account

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6.0	13 November 2017	Rowan Friend, Belinda Edmunds, Jane Ellis	Fees	Added Laundry and lost hat fee	Belinda Edmunds 13 November 2017
7.0	26 April 2019	Kate Sellick, Mariah Veerbeek, Rowan Friend	CCB Payment Portal & Current Fee structure Sundry Fees Bookings, cancelations, absences Confidentiality Standards Throughout	Changed to CCS Changed from Hub Debit to Debit Success Added Changes to VC booking fee Added the My Family Lounge App Removed parents being able to check statements online. Updated to the new NQS Removed Centre Administrator	Kate Sellick – 8 May 2019
8.0	May 2024	KW OSHC Consulting	Implementation. Roles and Responsibilities	added to for clarity of responsibilities Added this to clearly state what the PMC	Rowan Friend – 3 Sept 2024

Fees Procedure

				and Families roles are	
			Fee Structure / throughout	Qikkids – changed to CCMS program. Debit Success changed to CCMS program. direct debit system	