

FEES

PRINCIPLE

Fees are bench marked against regional children's services and the ongoing service sustainability. Fees for services are set within the limits of the Greater Shepparton City Council budget and funding authorities.

GUIDELINES

1. The *Fees* policy is to be made available to all families, with payment of fees to be in accordance with (*Appendix 8.1–Greater Shepparton City Council Children's Services Schedule of Fees*), that all families will receive upon their child's enrolment.
2. *Appendix 8.1 - Greater Shepparton City Council Children's Services Schedule of Fees* is to be reviewed annually, separate to the *Fees* policy.
3. Communication regarding fees and accounts will be discussed in accordance with privacy requirements, cultural inclusiveness and support of family's individual requirements.
4. Unpaid debts will be referred to the Council's Debt Collection Agency. All fees incurred will be the responsibility of the debtor.
5. If fees are not paid by the due date and no payment plan has been established, services will be ceased for all Council Services that the family is using (Long Day Care, Occasional Care, Family Day Care and Pre-kindergarten (excluding Kindergartens)).
6. If families are experiencing difficulties with fees they should contact Children's Services on 58329783.
7. Where agencies pay the fee for a client, the Child Care Subsidy is not available and the full childcare fee will be charged. (*Appendix 8.2 - Agency Payment Agreement (APA) Letter*) needs to be completed, prior to the commencement or continuation of care.
8. Where a family is seeking an agency payment and care is being used, the family will be responsible for the debt until such time the agency completes the APA.

Late Fees

The Service Leader may apply a late fee after reminders and discussions have been had with families. A late fee of \$2.00 per minute per child can be charged to parent/guardians who arrive to collect their child/ren after the service closing time or booked care time.

Grievances

The Grievance Procedure of the service will be followed in all instances of dispute or dissatisfaction concerning the setting of fees. Refer to the *Concerns and Complaints* policy.

Long Day Care

Nancy Vibert Occasional Care

Family Day Care

1. Quarterly Childcare Management System (CCMS) statements will be distributed to Long Day Care and Family Day Care families, which include details required in accordance with the Family Assistance Law.
2. Payment for occasional care must be made on arrival on the day care is provided or can be paid in advance. Fees will be charged for all late cancellations which include sessional care.

Kindergarten

Pre - kindergarten

1. Unfunded children will be charged the relevant Department of Education and Training (DET) per capita subsidy, the service fees and no Kinder Fee Subsidy (KFS) will be offered.
2. Charges are allocated pro-rata for late enrolments

Long Day Care Children Attending Kindergarten

1. Parents/Guardians of children attending the funded kindergarten program in a Greater Shepparton City Council Long Day Care Service will pay fees according to their total utilisation of the services available. This policy applies to Arthur Dickmann Child Care Centre, Frank R Pullar Child Care Centre, Nancy Vibert Occasional Care Centre and Echuca Road Kindergarten.
2. A child attending the kindergarten program and long day care on the same day (before and/or after kindergarten care), the relevant daily long day care fee is payable. The kindergarten term fee will then be calculated on a pro-rata basis in this instance.
3. In the event a casual long day care place is utilised on a child's kindergarten day, the long day care fee is charged and there is no refund on the Kindergarten term fee for that day.

Family Day Care

1. The Family Day Care Service Leader will determine in conjunction with contractors the appropriate fee schedule in consideration of but not limited to the following;
 - Qualifications
 - Years of experience
 - Professional development
 - Physical environment
 - Location
 - Mentoring capacity
 - Meals/travel arrangements
 - Programming contributions
 - Professional environment
 - Demand of service
2. Fees and levies will be reviewed in May each year for implementation in July.
3. Educators will require families to initial a record of payment for cash payments.
4. The Coordination Unit staff will provide payment summaries to contractors once the Child Care Management System (CCMS) processing is complete. These will detail the amounts responsible for collection.

Implementation Guidelines

1. The Coordination Unit staff will provide families with a fee schedule and fee estimate.
2. Services will not commence for families until all signed placement agreements are returned to the coordination unit office.
3. Parents/guardians are to make payments in accordance with their placement agreements.
4. Contractors will advise Coordination Unit staff immediately once it is identified payments have not been received.
5. A cease of care notice to families for outstanding accounts not paid will be issued by Greater Shepparton City Council.
6. In the event payment is not received by the due date outlined by the Cease of Care notice, services will be immediately ceased at all Council Children's Services (excluding Kindergartens).
7. Educators will keep a record of family payments of cash only transactions (internet payments and bank deposits require no further documentation).

Debt Recovery

1. The Coordination Unit will pursue all debts from contractors in relation to overpayment of contract payments associated with government funds, such as Child Care Subsidy.
2. Greater Shepparton Family Day Care will cease care of families in Family Day Care who incur an outstanding debt at any other of Council's Children's Services which include long day care or occasional care and other family day care educators until such time that the debt is repaid or a payment plan is implemented.
3. Families will not be able to transfer care to other educators unless all outstanding amounts are paid.
4. Outstanding payments not recovered prior to cease of care will be forwarded to Council's debt collection agency. Debt recovery charges will be added to the family account.
5. If a recommendation to cease chasing the debt by Council's debt collection agency is made the service will discuss this with the contractor.
6. Contractors wanting Council to pursue debt outside of the recommendation of Council's finance department and debt collection agency will have future costs of debt collection, invoiced to them directly.

Additional Charges and Levies

1. Parents are required to pay the full fee including the levy (less the amount of Child Care Subsidy they are entitled to receive) to the educator. The parent levy is deducted from the Child Care Subsidy paid directly to the educator by the coordination unit. This levy is reviewed annually.
2. An educator levy is charged weekly to the contractor and collected fortnightly through deductions.

Related Policies

- Enrolment and Orientation
- Concerns and Complaints

National Quality Standards –7.1.2

Education and Care Services National Regulations – 168(2) (n), 172

Sources and Reference Tools

- Management – Children and Youth Services, Greater Shepparton City Council
- Department of Education and Training
- Kindergarten Funding Guide 2016
- Child Care Provider Handbook
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Framework

Reviewed: October 2017

Next review due: October 2019

Amended June 2020:

- changes made to reference Child Care Benefit to Child Care Subsidy
- updated Children's Services Schedule of Fees/Sources and Reference Tools