PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY
Quality early education and care provides the foundation for children’s development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our Service is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

As an approved childcare service, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to reduce fees to eligible families. Our fee structure is based on our ability to provide the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations, Family Assistance Law, the Australian Taxation Office and guidelines contained in the Child Care Provider Handbook.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

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|  QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP |
| 7.1 | Governance  | Governance supports the operation of a quality service  |
| 7.1.2 | Management Systems  | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service  |
| 7.1.3 | Roles and Responsibilities  | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service  |

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| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS |
| 168 | Education and care services must have policies and procedures |

RELATED POLICIES

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| Arrival and Departure Policy Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Governance PolicyEnrolment Policy Governance Policy  | Orientation of New Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Termination of Enrolment Policy  |

PURPOSE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of Waratah All Year Care’s fee structure ensuring children’s fees are paid on time and that there are consequences for failure to pay fees on time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to management and families of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for education and care to be provided for their child. We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all Child Care Subsidy legislative requirements. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure childcare funding is administered appropriately. Our Service ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family.

The fee structure of the Service includes:

General Fees

* Fees are charged daily and vary depending on the Child Care Subsidy (which replaced the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate in 2018). The Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to Waratah All Year Care which will be used as a fee reduction (Visible on statement).
* Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child include:
1. The age of the child (must be 13 years or under and not attending secondary school),
2. The child meeting immunisation requirements,
3. The individual, or their partners, meeting the residency requirements.
* Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
1. Combined family income,
2. Activity level of parents,
3. Type of child care Service.
* Fees must be kept in advance of a child’s attendance.
* Fees are to be paid in accordance to the agreement set out in the debit success form filled in on enrolment, or through cash and bank transfer (if agreement is reached between management and account holder)
* Fees are payable in advance for every day that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes pupil free days, sick days, and family holidays but excludes periods when the Service is closed.
* Fees are charged at full days only (regardless of the actual attendance hours on any day)(excluding Saturday’s which are charged at a half an hour rate for the time in care).
* Families may choose to book casual and or permanent days.

Payment of fees

* Fees are set up using debit success.
* Families will be issued with a fee statement on a weekly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements.
* A dishonour fee may apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees.

Financial Difficulties

* If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the approved provider.

Absences from Service

* Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session
* Families must still pay the ‘gap’ fee to the Service if their child is unable to attend. [Fee charging practices are commercial decisions made by each childcare service and are not a matter regulated by the Family Assistance Law. Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment]
* Under the Child Care Subsidy families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances. (See Child Care Subsidy Handbook).
* Allowable absences can be taken for any reason, including public holidays and when children are sick.
* Records will be kept by the Service for each absence.
* Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via [myGov](https://my.gov.au/LoginServices/main/login?execution=e2s1).
* In a period of local emergency, such as bushfire or pandemic, and our Service is temporarily shut down on public health advice, families may be provided with additional absence days as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

Failure to Pay

* If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder will be issued after one week and then again after two weeks if the fees are still outstanding. A child’s position will be terminated if payment has not been made after three weeks, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child’s position. At this time the Service will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.

Late Fees

* Waratah All Year Care is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. This is a breach in the Education and Care Regulations.
* It is unacceptable to pick children up late from Waratah All Year Care. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time. Currently, a fee of $10.00 per 10 minutes block or part thereof will be incurred by the family.
* A review of the child’s enrolment will occur where families are consistently late with fee payment.

Change of Fees

* Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of four weeks written notice is given to all families.

Responsibility of Management

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

* ensuring all families are aware of our *Payment of Fees Policy*
* ensuring enrolment information of includes the parent/guardian’s Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth and the child’s CRN and date of birth
* providing families with regular statement of fees payable
* notifying families of any overdue fees
* providing families with reminder letters as required
* terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid
* discussing fee payment with families if required

Source

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/child_care_provider_handbook_0.pdf>

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Early Childhood and Care* <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-0>

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs*

Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (~~2017).~~ (2020)

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

REVIEW

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| POLICY REVIEWED | January 2021 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | January 2022 |
| MODIFICATIONS | * Policy statement added
* Implementation information added
* CCS section included
* Absences section added
* Responsibility for Management expanded
* Resources and information section added
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| POLICY REVIEWED | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS | NEXT REVIEW DATE |
| December 2018 | * New policy created for new service
 | December 2019 |
| December 2020 | * Inserted page breaks for appendices.
* Grammar, punctuation and spelling edited.
* Sources/references alphabetised.
* Minor formatting for consistency throughout policy.
* ‘Related policies’ alphabetised.
 | December 2021 |