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MELBOURNE CAMPUSES

 Bundoora
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REGIONAL CAMPUSES

 Bendigo
 Albury-Wodonga
 Mildura
 Shepparton

FEES POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 7

Name of Policy	Fees Policy
Scope	Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, Administrative and Reception Staff, parents/guardians
Legislation	A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7
Definitions	Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. Approved Provider - Manager, Family & Children’s Services LTU – La Trobe University Late Fee: A charge that may be imposed by the Approved Provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the Centre.

POLICY STATEMENT

La Trobe University Community Children’s Centre is an approved, long-day centre operating 10.75 hours per day, five days per week. Some families accessing this program are entitled to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), through the Commonwealth Department of Human Services (DHS). La Trobe University Community Children’s Centre is committed to implementing a fair system for fee payment, including when responding to non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts, maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians and advising users of the service about relevant government supports.

RELATED POLICIES

Service policies

Complaints and Grievances Policy
Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Enrolment and Orientation Policy

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- determining fee schedule, in consultation with the LTU Finance Department
- reviewing and implementing this policy and procedure
- ensuring system is in place for monitoring fees, including that fees are collected and receipted
- notifying parents/guardians within 28 days of any proposed changes to the fee schedule or the way in which the fees are collected
- considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring all parents/guardians are provided with information about fees when enrolling their child and ensuring that information about fees is readily accessible at the service
- ensuring all relevant information and relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions are collected where applicable
- ensuring that the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* is upheld by all staff, including in regard to financial and other information received
- ensuring a notice outlining fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to La Trobe University Community Children's Centre
- informing the Approved Provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service
- referring parents/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider

Educators and Administrative Staff are responsible for:

- informing the Approved Provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service
- referring parents/guardians' questions in relation to this fees/payment of fees to the Approved Provider or Administration staff

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- paying fees on time, including by making payment one week in advance
- reading and complying with the La Trobe University Community Children's Centre 'Information for Users and Conditions of Enrolment'
- notifying the Approved Provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees
- providing appropriate documentation to the Administration staff to access Child Care Subsidy

EVALUATION

To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to flexibility and efficiency of payment options and procedures for the collection of fees
- monitor the implementation, compliance, and complaints in relation to this policy
- monitor the number of families/children excluded from the service because of their inability to pay fees
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy, and best practice
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Fee and Enrolment Information

REVIEW DATE: REVIEWED JUNE 2023

Attachment 1; Fee and Enrolment Information

1. Fee Schedule

- 1.1 Approved Provider will provide a minimum of 28 days' notice before making any changes to fee schedule.
- 1.2 Fee schedule changes are made on an annual basis and will have a start date from January.

2. Enrolment

- 2.1 On acceptance of an enrolment, families will be offered a regular pattern of use (Complying Written Agreement :CWA); in the All Day Care programs, attendance patterns may be between one and five days and an early start (7.30 am) or 8.15 am start, in the ASELCC Specialist Program attendance patterns are three days and in the Sessional Care program attendance patterns may be between one and five days, multiple or single sessions per day with an early start of 7.30 am.
- 2.2 It is the family's responsibility to determine if they are eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and apply online. Full fees are payable until CCS is received by the Centre. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-claim>
- 2.3 Request to change an enrolment by increasing or swapping days is subject to the two-week notice period and can only be accommodated where a vacancy exists, and licensing requirements can be maintained. Families will be asked to give notice via writing or completion of the appropriate form. If the request is unable to be fulfilled, the request will be recorded on the internal waiting list and the request will be offered if it is available in the future.
- 2.4 Request to cease enrolment is subject to the two-week notice period. Families will be asked to give notice via writing or completion of the appropriate form.
- 2.5 The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) cannot be claimed after the child's last day of actual attendance. For example: if a family provides the Centre with 2 weeks' notice ceasing their child's place (as required) and consequently do not use this childcare, they will be charged full fee.
- 2.6 For Families in the All-Day Care or Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre programs, Casual/Additional days can be booked providing a vacancy exists and licensing requirements can be maintained. Additional days will be charged as per the current fee schedule.
- 2.7 For families in the Sessional Care program, casual/additional sessions can be booked providing a vacancy exists and licensing requirements can be maintained. Additional sessions will be charged as per the current fee schedule.

3. Payment of fees

- 3.1 Fees are to be paid at least one week in advance.
- 3.2 Statements are forwarded to parents/guardians weekly. All accounts must be paid in advance regularly and a nil balance achieved
- 3.3 Payment is made utilising the preferred method of the family. Parents can choose from multiple methods, including: EFT & credit card at Centre before 12.30pm, Online payments using LTU Onestop , LTU Salary sacrificing or After Tax deductions, or Centrepay <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/centrepay/how-use-it/set-deductions>
- 3.4 Families may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to support with payment of fees. For more information on CCS, please see <https://my.gov.au>

4. Absences

- 4.1 CCS defines an absence as "when a child is absent on a day on which care would otherwise have been provided if the child was not absent and the family was charged for that care" <http://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/1/1/a/05>

4.2 Through the CCS, each child is allowed an initial 42 absence days from care across all approved childcare services each financial year, which can be used for any reason and without the need to produce supporting documentation (includes public holidays). CCS is payable for any absence days up to 42 days regardless of the reason for the absence

4.3 CCS cannot be utilised for the following;

fees are charged to reserve a place for a child who has not yet commenced care,

fees are charged for a period after a child has already ceased attending care, or

the child has already attended their maximum number of CCS eligible hours in previous sessions in the same week

For further information on CCS and absences: <http://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/1/1/a/05>

5. Short Term Absence procedure

5.1 The Short-Term Absence procedure can be utilised by LTU staff and students to secure their child/ren's place at the Centre during a short-term absence (up to 26 weeks), related to their LTU work or study experience.

5.2 For LTU staff or students who are anticipating that they will be absent as part of their work or study experience and who choose to access this procedure, fees are charged for the first 4 weeks of care (based on their regular booking) to reserve child/ren's place until their return to the Centre. Families must give notice in writing 4 weeks prior.

5.3 This procedure is subject to the Manager's discretion, and availability of places across the Centre.

6. Compassionate Circumstances

6.1 If a family experiences substantive difficulty, for example illness or injury, the Centre may waive fees after the initial 4-week period and/or only charge for days that the family utilised the Centre. This arrangement is made at the discretion of the Manager and Senior Management Team.

7. General Fee Information

7.1 Childcare fees are charged for days booked, irrespective of whether the child attends the Centre

7.2 Fees are not charged for days that the Centre is closed

7.3 Summer Period bookings;

7.3.1 The Summer Period is between first week of December and last week of February.

7.3.2 During the Summer Period families can have a different booking arrangement to suit their leave/holiday plans, without impacting their permanent booking.

7.3.3 Families can vary their booking arrangement as often as needed with a minimum of one weeks' notice.

7.3.4 Families will pay for all absences during the Summer Period.

7.3.5 The Summer Period applies to all families in the All-Day-Care and Sessional Care Programs, and not to families accessing the ASELCC programs (Inclusive or Specialist).

8. Outstanding Debts

8.1 Non-payment of fees may result in the University taking further action to recover the debts.

8.2 LTU students may have sanctions placed on their student enrolment at La Trobe University until the debt is recovered.

9. Late Fines

9.1 Parents/guardians who are still in the Centre after 6.15 pm will incur a late fee of \$50.00 for the first 10 minutes, or part thereof, per child and \$50.00 per 10 minutes, or part thereof, per child thereafter. CCS is not claimable for this.