

A-4 PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Tanderra OOSH sets fees in accordance with its annual budget in order to meet the income required to develop and maintain a quality service for children and families. We strive to ensure that our service is affordable and accessible to families in our community. The Approved Provider ratifies the budget annually, or as necessary, and monitors it carefully throughout the year.

PROCEDURE

a) Annual Administration Fee

- Upon enrolment, each family using the service for before and after school care is required to pay an annual, non-refundable administration charge to support the cost of managing family records, accounts and all associated administration costs. Thereafter, the annual administration fee will be applied on re-enrolment, when families re-enrol their children for the next school year.
- This amount will be pre-determined by the Approved Provider and reviewed on a regular basis.

b) Membership

- The service is a project of the Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Co-operative Ltd and as such, families enrolling their child in the service are bound by the rules of the Co-operative.
- Families are entitled to join as members of the Co-operative and have voting rights at any General Meeting held.
- For those wishing to take up membership, an annual fee is payable.

c) Payment of Fees

- Fees are charged per session. The amount payable is the gap fee after any childcare subsidy or any other relevant entitlement or subsidy that the family has been approved for has been calculated.
- Fees are charged following the week of care. Families will be provided with a Customer Account Statement showing the amount charged, the subsidies applied, the sessions attended, amounts previously paid, any absences and other information required as per Regulation 168.

d) Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Families wishing to receive Child Care Subsidy must complete the necessary registrations through Centrelink and/or their MyGov account. Full details can be found here: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy>
- To have CCS applied to their account, families must provide the service with the Customer Reference Numbers for each eligible child and for the parent to whom the children are linked for CCS. Families must notify the service of their intention to claim CCS at the time of enrolment (via the online enrolment form) or if later, in writing or via email to the service.
- Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to the service and families are required to pay the gap fee calculated for each week of care. All rules and requirements for the administration of CCS are binding for the service and families. This includes the provisions for allowable and additional absence days.
- Some families may be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy payments if they meet the criteria. Additional Subsidies available for application directly through Centrelink are: The Grandparent Subsidy, Transition to Work Subsidy and Temporary Financial Hardship Subsidy. The Child Wellbeing Subsidy provides extra help for families with a child who is vulnerable or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, or a child in formal foster care, kinship care or in the care of the state/territory or Minister. Families wishing to be considered for the Wellbeing Subsidy should approach the Nominated Supervisor of the service, who is responsible for applying for the subsidy on families' behalf.

More details on ACCS can be found here:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy>

e) Bookings and cancellations

- Families need to make bookings in advance for the sessions required. This can be done either on a casual basis (via the Kidsoft Parent Portal or by direct application to the service) or families can request permanent bookings at the time of enrolment or at any time throughout the year. Permanent bookings can only be made or changed by service staff and not via the parent portal.
- Casual bookings can be cancelled by contacting the service. If the cancellation occurs prior to the day of care, the cancellation will not incur the session fee. However, if cancelling on the same day of the care, the session fee will still be charged.
- Permanent bookings can be cancelled by contacting the service and providing two (2) weeks written notice.

Note: CCS cannot be paid for any sessions before the first time or after the last time a child physically attends the service. For this reason, full fees will be charged for any absence days before a child's first day and/or after their last physical day of attendance. Families can seek further information regarding the administration of CCS by visiting:

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/child-care-subsidy>

f) Absences

- Fees are payable for family holidays and sick days if those days fall on a day that a child is booked into the service. Pupil free days and public holidays which fall within the school term are also payable where children have a permanent booking.
- Permanent bookings for before and after school care are valid for the state school terms only. During the school holidays, vacation care operates, and families can book the care they require for each school holiday period.
- During the vacation care period, all days booked are payable regardless of absence for any reason.

g) Service closure

- No fee is charged while the service is closed over the Christmas/New Year period.

h) Methods of Payment

- Fees and all payable charges are paid via our Direct Debit System, iDebitPro. This is included in the online enrolment process through the Kidsoft Parent Portal. Families can change their direct debit details at any time via the Kidsoft parent portal. Parents can elect for fees to be paid on a weekly or fortnightly basis from a bank or credit card account. All charges payable including childcare fees, the annual administration fee, late fees, excursions or in-house events are all paid via the direct debit system.
- Families will be given a minimum of fourteen days' notice of any changes to the way in which fees are collected (Regulation 172).
- All gap fees (the full fee payable less any deducted subsidies) must be paid by families by electronic means, in accordance with regulatory requirements.
- Methods of payment other than direct debit, will only be considered on direct application to the Nominated Supervisor for special circumstances such as when accounts are paid by another party who is not the enrolled parent such as a grandparent, organization or government department.
- Families nominating a bank account for direct debit payments will not pay any fee for each occasion that the direct debit is transacted. Families who choose to pay via a credit card will be liable for a transaction fee charged. No Amex or Diners Club cards will be accepted.
- Should a direct debit payment fail, the family will be informed by the service. The family will be liable to pay the failed payment fee for each failed transaction and the following scheduled direct debit payment will then include the previous amount owing as well as the concurrent fees and the failed payment charge. Should this situation be repeated, the service will enact its debt recovery policy.

i) Debt recovery

- The Approved Provider reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the service.
- 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 will be followed up as below:
 - ✓ The family will be notified that fees are overdue, giving 7 days for payment. An overdue fee may be added to the invoice.
 - ✓ If payment is not received by the specified date, the family will be contacted by email or in writing and requested to pay in full within a further 7 days or to contact the Nominated Supervisor to discuss a payment plan.
 - ✓ Failure to pay in full or contact the Centre to discuss a payment plan by the date set out in the letter or email will result in a final letter notifying the family that unless payment is made within 5 working days, or a payment plan entered into, the child will be unable to attend the service.
 - ✓ If a signed payment plan is not adhered to, a follow-up process will commence at point 2.
 - ✓ In the case of unresolved debts, 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.

j) Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulty, a suitable payment plan may be arranged for a specific period of time. The family should contact the Nominated Supervisor to discuss this and other possible avenues of financial support.

k) Late collection fee

- The service operates from 6.30am – 6.30pm during before and after school care and 7.00am – 6.30pm during vacation care. Staff are unable to accept children in the service outside of these hours. Should children be present after the closing time, a late fee of \$20 per family per 15-minute block or part thereof will apply.
- The hours and days of operation of the service will be displayed prominently within the service (Regulation 173).
- In circumstances that are beyond the control of families, for example, weather and traffic accidents, which may result in them arriving late to collect their child, the Nominated Supervisor will have 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 contact the family to discuss this.

l) Search Fee

- If your child does not arrive as expected in after school care and Tanderra OOSH has not been notified, a search fee may be applied per family. The Search Fee rate will be regularly reviewed by SNCC Management, along with the fee rate.

m) Confidentiality

- All information in relation to fees will be kept in strict confidence. Members of staff or the Approved Provider will not discuss individual names and details openly. Information will only be available to the nominated persons required to take action, for example, to initiate debt recovery.
- Families may access their own account records at any time, or particulars of fees will be available in writing to families upon request.

n) Increase of fees

- The fees are set by the Approved Provider in order 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 days' notice of any fee increase (R 172).

CONSIDERATIONS

National Quality Standards

7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage the risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defining, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011

R168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
R170	Policies and procedures to be followed
R171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
R172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

Related Policies / Forms

Delivery and collection of Children policy
Enrolment and orientation policy
Governance and Management Policy
Confidentiality Policy
Family Information Booklet

ENDORSEMENT AND REVIEWS

Date	Action
April 2023	Submitted for approval
June 2023	Approved by SNCC Board
June 2026	Next Review Date