FEES POLICY

**Rationale**

The Waikerie Children’s Centre Inc. aims to provide a quality service at an affordable price to eligible parents. The Governing Council will set fees each year on completion of the annual budget. These will be set according to the Centre’s required income necessary to provide quality service. The Governing Council will review fees to ensure viability of the service.

**Hours of operation**

The Centre as a whole operates between the hours of 7.45 a.m. and 5.45 p.m. Monday to Friday each week. The session times for each service are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PRESCHOOL</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school Sessions are offered on four days: Monday - Thursday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afternoon session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full day session</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>CHILDCARE</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child care is available on all days: Monday - Friday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sessional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunchtime care</td>
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</tbody>
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**Fees for Preschool and Childcare**

Fees charged will depend on whether childcare only is used, pre-school only is used, or a combination of childcare and pre-school is used. Childcare and fees will be charged in arrears.

Pre-school fees are invoiced at the beginning of each term and are due at the end of week 3.
Fees are set and recorded in the Governing Council minutes, and the Parent Handbook will be updated accordingly.

Please note: If you are experiencing difficulties paying fees, please see the Director before fees are overdue. All matters will be handled in the strictest confidence.

How policy will be implemented (Specific Policies & Procedures):

1. **Procedure**

   Fees are determined by the Director, the Finance Sub-committee and endorsed by the Governing Council. The Centre will give two (2) weeks notice of any fee changes, unless circumstances beyond our control occur. e.g. Government changes in direction, policy or the Government itself changes.

2. **Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate**

   The Australian Government offers 2 types of financial assistance for families using child care: the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate. Application for Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) is made through the Department of Human Services (DHS). The DHS will establish the level of assistance paid to the parent which is determined by the family’s total gross income. To receive the CCR you must be eligible for Child Care Benefit and meet the criteria. This can be paid to you in a variety of ways and can also be paid to our centre as a fee reduction.

   **Parent Responsibility for Child Care Benefit**

   - Parents need to apply for Child Care Benefit through the Department of Human Services by phoning 136150 or by visiting the office in person.
   - Parents need to sign daily attendance records at the child care service.
   - It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the DHS of any changes that might affect their Child Care Benefit as specified by the Child Care Benefit Guidelines, e.g. change in income. Phone 136150 or languages other than English Phone 131220.

3. **Childcare Bond**

   All parents enrolling children for child care are required to pay accounts weekly and will be required to pay a three (3) week bond based on expected usage e.g. full-time, or part-time and sign a fee agreement prior to commencement of care. (Parents eligible for Child Care Benefit pay the parent component only.)

   The bond will be repayable, minus any outstanding charges upon your child ceasing care at this Centre.

4. **Payment of accounts**

   Fees for child care will be charged and payable for all care booked. This covers employment of educators in anticipation of numbers enrolled each day.

   Accounts will be issued once a week - clients pay for the week they have just used - payable within 7 days or as otherwise negotiated with the Director. Invoices can be emailed or received as a paper copy.
Payments can be made directly at the reception desk, or via direct deposit to the Centre’s bank account. If the office is unattended, payments can be made by placing money in an envelope, which is provided at the desk. The envelope must be clearly labelled with your name, and the amount of fees enclosed and placed in the locked payment box provided. A receipt will be issued for all payments.

Any adjustments to fees will be made on the following account.

This is a non-profit, self-funded Centre, therefore prompt payment of fees is required to enable this service to meet its financial commitments. e.g. wages, children’s resources and centre running costs.

5. **OUTSTANDING ACCOUNTS**

If clients are having difficulty paying their account they can meet with the Director to discuss an alternative payment plan. The plan will be documented and signed by both parties.

*Procedure:*

One week overdue
- Reminder stamp on accounts

Two weeks overdue
- A written reminder will be included with the weekly account, indicating that care could be cancelled if the account is not paid.

Three weeks overdue
- If no payment or contact regarding the account is received at the beginning of the 3rd week, a phone call or personal approach is made to the account holder requesting payment, including the offer of a payment plan.
- The family will also be notified that failure to pay will result in the bond being used to offset outstanding fees and the family will need to pay a new bond if wishing to return to the Centre.
- If the bond is used to settle the account in full, offer for care is withdrawn.

6. **Late Fee**

To maintain staff ratios for licensing, it is essential that booked times are adhered to.

Late collection of children **INCURS STAFF COSTS** which will need to be passed on to the parents concerned.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

A late fee of $1.00 per minute for the first 15 minutes and $2.00 per minute thereafter will be imposed after the end of the care sessions booked.

If a child is still at the centre half an hour after closing time and no-one can be contacted, the child will be referred to Crisis Care in consultation with the local Police. In such circumstances all local solutions will be explored in the first instance to ensure the safety and well being of the child.
(When possible please allow yourself enough time to greet your child, collect bags and speak with the staff.)

7. Withdrawal Notification

For efficient management of the centre a minimum of three (3) weeks written notice is required when withdrawing your child.

8. Holding Fees and Absences

Holding fees are fees charged of families to reserve their place in a centre when their child/ren are absent. Holding fees generally apply to long term absences, holidays or extended illness only.

Illness
When a Doctor's Certificate is produced due to sickness, 100% of the fee is charged for the first week (calendar week) of the child's absence. If the illness extends beyond the first week, 50% of the fee is charged.
NB: Child Care Benefit eligibility will apply.

Holidays
A reduction of 50% of fees will apply if one (1) weeks notice is given in writing for a maximum of 42 days each financial year.

9. Notification of Changes

Whilst the Centre will be as flexible as possible, it is the responsibility of parents to notify changes in your income and financial circumstances, to the Department of Human Services.

Please Note
The Department of Human Services will acquit each entitlement against the family's taxation records. Please speak with the Department of Human Services if you have an underpayment or over payment.

Casual and Emergency Care
N.B. All casual and emergency care must be paid for before commencing the session.

10. Confidentially

All information regarding children and their families is confidential.

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