

Fees Policy

Raleigh St is committed to providing responsible financial management of the Service, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable business, while keeping fees at the lowest possible level. We aim to provide a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts.

National Quality Standard (NQS)-

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

Education and Care National Regulation/Law-

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

Related Policies-

- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Governance and Management of the Service Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy

The CoM and/or Director are responsible for:

- reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements
- developing a fee policy that will keep fees affordable while maintaining service viability
- ensuring that funded places for children in the kindergarten program are given priority in the Kindergarten Room
- considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families

- clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally sensitive way, and in the family's first language where possible
- complying with Raleigh St's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees
- notifying families within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected (Regulation 172(2))
- ensuring a notice outlining fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main foyer
- providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement
- collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable
- collecting and receipting fees
- collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable

Staff are responsible for:

- informing the CoM of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees
- referring families with questions in relation to this policy to the Director or CoM

Families are responsible for:

- reading all the information provided by Raleigh St regarding payment of fees (refer to Attachments 1, 2 and 3)
- signing, returning, and complying with the Fee Payment Agreement
- notifying the CoM or Director if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees

Attachments-

- Attachment 1: Fee information for families
- Attachment 2: Statement of Fees and Charges – Fee schedule
- Attachment 3: Fee Payment Agreement

Appendix 1: Background and legislation-

Background

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per capita funding as a contribution towards the costs of the four-year-old kindergarten program. Income from other sources, primarily fees, is required to meet all the additional costs incurred by the service in the delivery of the children's program.

DET requires that funded services have a comprehensive written fees policy in place, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. The policy must include a written

statement about the fees to be charged, as required under Regulation 168(2)(n), and the payment process.

All families must be informed of daily fees at the time of enrolment. The Kindergarten Guide (refer to Sources) outlines the criteria to be covered in the policy.

Legislation and standards-

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)

Sources-

- The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is available under early childhood / service providers on the DEECD website: www.education.vic.gov.au)
- The constitution of Raleigh Street Community Children's Centre

Review-

Policy reviewed-	Modifications-	CoM endorsement date-	Next review date-
May 2020	Policy created for RSCCC based on CC Desktop template- JR & KC	May 2021	May 2022
June 2022	Alterations to daily and weekly fees and new covering period dates added	July 2022	June 2023

Attachment 1

Fee information for families

How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, the CoM sets fees each financial year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service
- the level of government funding provided for the program
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar services in the area
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards
- reasonable expenditure on improvements and maintenance of equipment and facilities to ensure a high level of amenity and safety of Raleigh St and to ensure enrolment levels remain high

Other charges

Other charges levied by Raleigh St are included on the Statement of Fees and Charges. These include:

- **Bond:** This payment secures a child's place at the service and is payable on acceptance of enrolment. The bond is equivalent to two weeks of the usual fee payment for each child attending. The bond is retained for the duration of the enrolment of the child(ren) and returned upon leaving Raleigh St. Families experiencing financial hardship should discuss any difficulties with the Director.
- **Excursion/service event charge:** This additional charge is required to cover the cost of excursions or special events that occur throughout the year in response to emerging children's program needs and interests. Affordability and relevance to the children's interests and the service program will be taken into consideration before a decision is made that will require families to pay this additional charge (refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy). Events that are planned ahead are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget and do not incur this additional charge.
- **Late collection charge:** The CoM reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are late in collecting a child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by the CoM, details of which can be found in Attachment 2.

Statement of fees and charges

A statement of fees and charges will be provided to families on enrolment, and whenever fees change.

Subsidies

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

CCS is an Australian Government payment that can assist eligible families with the costs of childcare at an approved or registered care provider. Raleigh St is an approved care provider with the Family Assistance Office (FAO). The amount payable is set by the Australian Government. Further details are available at: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/families or telephone 136 150.

Payment of fees

- Upon enrolment, families will have been issued with a username and password to set up their payment details and view their fees account in KidsXap
- Raleigh St uses KidsXap, a Child Care Subsidy System used for tracking fees, subsidies and payments
- Families are expected to become familiar with this application and keep track of their fees account via this portal/app
- Invoices will be sent to families to their nominated email address on a fortnightly basis and payments are debited from the account by a direct debit arrangement between the family and a third party (QuickPay) that deducts the fees outstanding on your last invoice each fortnight
- The direct debit occurs on the Friday following your last invoice date, and families are invoiced for fees in arrears
- It is the family's responsibility to inform Raleigh St if invoices are not being received, or the nominated email address has changed
- Fees are payable by direct debit only
- The nominated account holder is responsible to ensure that sufficient funds are available in the account to cover each fortnight's payment
- An \$8.50 dishonour fee is charged by QuickPay if the direct debit fails due to insufficient funds. In addition to a failed payment fee, **there are fees if you nominate a credit card facility to pay fees- 1.8% of the payment amount for Visa or Mastercard, and 3.6% for Amex or Diners Club cards**
- Direct Debit from a savings account does not incur fees

Families experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the Director to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The Privacy and Confidentiality Policy of Raleigh St will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

Unpaid fees

If fees are not paid by the due date, the following steps will be taken:

- An initial reminder letter will be sent to families with a specified payment date and will include information on a range of support options available for the family
- Where payment is still not received, families will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan
- Should the family fail to respond to the meeting request or make payment the Director will notify the Committee of Management. A second and final letter will be issued notifying families that the child's place at the Raleigh St may be withdrawn unless payment is made, or a payment plan is entered into within a specified period of time. This letter will also include information on a range of support options available for the family
- The Committee of Management will continue to offer support and will reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector
- If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place, families will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing

Refund of fees

Fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the Committee of Management). There will be no refund of fees in the following circumstances:

- a child's short-term illness
- public holidays
- family holiday during operational times
- closure of the service for one or more days when a qualified educator is absent, and a qualified reliever is not available
- closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

Fees are not charged when the centre is closed for a professional development day (1 day a year) nor for the setup and pack down days that occur at the beginning and end of each year (2 days a year).

Notification of fee changes during the financial year

Fees are reviewed at the beginning of each financial year in line with wages increases. Any fee increases at any other times of the year are only ever considered in exceptional circumstances e.g. if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

Parents/guardians will be notified two weeks in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

Attachment 2

Raleigh Street Community Children's Centre Statement of Fees and Charges

Fee schedule 2022/23

Covering period 4 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Hours: 10.5 hours per day

Daily Fee	138.00
Weekly Fee (attending 5 days)	680.00

Late collection charge

We request that children are collected by 5:45pm to allow time for staff to pack-up the centre prior to their shift finishing at 6pm.

The following late fees apply from 6pm:

\$5 for any part of the first 5 minutes

\$10 for 5-10 minutes

\$15 for 10-15 minutes

\$1 each minute after 6:15pm

The late fee is determined by the CoM and administered by the Director.

Attachment 3

Fee Payment Agreement 2022/23

Please complete this form and return to Raleigh Street Community Children's Centre

Fee payment contract

Child's full name: _____

Parent's/guardian's full name: _____

- I/we agree to pay fees two weeks in advance.
- I/we understand that fees are non-refundable.
- I/we acknowledge that if fees are not paid two weeks in advance, the Committee of Management will implement the late payment of fees procedures, as outlined in the Fees Policy, which could result in the withdrawal of my/our child's place at the service.
- I/we agree that if my/our financial circumstances change and I/we am/are unable to pay as agreed, I/we will immediately notify the Director to discuss alternative payment options.
- I/we acknowledge that I/we have received and read the service's Fee information for families, which outlines the procedure for payment of fees.
- I/we agree that if we no longer require a place for my/our child/children, we will provide 4 weeks' notice and will continue to pay fees for this notice period, regardless of whether my/our child/children attend(s) or not.
- In the event that I/we withdraw our child(ren) attending the 4-year-old kindergarten program from the Centre after the start of term 4, we agree to pay fees to the end of the calendar year.

Signature (parent/guardian):

Date:
