

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Document Name:	Management of service fees
Review Dates:	November 2021; July 2023
Review Cycle:	3 yearly
Approved By:	Director
Approval Date:	26 February 2018; 11 July 2023

MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE FEES

1. POLICY STATEMENT AND/OR PURPOSE

At Catholic Early Learning and Care (CELIC), we strive to provide high quality care and value for money for the children who attend our services and their families/carers. The long-term viability of our childcare operations is essential to our mission of supporting the families within our Diocese. Our goal is to operate in a financially responsible manner that benefits children, staff and families by providing quality care, continuing employment and affordable fees at each service. The collection of fees and management of debts is performed in an ethical and efficient manner to ensure the quality of care provided is not affected by non-payment of fees.

2. APPLICATION

This procedure applies to all Catholic Early Learning and Care Services in the Diocese of Cairns.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 Setting of Fees

Fees will be reviewed by management annually at the end of each calendar year and will take into consideration affordability for families, local demand and economic conditions, and the level of quality provided by the service. Fees will not be charged to account holders during periods of closure including public holidays. Additional fees may be charged for enrolment fees, delayed enrolment start fees, late collection of children, late payment, debt collection costs or any other fees determined appropriate by management and/or contained within the terms and conditions of each enrolment.

3.2 Notification of Current Fee Schedules

Nominated Supervisors will be advised of changes resulting from the annual review before the end of each calendar year. Fee schedules for each service will be published on the Catholic Early Learning and Care website. Changes to website fee schedules will be published at least 14 days before any new fee comes into effect. Amounts, notice periods and any other terms and conditions specified in the published fee schedules are to be observed by nominated supervisors and those administering fees at each service.

3.3 Charging of Fees

Fees will be charged weekly in arrears. Account holders can view their transactions at any time using the OWNA app on their personal device. The OWNA system automatically creates invoices Monday of each week.

3.4 Payment of Fees

As a condition of enrolment, fees will be collected weekly for the prior week's charges. Payments are initiated manually by CELIC Tuesday of each week. Other payment arrangements may be negotiated at the discretion of Catholic Early Learning and Care. Failure to pay fees within the time prescribed is a breach of enrolment and may result in withdrawal of care until the account is paid in full or a payment plan is negotiated.

3.5 Negotiated Payment Plans

A payment plan for unpaid fees may be negotiated at the discretion of Catholic Early Learning and Care. Failure to adhere to a negotiated payment plan may result in termination of enrolment and referral to a debt collection agency. Costs associated with debt collection will be recovered from the account holder.

3.6 Genuine Hardship Cases

Every effort will be made to assist families with genuine hardship circumstances. Pastoral care support, professional counselling and/or financial assistance from within the Diocese may be offered to families in need. Families requiring assistance should contact Central Administration to discuss their situation. Refer to *section 5. Enquiries* for contact details.

4. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Breaches or suspected breaches of this policy should be reported to the Central Administration office.

Investigations relating to a breach of this policy may occur, depending on the nature of the alleged breach. Responsibility for an investigation may be conducted internally or, in certain circumstances, may be referred to an independent investigator.

Where it is determined that a breach has occurred, the nature and gravity of the breach will be considered.

Action taken may include disciplinary processes including counselling or compulsory training, warnings or termination of employment. Some forms of inappropriate behaviour may also constitute a criminal offence that may be reported to external regulatory authorities.

5. ENQUIRIES

Catholic Early Learning and Care Director- admin@cclc.catholic.org.au

6. SEE ALSO

Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 - Regulation 168 (2) (n), 172
- Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011
- The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care 2009.
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999

7. APPROVAL



Alison Forster
Director
Catholic Early Learning and Care

Date: 11/07/2023