

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 44

KINDERGARTEN (VIC) PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations [regulation 162 (2)], the approved provider must ensure a comprehensive written fee policy is in place for the payment of fees and clearly communicate this policy with all families at time of enrolment.

Our Service is committed to supporting the Victorian Government’s Free Kindergarten initiative as part of the Best Start, Best Life reform.

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 SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION

Family Law Act 1975	Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015
Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015	Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005	Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (MARAM)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	
Family Assistance Law- Incorporating all related legislation for Child Care Provider Handbook in Appendix G https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook	

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RELATED POLICIES

Dealing with Complaints Policy Delivery of children to, and Collection from Education and Care Service Premises Free Kindergarten Enrolment Policy (Vic)	Governance Policy Orientation of Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
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PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for *Free Kinder* for funded kindergarten programs available at our Service

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, nominated supervisor and other management, educators, families, and children of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and how *Free Kinder* funding is applied for our kindergarten programs

We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all *Free Kinder* funding legislative requirements.

We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure all childcare funding is administered appropriately. Our Service ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family and abide by the Victorian Protective Security Standards (VPSS) and Australian Privacy Principles (APP).

FEES/FREE KINDER

- The Victorian Government will make *Free Kinder* payments to our Service to offset the parent fee component for a 15-hour program and is paid pro-rata from a child’s funding start date.
- Children must only receive funding for *Free Kinder* at one service. If a child attends more than one service that offers a funded kindergarten program (e.g., a sessional service for some days and a long day care service on other days), the family must nominate which service they will receive their funded kindergarten program and therefore their Free Kinder funding.

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- Our Service promotes participation of all children, particularly among children who require additional support, such as children with disability and Aboriginal children. Free or low-cost programs are available for eligible children through the Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) program.

KINDERGARTEN FEE DEPOSIT

- A kindergarten fee deposit of \$50.00 is to be paid to hold a child's funded kindergarten position at the Service. This fee will be refunded four weeks after commencement of kindergarten.
- The kindergarten fee deposit is non-refundable should the child not participate in the funded kindergarten program
- Kindergarten fee deposits may be waived for children who are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten (ESK).

LATE FEES

- Our Service is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. This is a breach in the Education and Care Regulations.
- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the Service. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the session.
- Currently, a fee of \$15.00 per 10 minutes block or part thereof will be incurred by the family.

TERMINATION OF ENROLMENT

- Parents are to provide **two weeks** written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the Service.
- If a child moves to another service during the kindergarten year, funding from Free Kinder will move with the child, with regular payments made to the new service for the remainder of the year.

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RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT

THE APPROVED PROVIDER AND NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- provide all families with access to our *Kindergarten Payment of Fees Policy*
- provide information to families of operating hours including term dates, planned closures and additional hours to account for closure [related to funded kindergarten programs]
- review this policy annually and in consultation with families/staff and other stakeholders
- ensure families are aware of payment options and procedures
- ensure families are not charged for incursions or regular excursions (e.g.; Bush Kinder)
- ensure families are notified of any additional charges – excursions/incursions in writing
- ensure any surplus funding is used to improve the quality of our funded kindergarten program and support engagement of families
- ensure that any funded child is recorded in KIMS
- adhere to the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* regarding financial and other information
- share or request information with other Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) under legislative principles of Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

TEACHERS/EDUCATORS AND OTHER STAFF WILL:

- read and adhere to the *Kindergarten Payment of Fees Policy*
- advise the Nominated Supervisor or management of any concerns or complaints regarding the management of kindergarten funding subsidy or grants raised by families

RESPONSIBILITY OF FAMILIES

- read and adhere to the *Kindergarten Payment of Fees Policy*
- provide the Service with the correct enrolment details to facilitate the *Free Kinder Funding*,
- provide proof of their child's immunisation status as per No Jab No Play legislation
- nominate and document which service their child will participate in to receive Free Kinder funding

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

- Ongoing review and evaluation of this policy will support the continuing development of the Service.
- Evaluation will involve all stakeholders
- The policy will be reviewed to reflect compliance with all related legislation, research and best practice.
- The development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) will form part of the reflection procedure.

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DEFINITIONS

Early Start Kindergarten	A funding program that enables eligible three-year old children to access up to 15 hours of kindergarten a week for two years before starting school. Eligible children must be three by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten and include those who are from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or are known to Child Protection or Child FIRST [Early Start Kindergarten]
Excursion/event fee	An additional fee charged to cover the costs for participation in a planned excursion where fees are required to cover transportation,
Free Kindergarten	Free Kinder is an initiative by the Victorian Government to support families access up to 15 hours of free kindergarten for three-year-old and four-year-old children in a funded service.
Kindergarten fee deposit	Payment to secure a position in a funded kindergarten program. This fee should not act as a barrier to enrolling families to our Service. The enrolment fee will be refunded four weeks after the child commences in a funded kindergarten program. If the child does not commence kindergarten the deposit will not be refunded

SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
 Australian Government Department of Education. Child Care Provider Handbook <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/resources/child-care-provider-handbook>
 Australian Government Services Australia. (2021). [Child Care Subsidy](#).
 Department of Education and Training. (2023). [The Kindergarten Funding Guide](#).
 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011). (Amended 2023).

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY:	Carol Czaplowski	Nominated Supervisor	
POLICY REVIEWED	JANUARY 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JANUARY 2025
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