KINDERGARTEN (VIC) PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, 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 the time of enrolment. Our Service is committed to supporting the Victorian Government's *Free Kinder* 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 NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION

Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017	Family Law Act 1975
A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999	Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Act 2015
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005	Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (MARAM)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015	Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Family Assistance Law – Incorporating all related legislation as identified within the Child Care Provider Handbook	

RELATED POLICIES

CCS Accounts Policy Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Governance Policy	Free Kinder Enrolment Policy (Vic) Fraud Prevention Policy

Dealing with Complaints Policy Delivery of children to, and Collection from Education and Care Service Premises Policy	Governance Policy Orientation of Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for *Free Kinder* for funded kindergarten programs available at our Service and the collection and payment of additional hours of education and care.

SCOPE

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

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service is committed to ensuring that children's safety, rights and best interests are the paramount consideration in all decisions, actions and practices. We aim to ensure families understand the fee schedule and how *Free Kinder* funding is applied for our kindergarten programs and payment of fees for additional education and care above the 15-hour funded program.

We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all *Free Kinder* funding and Child Care Subsidy legislative requirements. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure all child care 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).

FEE SETTING

FREE KINDER OFFSET

- Fees are set in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, Family Assistance Law, the Australian Taxation Office and guidelines contained in the Child Care Provider Handbook and the Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- Fees for a funded kindergarten program will be reduced through the Victorian Government Free Kinder offset
- The Free Kinder offset will be provided to the Service to reduce the parent fee component. This

- equates to a 100% reduction in fees per year for each child and is calculated and paid pro-rata from a child's funding start date. [sessional kinder completely free Kindergarten Funding Rates]
- The Free Kinder funding will be shown in invoices with the booking cost at $0.00
- The funding will be reflected on the invoices weekly
- Families will be advised when the funding will commence and cease
- A child may only access one funded kindergarten place at a time
- Where a child attends more than one Service offering a funded kindergarten program families must nominate the service, they will access their funded place and receive the Free Kinder offset.

Access and inclusion

- The Service promotes participation of all children, including those who may require additional support

Governance Compliance

- The Service will enter into and comply with a Service Agreement with the Department for the delivery of funded kindergarten programs
- The Service will ensure appropriate insurance is held and maintained

COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDY OR KINDERGARTEN FUNDING

Families who wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy should speak with the nominated supervisor in the first instance. The nominated supervisor will follow the steps as outlined in this policy, including advising the approved provider of all grievances.

Families can raise concerns regarding the management of the Child Care Subsidy to the Department of Education via their Online contact form. Additionally, information about any potential breach of Child Care Subsidy can be reported anonymously by submitting an online report directly to the Department of Education. For more information visit the Department of Education website: Reporting fraud via a tip-off.

Any misuse or misappropriation of funds will be reported to Victoria Police and a serious incident report will be filed to the Department of Education.

TERMINATION OF ENROLMENT

- Families 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.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT

THE APPROVED PROVIDER AND NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- meet obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ensure that children's safety, rights and best interests are the paramount consideration of all Service decisions and practices
- require the Service and all persons with management and control (PMC) comply with the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL)
- ensure persons with management and control (PMC) are considered 'fit and proper' persons
- complete appropriate background checks, including criminal history checks are conducted for personnel administering CCS
- provide all families with access to our *Kindergarten Payment of Fees Policy* and ensure families are aware of payment options and procedures
- provide families with information about 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
- directly offset the full Free Kinder payment from the fees of parents with children receiving their funded kindergarten program at the Service
- provide families with a parent invoice statement regularly (fortnight/monthly) that clearly indicates the offset amount (labelled Victorian Government Free Kinder offset)
- 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 Arrival (effective 2025)
- notify families of any overdue fees
- discuss fee payment with families if required
- provide families with reminder letters as required

- 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)
- ensure any person with management or control and any person responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service are fit and proper persons to be involved in the administration of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy (Family Assistance Law)
- ensure background checks, including criminal history checks are carried out for any personnel administering Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy (Family Assistance Law).

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 Child Care Subsidy or Kindergarten Funding 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* and Child Care Subsidy (CCS), if required, including:
    - Centrelink Reference Numbers for child and CCS claimant
    - Date of birth for child and CCS claimant
- 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
- ensure payment of additional fees as per policy
- notify the approved provider/nominated supervisor if experiencing any payment difficulties
- notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement
- confirm their child's enrolment through the parents myGov account.

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

Our *Kindergarten Payment of Fees Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, research, complaints or incidents related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management, and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

DEFINITIONS

Child Care Subsidy	A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist families with child care fees at approved education and care services. Payment is made directly to approved child care providers. Eligible families can receive CCS under Family Assistance Law. [Child Care Subsidy]
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 refuge or asylum seeker background, or identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or are known to Child Protection [Early Start Kindergarten]
Enrolment application fee	A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the enrolment of a child at our service
Excursion/event fee	An additional fee charged to cover the costs for participation in a planned excursion where fees are required to cover transportation, entry fees or other related costs. (See: Excursion/Incursion Policy)
Fees	Fees charged for program hours over and above the 15 funded hours per week (600 per year).
Free Kinder	Free Kinder is an initiative by the Victorian Government under the Best Start, Best Life Reform that reduces or removes out-of-pocket fees for families accessing a funded kindergarten program by providing a fee offset to services on behalf of eligible children.
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 once the child commences in a funded kindergarten program. If the child does not commence kindergarten the deposit will not be refunded.
One Funded Kindergarten Place	A Victorian Government requirement that a child can only access funding for one kindergarten program at a time. Families must nominate the service at which they will receive their funded kindergarten program and associated funding.
Statement of entitlement	A statement provided to parents eligible for CCS each fortnight detailing sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts, including the Free Kinder offset fees.

RELATED RESOURCES

Overdue Fee Payment Procedure- including non-payment of fees letters to parents

SOURCES

Australian Government Department of Education. (2026). Child Care Provider Handbook
Australian Government Services Australia. (2024). Child Care Subsidy.
Department of Education. (2026). *Kindergarten Funding Guide*.
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	[NAME] Amy Flockhart	[POSITION] office admin	[DATE] 21/07/2026
POLICY REVIEWED	JUNE 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JUNE 2027
VERSION	V7.06.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • additional information added re: paramount consideration and Family Law requirements • subheadings introduced to improve clarity, reduce duplication and support consistent understanding and implementation of policy • sources checked and updated		
PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS			
JUNE 2025	• annual policy maintenance • sources checked and repaired as required		