Fees and Free kindergarten including More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder Policy and Procedures

Purpose

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines for:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability of Acacia Children's Centre, by setting appropriate fees and charges
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by Acacia Children's Centre

How services comply with the Free Kinder funding requirements.

Values

Acacia Children's Centre. is committed to:

- providing responsible financial management of the service, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable service, while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level
- providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians
- advising users of the service about program government funding and fees to be paid by parents/guardians
- supporting the Victorian Government's Free Kinder initiative

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge and, parents/guardians attending Acacia Children's Centre.

Background

Acacia Children's Centres (Acacia) is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation. Acacia has a commitment to maintaining fees at the lowest possible level whilst providing a high-quality service and acknowledging the qualifications, skills and dedication of staff.

Acacia believes that all children have a right of equal access to quality education and care services. To ensure accessibility, we do not require a bond to secure a place or charge an enrolment fee upon commencement.

Fees are calculated annually based on budget estimates. Fees are applied throughout a financial year (July to June). Each Centre's annual budget determines the maximum fee for one week's care. Families will be notified within 14 days of any fee changes. Each Centre also provides regular information on fees for parents via the School Stream app and signs on the notice boards within the Centre.

Regulation 168(2) (n) of Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 requires that Early Childhood Education and Care services have a comprehensive written fees policy, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. The policy must include a written statement about the fees to be charged and the payment process. All families must be informed of applicable fees at the time of enrolment.

Australian families receive help with the cost of childcare through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The Victorian Government Department of Education (DE) and Services Australia administers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Providers must be approved by the department to receive CCS.

DE is responsible for the legislation that underpins CCS. This legislation is called Family Assistance Law (FAL). All providers that receive CCS must follow the rules under FAL. DE monitors providers' compliance with FAL.

The Australian Government subsidises the cost of childcare. State and territory governments are responsible for the health, safety, wellbeing and educational outcomes of children.

The Australian Government considers that immunisation is an important health measure for children and their families, as it is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against harmful and often deadly diseases. To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the standard vaccination schedule, be on an eligible catch-up vaccination schedule or have an approved exemption from being immunised.

CCS is paid directly to approved providers and passed on to families as a fee reduction.

Additional Child Care Subsidy provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. This support recognises the preventative and protective influence of quality childcare on a child's health, wellbeing and development; and the importance of continuity of care.

There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)—to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work)—to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.

The Inclusion Support Program is designed to assist early childhood education and care services to include children with additional needs by providing support, in the form of practical and tailored advice and strategies on effective inclusive practice, from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

Fees are charged immediately on the first commencing week. Fees are due and payable 2 weeks in advance. A statement of fees will be issued to all families fortnightly at a minimum.

The Best Start, Best Life reform will help all Victorian children dream even bigger through increased access to quality early childhood education and care. A critical part of the reform is Free Kinder, which will support access to two years of high-quality kindergarten programs for all Victorian children. All families with a child enrolled in a funded kindergarten program are eligible for Free Kinder this includes both 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs.

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:

- providing a free 15-hour program to four-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- providing a free 5-to-15-hour program to three-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for three and four-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service

Free kinder supports every Victorian child to get the best start in life no matter where they live. Research shows that play-based learning is a powerful way to support children's learning and development. Two years of early learning is a crucial part of their educational journey, these benefits last into the school years and beyond.

Regulation 168(2) (n) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 requires that funded services have a comprehensive written fees policy, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. Any voluntary parent donations and/or fundraising must comply with the Free Kinder subsidy guidelines and be responsive to the local community.

Definitions

Centrelink: The agency that delivers payments and services to individuals and families on behalf of the Australian Government.

Child Care Safety Net: Targeted assistance to vulnerable and at-risk children and their families, as well as supporting childcare services in disadvantaged communities to address barriers in accessing childcare.

The Child Care Safety Net has three components:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy
- Community Child Care Fund
- Inclusion Support Program

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of childcare. Payments are paid directly to approved childcare providers.

Complying Written Arrangement:

A CWA (Complying Written Arrangement) is an agreement between you and Acacia for the provision of education and care in return for fees. Care may also be provided on a casual basis, in addition to your child's regular weekly booked days, where availability allows. Acacia provides 10-hour sessions per day, from 7:30am to 5:30pm. Our current fees are published on our website at acacia.org.au.

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is applied by Services Australia once your child's enrolment details have been confirmed through your MyGov account. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child's booking details are correct and reflect the care they require.

Whenever your child's booking is changed, you will receive an updated CWA through Xplor for you to review and agree to. If you do not agree with the details outlined in the CWA, please contact the Centre Director as soon as possible to discuss the arrangement. The arrangement includes certain required information:

- the names and contact details of the provider and the individual(s)
- the date the arrangement starts
- the name and date of birth of the child (or children)
- if care will be provided on a routine basis and if so
- details about the days on which sessions of care will usually occur
- the usual start and end times for these sessions of care
- whether care will be on a casual or flexible basis (in addition to, or instead of, a routine basis)

Details of fees charged under the arrangement (providers can reference a fee schedule or information available on their website), which the parties understand may vary from time to time.
Additional information can be included to support the individual's understanding of their payment obligations

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): A funding program that provides eligible children 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten program each week for two years before starting school. To be eligible a child must by 3 by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten and be from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or the family has had contact with child protection. Details are available at: www.vic.gov.au/early-start-kindergarten If a child is eligible for ESK, they should be enrolled in ESK, even where Free Kinder and/or 15 hours per week of funded three-year old kindergarten is offered. This ensures eligible children have priority access to 15 hours of funded kindergarten provided by an early childhood teacher and that service providers receive additional funding and support. ESK enrolments contribute to School Readiness Funding (SRF) calculations for service providers. It also allows the Department to continue to monitor efforts to engage the most vulnerable children in kindergarten across Victoria and provide additional targeted support where required through SRF or Early Childhood LOOKOUT

More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder: Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to **More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder** over the next decade from 2025. Funded kindergarten hours will double from 15 to up to 30 hours a week. More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder will be delivered through sessional kindergartens and long-day-care centres. By 2036, children across Victoria will have access to 1,800 hours of funded

kindergarten before school, comprising 600 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and 1,200 hours of More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder

More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder priority cohort: From 2026, between 16 and 25 hours of More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder will be available to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- children from a refugee or asylum seeker background
- children who have had contact with Child Protection
- children who were supported by Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) or Access to Early Learning (AEL) in their Three-Year-Old Kindergarten year.

From 2028

- children who have (or have a parent or guardian who has) a Commonwealth concession card
- children from a multiple birth family (triplets or more).

More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder for this group of priority cohort children increase to up to 30 hours from 2028

Fees: A charge for a place within a program at the service.

Late collection fee: A charge that may be imposed by the approved provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program

Free Kinder: A Victorian Government Best Start, Best Life initiative providing Free Kinder programs for four-year-old and three-year-old children in funded services, that have opted into the initiative.

- Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:
- providing a free 15-hour program to 4-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- providing a free 5 to 15-hour program to 3-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for 3 and 4-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service.

Funded Kindergarten: For services that have not opted for Free Kinder, the Victorian Government provides funding to support children to access a high-quality kindergarten program in the two years before they start school. The funding is a contribution towards meeting the cost of the kindergarten program. Funded kindergartens charge fees to help meet the cost of running kindergarten programs. Fees are set by individual kindergartens and depend on things like how many hours children attend and whether there are extra costs such as excursions.

Initial 42 absence days

CCS is paid for up to 42 absence days for each child per financial year across all approved long day care services. Absence days are referred to as 'Initial 42 days absence' in the family assistance law.

- Each child receives a new set of initial 42 absence days at the beginning of the financial year.
- These absence days can be taken for any reason (provided the day being reported as an absence is a day on which care would have otherwise been provided). Refer to sources.

Cessation of Enrolment

A family must give Acacia 2 weeks' notice if they decide to withdraw their child from the centre. If a family gives a shorter notice period, they will be charged for the full 2 weeks, regardless of whether their child attends the centre or not.

CCS is generally not available for any absences before a child first physically attends a service, or after the last day a child physically attends a service. Therefore, families may be charged full fees for any days missed

after the child was last in attendance. However, if families have an approved reason (see the Services Australia website) CCS may be paid for the last 7 days of enrolment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities Approved provider and persons with management or control, Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge.

- Ensuring that policies and procedures are in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service (Regulation 168), and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (Regulation 170)
- Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements
- Developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability
- Communicating with families at enrolment about fees, including:
    - the amounts charged
    - payment periods and methods
    - how the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy will be applied
    - notice periods
    - financial hardship consideration and payment plans
    - how they can access copies of statements/receipts
- Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the nominated supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of the Commonwealth Governments Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy
- Ensuring that families are informed of the operating hours including term dates, planned closures and additional hours to account for closures.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered
- 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 where possible in the family's first language
- Ensuring that the Fees Policy is readily accessible at the service (Regulation 171)
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, ECT/educators, staff and volunteers follow this policy and procedure (Regulation 170)
- Providing all parents/guardians with fee information (refer to Attachment 1)
- Providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges upon enrolment of their child/ren
- Providing all parents/guardians with a Complying Written Arrangement (refer to Definitions). All arrangements must be recorded, either on paper or electronically, and must be kept by the provider

- Ensuring that once the approved provider enters a Complying Written Arrangement (refer to Definitions) with a family, they must submit an enrolment notice within seven days of the end of the week in which the arrangement started
- Informing families that children who haven't attended a session of care in 26 consecutive weeks will no longer be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (refer to Definitions)
- Informing families if they are receiving Child Care Subsidy (refer to Definitions), they must update Centrelink on any changes to their income, activity and other circumstances via their Centrelink online account
- Ensuring fees are collected and receipted
- Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable
- Complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees
- Notifying parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days before any proposed changes that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected. (Regulation 172(2))
- Addressing any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service in a timely manner
- Ensuring families are not charged any compulsory out-of-pocket levies or maintenance fees (voluntary fundraising and payments/donations are permitted)
- Ensuring that children enrolled in a kindergarten program are not charged higher fees in comparison to children that are not attracting kindergarten funding]
- Directly offsetting the full Free Kinder entitlement from the fees of parents/ guardians with children receiving their funded kindergarten program at the centre (service providers are not required to separately calculate and record the cost of the kindergarten hours separately for integrated programs)]
- Applying the fee offset regularly (e.g., fortnightly or monthly) and clearly indicating the offset amount (labelled Victorian Government Free Kinder offset) on parent/ guardian's invoice statements]
- Communicating with parents/guardians that the offsets will not impact their CCS payments
- Ensuring any non-funded positions are enrolled in accordance with the Kindergarten Funding Guidelines (refer to Sources)
- Providing communication to families explaining their access to one year of three-year-old or four-year-old and one year of More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder program
- Ensuring families that attend both sessional kindergarten and a long day care service nominate and document at which service the child will participate in the funded kindergarten program
- Use any surplus funding on improvement efforts for the funded kindergarten program, such as improving quality and supporting engagement of families for the minority of cases where parents are charged less than the Free Kinder entitlement in out-of-pocket fees for the duration of the kindergarten year
- Ensuring any voluntary parent payments/donations are explicitly agreed to in writing and receipted
- Ensuring that any child that is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten is enrolled at the service and recorded on the Arrival system
- Collecting all relevant information regarding those with entitlement to concessions and recording it on the Arrival system
- Providing all parents/guardians with information about Free Kinder and More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder program (refer to Attachment 1)
- Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the approved provider.

Responsibilities of families

- Reading the Fee information for families (refer to Attachment 1), and complying with the Complying Written Arrangement (refer to Definitions and Attachments 2)
- Notifying the approved provider if they are experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, ECT/educators, staff and volunteers follow this policy and procedure (Regulation 170)
- Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable
- Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the nominated supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DE's Free Kinder initiative (refer to Definitions)

- Ensuring families that attend both sessional kindergarten and a long day care service nominate and document at which service the child will participate in the funded kindergarten program

- Reading Acacia's Free Kinder information for families (refer to Attachment 1),
- Implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the approved provider and staff, and in line with the requirements of DE's Free Kinder initiative (refer to Sources)
- Families receiving Child Care Subsidy (refer to Definitions), they must update Centrelink on any changes to their income, activity and other circumstances via their Centrelink online account
- ensure that their child's booking details are correct and reflect the care they require (CWA) Xplor and Centrelink
- to advise of any account changes to their designated direct debit information

Evaluation

Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the nominated supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DE's Free Kinder initiative (refer to Definitions)

Ensuring families that attend both sessional kindergarten and a long day care service nominate and document at which service the child will participate in the funded kindergarten program

Reading Acacia's Free Kinder information for families (refer to Attachment 1),

Implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the approved provider and staff, and in line with the requirements of DE's Free Kinder initiative (refer to Sources)

Sources and Related Policies

- Department of Education: Child Care Subsidy (CCS): www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/child-care-subsidy
- The Child Care Provider Handbook: www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook
- Best Start Best Life: https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education): www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide
- Resources for Funded Kindergartens: https://www.vic.gov.au/resources-funded-kindergartens

Related Policies

- Compliments and Complaints
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions and Service Events
- Governance and Management of the Service
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

Attachments

- Attachment 1: Free Kinder information for families
- Attachment 2 Fee information for families

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

Any educator or staff found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Version 9	Endorsed By: COM	Approved: Aug 2010	Review: September 2026

Attachment 1. Free Kinder information for families

General information

Kindergarten programs for four-year-old and three-year-old children in Victorian Government funded services will be free as part of the Best Start, Best Life reform.

Free Kinder provides families with a free program in sessional services and a fee offset in long day care services.DE also provides funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, Asylum seeker and refugee children and children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs.

Acacia offers wrap around care outside of the 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) sessional kindergarten program. This fee is applicable to all families that require care before and after the kindergarten session.

The below table will be displayed in centre's Foyer

Operation hours	St Albans 6.30am till 6.00pm Richmond 7.30am till 6.00pm **Fitzroy 7.30am till 6.00pm**
Term 1	
Term 2	
Term 3	
Term 4	
Planned Closures	Our centres will close for approx 3 weeks during the December and January school holidays. Families will be advised of these closure dates in term 3

What Free Kinder means at our service

Acacia has opted into the Free Kinder initiative. Applicable parent fees are outlined below:

- Funded sessional kindergarten for 3-year-old children (up to 15 hours per week) – no parent fee (only when offered Integrated places takes priority over sessional places)
- Funded sessional kindergarten for 4-year-old children (15 hours per week or 25 for priority groups under **More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder**) - no parent fee (only when offered Integrated places takes priority over sessional places)
- Kindergarten and **More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder** in long day care for 3 and 4 -year-old children – parent fee will be reduced by the Free Kinder Funding

Acacia will directly offset the Free Kinder entitlement from the fees of parents/ guardians with children receiving their funded kindergarten program at the centre

The fee offset will be applied weekly in arrears and clearly indicating the offset amount (labelled Victorian Government Free Kinder offset) on parent/ guardian's invoice statements

For families who are eligible for ESK, AEL or **More hours of 4-Year-Old-Kinder** may be eligible for further offset of their fees. Please see your director.

The offsets will not impact their CCS payments.

Free Kinder funding requirements.

Acacia Children's Centres will ensure that:
- Families enrolled will not be charged for activities, incursions and excursions while attending our centre
- Long day care services must reconcile payments before the end of each calendar year to ensure all families have received their full entitlement
- Families are advised when the offset will commence and end through our communication app that translates into family's home language. Families can access the Xplor app for a detailed statement of the funding they have received.

ATTACHMENT 2 - Fee information for Families

1. General information

Acacia Children's Centres abides by the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017 (refer to Legislation and standards). The Child Care Subsidy helps by assisting families with their childcare fees and provides greater assistance to low and middle-income families. The Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged or located in a regional or remote community.

2. How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, Acacia Children's Centres sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service
- the level of government funding provided
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar services in the area
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards
- requirements of Child Care Subsidy: www.education.gov.au

Once fees are set for the year, they will only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if enrolments drop and the service is at risk of not being able to meet its expenses.

3.Other charges

Other charges levied by Acacia include:

Late collection fee: Acacia reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by Acacia.

The Centre applies a late collection fee for parents who collect their child after the Centre closing time (6.00pm). The late collection fee is designed to act as a deterrent as it is important to protect the rights of staff to finish work at the end of their shift.

Where a parent is running late, they are required to contact the Centre as soon as possible to inform staff of the delay and the expected time of arrival. If a child has not been picked up by 6.00pm, Centre staff must contact parents/guardians phone number. The emergency number will be contacted if parents or guardian are not available, to arrange alternative collection. If a parent is extremely late and all attempts to reach emergency contacts have failed, staff will report the incident to Child Protection Emergency Service.

Late collection fee is $25 for the first 15 minutes or part there of, and $2.00 for every minute following. The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is not paid on this fee. The late collection fee is due and payable the following morning. This ensures that children and staff welfare is considered.

4. Statement of fees and charges

A statement of fees and charges will be provided to families via xplor.

They will show any childcare subsidy payments made by the Commonwealth Government and the remaining gap fee is to be paid by parents/carers. Families are expected to pay the gap fee shown on the statement and not allow fees to fall more than 4 weeks into arrears.

4. Payment of fees

All childcare fees are paid by direct debit. At the time of enrolment, families are required to nominate an Australian bank account from which their childcare fees will be deducted. Families can access their account statements at any time through the Xplor Family App.

Childcare fees will be deducted from the family's nominated bank account in accordance with the agreed direct debit schedule. Acacia Children's Centres will absorb any processing fees associated with the direct debit transaction.

Credit and Debit Card Payments

From 1 October 2026, new Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) regulations will prohibit businesses from applying payment surcharges to transactions made through the EFTPOS, Visa and Mastercard networks.

As a result, Acacia Children’s Centres will no longer accept credit or debit card payments for ongoing childcare fees from 1 October 2026.

As a not-for-profit, community-based organisation, Acacia is committed to keeping childcare fees as affordable as possible for families. To minimise payment processing costs and ensure that more resources can be directed towards providing high-quality education and care for children, all ongoing childcare fees must be paid by direct debit from a nominated Australian bank account.

Acacia will absorb any direct debit processing fees, so there will be no additional payment surcharge for families.

If a child is absent for any reason (including sickness and holidays), the full daily fee is still applied. The full daily fee also applies on Public Holidays. During Acacia’s annual summer holiday (3 weeks), fees will not apply.

Part-time bookings for childcare are available but must total a minimum of 1 full day. Part-time spaces are allocated strictly according to availability; whereby full-time places take priority over part-time attendance.

Parents/guardians having trouble in paying fees are requested to contact the Director to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The Privacy and Confidentiality Policy of the service will be always complied with in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

Payment Plans may be made to families experiencing financial hardship based on Management discretion.

Fees are applied to the below conditions or situations:

- Full fee is required for all public holidays.
- Full fee is payable when the child takes any holiday during the year whilst the Centre is in operation.
- Notice to withdraw from a Centre must be given 2 weeks before the actual date of leaving. In case parents/guardians would like to withdraw their child from the Centre 2 weeks before the Christmas-closing-period, fees must be paid in full (even where 2 weeks' notice has been given).
- Full fees are charged for booked attendances. There is no reduction for days booked but not attended.
- notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the Fees charged or the way in which the Fees are collected.

- Full fees are charged when children are away sick, or when they are excluded during outbreaks of infectious illness for which they have not been immunised.
- In the event of a long-term illness, families are advised to negotiate an alternative arrangement with the Director.

The Centre reserves the right to cancel a booking if fees are outstanding and satisfactory arrangements have not been put in place. The Centre will employ a service to pursue bad debts. Acacia will proceed to legal action when other approaches have been exhausted.

6. Cancellation of booking

Families are asked to provide 2 weeks' notice of the cancellation of a booking. Fees will continue to apply for the 2 weeks' notice period.

7. 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 parents/guardians 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.
- Failure to attend the meeting and continued non-payment may result in a second and final letter notifying parents/guardians that the child's place at the service 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.
- Acacia 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 at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.
- No further enrolments of children from the parents/guardians will be accepted until all outstanding fees have been paid.

8. Refund of fees

Fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the approved provide/nominated supervisor. 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 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.

9. Fundraising

Fundraising is undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

10. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from the Nominated Supervisor or alternatively families may contact the local council.

11. Notification of fee changes during the year

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget ‘break even’ point. Parents/guardians will be notified one term in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.