

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Fees</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	April 2012
<b>Review Date:</b>	As necessary by the policy sub-committee.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Fees are set at a level which reflects the cost of quality child care, a cost which is affected by both Centre philosophy and government regulation and support. The fees are set from time to time by the Management Committee taking into account that Inner City Care (ICC) is a not-for-profit community based childcare centre. Families will be notified of changes to fees through the Newsletter and through notices in the children's pockets. Families will be given a minimum of two weeks' notice as to any rises in fees.

Users of the service give a commitment to promptly pay their fees.

Fees are payable for all hours of a child's regular attendance, whether or not the child uses the space booked. This includes holidays, days off sick and other absences. Fees are also payable for Public Holidays. The Centre is closed annually for a short period at Christmas – no fees are payable for this period. Long day care commences at 7.30am and ceases at 6.20pm.

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

This policy was developed according to Management Committee decisions and is reviewed regularly. It was last ratified by the Management Committee in March 2007, October 2008, November 2009, November 2010 and April 2012.

## **POLICY DETAIL/ BUSINESS RULES**

### **Bond:**

All enrolments from whole weeks down to single day places require a bond equal to the ordinary fee for 4 weeks. The bond is payable on enrolment at the Centre and will be returned when the child leaves the Centre, providing there are no outstanding fees to be paid and 4 weeks' notice of termination of child care has been given. The bond can be paid off in 4 equal installments over a 4 week period. All new enrolments will require a two week bond to be paid in order to secure the child care place. The further two weeks' bond will be payable upon the first day care commences. Should a place not be taken up and four week's notice not given, two weeks' bond will be retained by Inner City Care in lieu of short notice of termination of enrolment.

### **Fee Payment:**

Fees must be paid one week in advance at all times. Fees may be paid by cheque or internet banking. Cash payments are discouraged. If a cheque bounces the bank fee will be collected from that parent and it is the Director's discretion as to whether further cheque payments will be accepted from that parent. Fees for permanent enrolments are to be paid to the end of the current week at all times. Fees can be paid fortnightly or monthly as well but this must be done in advance.

### **Accounts in Arrears:**

Children for whom fees are more than 4 weeks in arrears will be excluded from the Centre. For accounts that exceed 2 weeks in arrears, the Centre Director will be informed and a letter requesting payment will be sent. For accounts exceeding 3 weeks in arrears, the Management Committee will be informed and actions discussed.

The Centre understands families may experience financial difficulties and encourages them to discuss any payment issues with the Director. Any such payment arrangements can be made at the discretion of the Management Committee.

**Late Fee:**

A late fee will be charged for children not collected by 6.30pm which will be added to the fee account and must be paid the following week.

**Child Care Benefits:**

The Federal Government provides Child Care Benefits to all families who are Australian residents/citizens (subject to a means test) to assist with the cost of their child care fees. Application for Child Care Benefits is to be made with the Family Assistance Office, which is the body responsible for making these assessments. The Centre will charge full fees until it receives the rebate amount directly from FAHCSIA. It is also imperative that children are signed in and out in the Attendance Book each day they are enrolled at the Centre.

**Occasional Care:**

Occasional care is only offered to children already enrolled at the Centre – unless at the discretion of the Director. Fees for time in excess of the booked period are due and payable on collection of the child. The Centre must be notified of cancellation of occasional care by 8am of the relevant day or the full fee will be charged.

Minimum charge is half day session and only applicable when a half day session is available. Occasional care will not be made available while fees are outstanding.

**Planned Absences:**

All permanent booked spaces must be paid for. A full day fee may be reduced retrospectively to 50% of the standard daily fee rate for planned absences over 2 weeks in duration, if the following conditions are met:

- You must give at least 4 weeks notice of your child's absence;
- There must be no vacancies at the Centre for the relevant day of absence i.e. the budgeted amounts of child care places must have been filled; and
- We must have sold your place to someone wanting occasional care for the relevant day of absence.

Note that where all of the above conditions are satisfied on some but not all of the days of absence, the fee reduction will apply only to those days where all the conditions are satisfied.

**Illnesses:**

In the case of absences of more than one week due to infectious diseases (chicken pox, rubella, measles, etc) or hospitalisation, full day fees for permanent books may be reduced retrospectively to 50% of the standard daily fee rate if the following conditions are met:

- A medical certificate must be produced covering the period of absence;
- There must be no vacancies at the Centre for the relevant day of absence i.e. the budgeted amounts of child care places must have been filled; and
- We must have sold your place to someone wanting occasional care for the relevant day of absence.

Note that where all of the above conditions are satisfied on some but not all of the days of absence, the fee reduction will apply only to those days where all the conditions are satisfied.

**Absence Without Notice:**

Should a child not attend the Centre for 2 – 4 weeks without notification, his/her enrolment may be discontinued – at the Director's discretion.

**Closure of the Centre;**

The Centre is closed annually for a short period at Christmas. No fees are payable for this period.

**Public Holidays:**

Full fees are payable for Public Holidays occurring on children's normal enrolment days. These days paid for are not transferable to other days.

**Excursions and Entertainment:**

A charge will be made to parents to cover the costs of occasional excursions and entertainments. This is usually only a small charge to cover transport costs, etc. and is not obligatory.

**Termination of Enrolment:**

Four weeks' notice of termination of a permanent booking must be given in writing to the Director or Administrator, otherwise fees equivalent to 4 weeks must be paid in lieu of attendance.

**Waiting List Fee:**

An administration fee will be charged for all Waiting List applications – other than families with siblings currently at the Centre. The fee will be set by the Management Committee.

**AUTHORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES**

The Centre Director is responsible for ensuring all ICC staff have training in this policy. All ICC staff are accountable for the implementation of this policy.

**OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION**

Education and Care Services Regulation and Law 2011.

**APPROVAL**

Approved by Management Committee	
Meeting date:	April 2012
Policy Owner:	Inner City Care
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