



FEE POLICY

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is:

- To ensure a smooth process for the collection of fees.
- To comply with Centrelink and Government Regulations.
- To ensure income is sufficient to cover child care operating costs.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to:

- Little Saints Early learning Centre (the Service) and
- St Andrew's After School & Vacation Care (the Service)

3. Policy Statement:

Little Saints Early Learning Centre is a long day care centre which provides care for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years. In order for the Centre to operate at a high quality level it is critical that the Centre income reflects its expenses to cater for the needs of all staff, children and their families.

Fee amounts are determined by staff:child ratios, staff wages, regulatory requirements, and centre operational expenses. Daily fee prices will be reviewed regularly and be adjusted to reflect the changes in CPI and Care Care provision costs. Should fees increase, parents will receive written notification of at least two weeks in advance.

4. Rationale:

Little Saints ELC relies on fees to function and operate efficiently to be able to provide a high quality service for families, children and staff; therefore accounts must be kept up to date at all times.

5. Fee Payments:

- Statements are issued on Mondays for the current week and payment is required by that Friday.
- Payments can be made by the College payment portal, cash, cheque, eftpos, bpay or direct debit.
- Credit card payments incur a merchant fee of up to 1.65%.
- Dishonoured cheques will incur a bank charge.
- All fee payments can be made in person between 8.00am and 4.00pm and will be taken by the Administration Assistant.

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- All booked days will be charged for (including absences) while the Centre is open. The Centre closes for two weeks during the Christmas, New Year's break and all public holidays.

6. Waiting List and Enrolment:

- When joining the Waiting List, a non-refundable \$30 administration fee is required. Payment can be made by any of the methods listed above (see Waiting List and Enrolment Policy).
- Once a placement is offered, a \$300 bond or equivalent of two weeks full fees is required to secure your child's position. The bond payment is refundable upon leaving the Centre, providing that fees are up to date, 10 business days notice has been received in writing. Should your child not attend for the last 10 days, full fees will be payable (Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate is not available).

7. Child Care Benefit (CCB):

- CCB is a scheme offered by the Federal Government to help with the costs of child care.
- Fees are calculated by using your percentage provided by the Family Assistance Office, which is based on your combined family income. It is the individual family's responsibility to ensure information is kept up to date with Centrelink, to ensure your fees are calculated correctly.
- CCB Formula:
 - $(\$4.17 \text{ Centrelink Hourly Rate}) \times (\text{Hours Enrolled}) \times (\%) \times (\text{Part-time Loading Rate}) = \text{Child Care Benefit}$.
 - $\text{Centre Fees} - \text{Child Care Benefit} = \text{Gap Fees (what you pay)}$
 - Child Care Rebate (CCR) may also be available to some families which can help to reduce fees further by either being paid directly to Little Saints or to families. The rebate by contribute 50% of out of pocket expenses.

8. Absences:

- Each child is entitled to 42 allowable absences (unexplained) per financial year.
- Unexplained absences are any days off such as holidays or sick days. After 42 days are used, CCB may still be applied should a medical certificate be supplied.
- Should your child be absent for more than 42 days, full fees will be charged for all absences in excess of 42 (CCB is not available).
- Discounts do not apply to absences.

9. Outstanding Accounts:

- Should you be experiencing financial difficulty, you will need to see the Director immediately to discuss a payment plan.
- If you do not contact management, you are at risk of losing your child's placement.

10. Late Collection of Children:

- Both Service close at 6pm and parents should ensure that they arrive in time to collect their child's belongings, sign their child out and leave the Service by 6pm.
- A late fee will be charged of \$15 for the first five minutes and \$5 per minute thereafter to cover staff overtime.

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11. Attendance Records:

- Attendance records are located in your child's room on top of the lockers.
- When dropping off and collecting your child, you must sign in and out. You must document the time, your name and initials.
- Absences must also be signed for.
- Centrelink rules state that if attendance records are not maintained, CCB is not available.

12. Cancellation of Your Child's Placement:

- To cancel your child's placement, written notification must be received either through email or by completing a change of details form.
- The service requires 10 business days notice to cancel a placement. If 10 business days notice is not received, the bond refund will be forfeited in lieu of fees payable for the last 10 days.
- If your child does not attend for the last two weeks, CCB cannot be claimed, and you will be charged full fees.

13. Measuring Tools:

- CCB is checked weekly through the Child Care Management Scheme (CCMS) and information is updated by DEEWR.
- A debtors list is printed weekly and Management advises families that are behind in fees, that action needs to be taken to bring accounts up to date.
- Cancellations will only be accepted should the correct process be followed.
- Staff check attendance records weekly to ensure that all families are signing in and out correctly and every day of the child's attendance.
- Staff alert Management if attendance records are not completed.
- Absences are monitored through our software programme Qikkids and DEEWR on a weekly basis.

14. Sources and Further Reading:

- National Law and Regulations
- Handbook Child Care Licensing 20010-2011
- DEEWR CCMS Handbook
- DEEWR CCMS Handbook
- www.familyassist.gov.au
- www.centrelink.gov.au
- www.mychild.gov.au
- www.deewr.gov.au

15. Links to Other Policies

- Enrolment Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

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