



PAYMENT OF FEES AND PROVISION OF A STATEMENT OF FEES CHARGED BY THE SERVICE POLICY GUIDELINES

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure 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).

The approved provider must notify families at least 14 days before any changes are made to the policies or procedures if the changes will affect the way in which fees are charged or collected (Regulation 172).

The policies and procedures will help to ensure that families and everyone associated with the service is aware of the fee requirements, and should promote a fees structure that is clear, transparent and consistent.

The policies and procedures should clearly identify the roles of everyone involved, including nominated supervisors, educators, staff and families. They should also address quality practices relating to the payment of service fees that align with the National Quality Standard.

These guidelines include advice on the Child Care Subsidy as it may be helpful as a reference for families, however its inclusion in your policy is not required under the National Law.

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, education and care services must have policies and procedures in place in relation to the payment of fees. These guidelines are part of a series and are intended to assist in the development of your *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy*. They have been designed to guide you in the development of your policy and are not an exact format.

1. Title

Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy

2. Policy statement

The policy statement will reflect your service's philosophy and approach to how your service will administer fees, inform families of the fee structure and work with families to make payment.

For example:

We are committed to providing all families the opportunity to enrol their children at our service, with a clear, transparent, fair and inclusive fee structure.

3. Background

Your policy needs to include a statement of why this requirement is in place.

For example, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* requires policies and procedures to be in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service.

4. Legislative requirements

Your policy must be consistent with and refer to legislative requirements for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Reg 111	Administrative space
Reg 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Reg 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Reg 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Reg 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

When writing your policy you will need to break down what is required under each Regulation and how your service will meet these requirements. How these work in practice at your service will be contained in your procedures.

As you reflect on your *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy*, it might highlight the need to split its various areas into different policies and procedures that can be readily accessed by all educators and staff members to follow. For example, you may wish to have separate policies for *Payment of service fees* and *Financial hardship considerations*.

5. Principles to inform your policy

All decision-making should be carried out in accordance with the principles of your service's *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy*. Examples of principles could include, but are not limited to:

- We are committed to providing all families the opportunity to enrol their children. Our fee structure aims to be fair and we accommodate payment plans for families requiring greater flexibility.
- We value our families and ensure there is two-way communication with them at all times. We ensure they are familiar with our fees at enrolment and we provide at least two weeks' notice of any changes to the fee structure.
- We prioritise good governance and quality management. Our fee structure is clear and transparent, and our systems and practices ensure that payments are processed correctly and receipts and statements are provided to families.

6. Key terms

To make it easier for your audience, provide definitions of key terms that may not be used every day. For example:

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	
Child Care Subsidy	<p>The main payment to assist families with the costs of education and care for their children. It is, with some exceptions, paid directly to providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction.</p> <p>Families make a co-contribution to their fees and pay the provider the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.</p>	https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook/child-care-subsidy
Notice period (fees)	The length of time stipulated by a service to notify families before making any changes that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected. The notice period must be at least 14 days.	National Regulations (Regulation 172)

7. Links to other policies

Refer to related policies and procedures, for example:

- Enrolment and orientation
 - Governance and management of the service
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8. Induction and ongoing training

State information about induction training and frequency of ongoing training and information sharing to assist managers, coordinators, educators and staff to fulfil their roles effectively.

9. Policy created/reviewed

Include the date the policy was created, reviewed or changes were made.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

State when the policy will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

11. Checklist

- Have you referenced the relevant Regulations and are these reflected in the policy?
 - Does the title provide a clear and concise statement identifying the intent of the policy?
 - Have you checked the policy requirements and referenced related legislation that applies to your service type?
 - Does your policy statement provide a framework for decision-making and ensure consistent practice?
 - Does your policy statement reflect your service philosophy?
 - Is it clear why this policy exists?
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PAYMENT OF FEES AND PROVISION OF A STATEMENT OF FEES CHARGED BY THE SERVICE PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

The approved provider must ensure the service has procedures in place in relation to the payment of fees.

You should be familiar with the Regulations referred to in your *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy*, as well as quality practices relating to the payment of fees, prior to developing your procedures.

The steps and guidelines you document in your procedures will not only guide your practice, but also inform regulatory authorities of educator and staff expectations and responsibilities.

Your procedures should be written in clear and concise language, making them easy to read and understand.

Your procedures also need to be practical and achievable. For example, if your procedures state that you will send out multiple reminders for late payments, you will need to make sure that steps are in place for this to occur.

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, education and care services must have policies and procedures in place in relation to the payment of service fees. These guidelines are part of a series and are intended to assist in the development of your *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service procedures*. They have been designed to guide you in the development of your procedures and are not an exact format.

1. Title

Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service procedures

2. Reference to policy and philosophy

Here you refer to your *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy* as seen in your policy documents. You can reference where you will find the policy to help those looking for it.

Your procedures will also reflect your service's overall philosophy, your *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy*, and quality practices for the notification, payment and collection of fees

3. Procedures

This is where you detail the way you will implement your *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy*.

It is the 'How to' in your service and includes specific step-by-step procedures for the payment of fees.

Some areas that will be outlined here will include:

- where the procedures will be kept
- when they were last reviewed
- templates and documents that might be required and/or used as a part of the procedures
- systems to monitor the implementation of the procedures.

As you reflect on your *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy*, it might highlight the need to split its various areas into different procedures, which will be displayed or accessed by all staff to follow in relation to their actions. For example, you may wish to have separate procedures for *Payment of service fees* and *Financial hardship considerations*.

4. Roles and responsibilities

This is where you will designate specific roles and responsibilities for the people who hold different positions within your service. This needs to align with the Regulations.

It is important to note that it is the legal responsibility of approved providers to ensure systems are in place to minimise risk and ensure health and safety procedures are implemented by the responsible people in services. Ultimate responsibility lies with the approved provider to ensure their service/s are meeting the requirements under the National Quality Framework.

When developing this section consider:

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators or other staff in your service in relation to the payment of fees?
- How will you clearly define these roles and expectations and where will it be documented?
- Why are clear and robust procedures for the payment of fees charged by your service important for the effective management and operation of your service?
- How will you learn from the administration of these procedures to improve your practices?
- How will you ensure that the necessary tools are available so the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators and other staff members can follow the procedures? How will they be made aware of the procedures?

An example of roles and responsibilities could include, but is not limited to:

Roles	Responsibilities
<p>Approved provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and <i>National Regulations</i> are met • set fees for children to enroll at the service and ensure policies and procedures are in place relating to the fee schedule and payment options • take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the <i>Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy and procedures</i> • ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff and families, and available for inspection • notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or - significantly impact the service’s education and care of children or - significantly impact the family’s ability to utilise the service
<p>Nominated supervisor/ Responsible person</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to payment of fees • implement procedures for the payment of service fees • communicate with families at enrolment about fees, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the amounts charged - payment periods and methods - how the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy (e.g. from your jurisdiction) will be applied - notice periods - how they can access a statement/receipt - financial hardship considerations and payment plans • ongoing communication with families about their account • ensure families receive receipts for fees paid • monitor the application of the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy
<p>Centre-based educators (and FDC educators if the service is responsible for fee collection)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be familiar with the <i>Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy and procedures</i> • support families to approach the person whose role it is to collect fees with any fee-related questions

An example of roles and responsibilities could include, but is not limited to:

<p>Family day care (FDC) educators (if the service is not responsible for fee collection)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be familiar with the <i>Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy and procedures</i> • implement procedures for the payment of service fees • communicate with families at enrolment about fees, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the amounts charged - payment periods and methods - how the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy (e.g. from your jurisdiction) will be applied - notice periods - how they can access a statement/receipt - financial hardship considerations • ongoing communication with families about their account • ensure families receive receipts for fees paid
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure they understand the service’s fee requirements and expectations at enrolment and any ongoing changes • meet the fee requirements • raise any fee-related questions with the person responsible for fee collection at the service

The following table will assist you in developing procedures specific to your needs and context. Don’t forget to refer to the Regulations when you are writing your procedures to ensure you are meeting your obligations.

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area <i>(this will be specific to the context of your service)</i>	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
<p>Fee structure</p> <p>Reg: 168-172</p> <p>QA6: 6.1</p> <p>QA7: 7.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the fee structure and what items should be included. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - waitlist fee - enrolment fee/levy - bond/security deposit - varying fees for different age groups - public holidays - family holidays - cancellation of casual bookings - additional days - illness - bedding - nappies - bottles/formula - food - late payment of fees - deposit fees for USBs, door entry fobs, etc. - incursions/excursions • What the service’s notice period will be before making any changes that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected (the notice period must be at least 14 days) • How much notice families must give to the service for the following and the manner in which fees are impacted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Withdraw from enrolment - Notify of an absence - Notify of family holidays - Notify of change of enrolled days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure your policy and procedures are available for all to access • Ensure the fee structure is part of the discussion with families at enrolment • Develop a reminder system to inform families of the fee structure around public holidays, family holidays and absences • Develop a communication plan for ensuring all families are aware of how much notice they must give • Develop a communication plan for informing families if and when fees are to be changed • Ensure your digital and accounting systems can effectively process payments, support the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy, and provide statements/receipts for families • Develop a system for families who do not pay their fees, e.g. a template reminder for overdue fees, debt collection, payment plans 	<p>Enrolment and orientation</p> <p>Governance and management of the service</p>

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area <i>(this will be specific to the context of your service)</i>	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the fee payment frequency, methods of payment, and other management systems will be • Consequences for non-payment or late fees • How often and what method will be used for communication with families about fees, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the amounts charged - payment periods and methods - how the Child Care Subsidy or other government subsidy (e.g. from your jurisdiction) will be applied - notice periods - how they can access a statement/receipt - financial hardship considerations and payment plan options • Ensure familiarity with jurisdictional requirements relating to service provision and fair trading 		

5. Procedures created/reviewed

Include the date the procedures were created or reviewed.

6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Your service, in consultation with educators, staff, families and other stakeholders, should review the effectiveness of these procedures within a set timeframe or earlier if there is a change in relevant legislation.

State when the procedures will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

7. Checklist

- Do the procedures align with your *Payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service policy*?
 - Have your procedures been written in plain English and can they be easily implemented by an educator or staff new to your service?
 - Is it clear who is responsible for the implementation of the procedures?
 - Are all educators and staff aware of the procedures and can implement them if required?
 - Do you need to develop any resources to monitor and record the procedures?
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Useful Resources

Include links to useful resources that have helped inform the development of your policy. Be mindful of any state- or territory-specific content.

Some examples include but are not limited to:

- Business advice, rights and responsibilities (Queensland) – <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/business-advice-rights-and-responsibilities>
- Affordability (Queensland) – <https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/age-spaces/keeping-kindy-affordable/>
- Child care provider handbook – <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook>
- Child Care Subsidy – <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>
- Customer service and consumer laws (Queensland) – <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/consumer-laws>
- Guide to the National Quality Framework – <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide>