

# FEES POLICY

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Mandatory – Quality Area 7



## PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability of Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care, by setting appropriate fees and charges
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. VALUES

Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care 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 funding, including government support and fees to be paid by parents/guardians
- providing equitable access for families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators and parents/guardians with an enrolled child, or who wish to enrol a child at Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care.

### 3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

#### Background

DET requires that funded services have a comprehensive written fees policy in place, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. The policy must include a written statement about the fees to be charged, as required under Regulation 168(2)(n), and the payment process. All families must be informed of applicable term and annual fees at the time of enrolment.

#### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* (Vic)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management
  - Standard 7.3: Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

**Approved care:** Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers. Details are available at: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit)

**Child Care Benefit (CCB):** A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Benefit. Details are available at: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit)

**Enrolment application fee:** A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

**Excursion/service event charge:** An additional charge required to meet the cost of special events or excursions that occur in response to emerging children's program needs. Events that are planned ahead and are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget do not incur this additional charge (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*).

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

**Health Care Card:** A Commonwealth Government entitlement providing concessions for low-income earners and other eligible people. Details are available at: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/health-care-card](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/health-care-card)

**Late collection charge:** A charge that may be imposed by the Approved Provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (refer to Attachment 1 – Fee information for families).

**Registered care:** Care provided by nannies, grandparents, relatives or friends, individuals working within kindergartens, occasional care services and outside school hours care services that are registered with the Family Assistance Office. Eligible families can receive some reimbursement of costs when using a registered care provider. Details are available at: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit)

**Voluntary parent/guardian contribution:** A voluntary payment for items not directly related to the provision of the children's program. Attendance at the service is not conditional on this payment.

#### 5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

##### Service policies

- *Complaints and Grievances Policy (DET)*
- *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*

- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (DET)*

## PROCEDURES

### **The Approved Provider is responsible for:**

- 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
- considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care and removing those barriers wherever possible
- 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 in the family's first language where possible
- providing all parents/guardians with a copy of the document containing fee information for families (refer to Attachment 1)
- providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges (refer to samples in Attachments 2 and 3) upon enrolment of their child, and ensure that the *Fees Policy* is readily accessible at the service (Regulation 171)
- providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement (refer to samples in Attachments 3 and 4)
- collecting and receipting all fees
- 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 within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected (Regulation 172(2))
- ensuring a notice outlining fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care.

### **The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:**

- considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care and removing those barriers wherever possible
- considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families
- communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way and in the family's first language where possible
- providing all parents/guardians with a copy of the document containing fee information for families (refer to Attachment 1)
- providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges (refer to samples in Attachments 2 and 3) upon enrolment of their child, and ensure that the *Fees Policy* is readily accessible at the service
- providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement (refer to samples in Attachments 3 and 4)
- collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents 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 within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected
- ensuring a notice outlining fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care.

**Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:**

- informing the Approved Provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service
- referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- reading the Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care Fee information for families (refer to Attachment 1), the Fee Payment Agreement (refer to Attachments 4 and 5) and the Statement of Fees and Charges (refer to Attachments 2 and 3)
- signing and complying with the Fee Payment Agreement (refer to Attachments 4 and 5)
- notifying the Approved Provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees

## **EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to affordability, flexibility of payment options and procedures for the collection of fees
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- monitor the number of families/children excluded from the service because of their inability to pay fees
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)).

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Tallygaroopna Primary School Outside School Hours Care on **22/02/2018**

**REVIEW DATE:** 22/02/2019