

7.13 FEES POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Our school has a commitment to ensuring our fees are as affordable as possible and that all families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce these fees where possible.

The setting and payment of fees considers all requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, Australian Tax Office, Privacy Act and the guidelines contained within the Child Care Provider Handbook. All records held at the service will be maintained in accordance with the service Confidentiality and Privacy Policy. Families will be provided with accurate fees statements and clear information regarding fee payment processes.

GOALS

To enable our service to provide high quality education and care for children, we need to ensure we are financially viable at all times. Our school's financial health and access to our service will be maximised by ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment.

STRATEGIES

Fee Payable/Accounts

- The Approved Provider will determine the required fee level to meet budget prediction for the year.
- The fee schedule and fees payment policy will be fully explained to families during the enrolment process.
- Fees payable will be based on per term amounts. Pro-rata fees for part-term attendance will apply for the child's first term of enrolment (e.g. 4 days attendance is equivalent to 80% of term fees).
- If a family withdraws a child partway through a term, or attend for only part of a term, then the full-term fees for that term are still payable. The only exception to this rule is for a new starter's first term at the school.
- Families will be given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any fee increase.
- An invoice will be sent to parents/guardians termly.
- Families are required to pay morning and afternoon fees in advance at the start of each term. A dated receipt, in accordance with Australian Government Guidelines, will be provided for each payment, upon request, or once at the end of the year.
- Public holidays and staff development days falling within term time do not affect the set term fees, and the usual fee schedule applies.
- Fee payment will be recorded according to Australian Government Guidelines.

- In the case of children's absence due to, but not limited to; illness or holidays within term time, fees will still be payable on days the child would normally attend according to Lindfield Montessori school term dates and pre-booked afternoons. We do not offer 'make-up' days for children's absences.
- Term fees and the calendar are set prior to the beginning of the calendar year and are available on our school website. They may vary in length between 8 and 11 weeks. Term lengths may vary but this does not affect the fees.
- Equity children as defined by the Start Strong Guidelines, will receive a 5% discount on their morning fees.

Payment of Fees

- Morning (8:30am – 12 noon) and afternoon (12 noon – 3:30pm) fees are payable from at the beginning of each term and must be paid in advance.
- Fees are paid via methods as outlined on the invoice.

Overdue Fees

Parents/guardians with overdue fees will be encouraged by the Principal to discuss any difficulties they may have in meeting payments and make suitable arrangements with the School to pay, including the option of a payment plan.

If this is not done, or the agreed arrangements are not kept, the matter may be referred to a debt collector and/or cancellation of the child's enrolment may occur.

Late Fee Payment for Late Departure of Children

Late pick up of children may incur a breach of prescribed child to adult ratios compromising safety and care of all children at the centre.

Lindfield Montessori reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians have not collected their child/ren from the service before closing time. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Management Committee and based on the service's need to recoup expenses incurred in employee overtime wages.

Late fees will apply when a child has not been collected at the conclusion of a session and signed out of the centre within the grace period at the end of Session 1 (12:00pm) or Session 2 (3:30pm). The fee charged will be at \$2 per minute starting at the end of the 15-minute grace period for Session 1 and \$5 per minute for Session 2. These will be based on the time recorded on the iPad used for sign in and out purposes.

That is, for Session 1, late fees will be charged if the child is signed out at or after 12:16pm. For Session 2, late fees will be charged if the child is signed out at or after 3:46pm. A parent/guardian will be informed of late fees incurred and the cost will be added to an invoice at the end of that term.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved Provider

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- 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 the service and removing those barriers wherever possible.
- Providing parents/guardians with a termly invoice and /or statement of fees and charges.
- Ensuring that the Fees Policy is readily accessible at the service.
- Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable
- Ensuring a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is provided to all enquiring families and current families at the beginning of the new school year or when requested.
- Ensuring a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service.
- Enter into a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) with a parent or guardian, to provide education and care services in exchange for fees. A CWA is an agreement between the education and care service and a parent or guardian. It will include:
 - The provider and parents contact names and details.
 - The date the arrangement is effective from.
 - The child or children's full name and date of birth.
 - Enrolled days and start/end times.
 - Details of the fees to be charged.
- Update any changes to the CWA as required.

Nominated Supervisor

- Providing parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges.
- Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable.
- 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 the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service.

Early Childhood Educators

- Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor.

Families

- Reading this policy and referring any questions, queries, or concerns to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Recording the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending care.
- Arranging for another person to collect their child and inform the school of this arrangement prior to collection of the child if they will be unable to do so within the session finishing times or grace periods.
- Paying for any booked day of education and care which falls in term time, including public holidays and staff development days.
- Provide documentation of additional absence days as required.
- Provide 4 weeks notice of withdrawal from the service. Failure to provide notice of withdrawal will result in all fees for the expected attendance to be charged at the rate of the previous term.
- Notifying the Principal or Business Manager if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees.

THE PLACEMENT FEE

The Enrolment Agreement states that a family's placement fee is payable on enrolment, then credited to the first term's fees on commencement.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months. Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Relevant Legislation	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Reg. 168 (2) (n) Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Family Law Act 1975
Related to NQS QA	Quality Area 7, Standard 7.1
Sources & Further Reading	ACECQA (acecqa.gov.au) The Department of Education www.education.gov.au/early-childhood

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
November 2021	Reviewed in line with AIS guidelines	2022
April 2022	Included OOSH late fees	2023
February 2023	Included late fee for OOSH, updated afterschool care time. Changed finish times from 2:30pm back to 3:30pm. Included placement fee information.	2024
January 2024	Updated in line with CELA changes	June 2026
June 2024	Invoices to include morning and afternoon fees together and to be sent out to families at the start of each term.	December 2025