

FEES POLICY

Quality Area 7



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines for:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability of St Francis of Assisi OSHC, by setting appropriate fees and charges
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by St Francis of Assisi OSHC.



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

St Francis of Assisi OSHC 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
- ensuring there are no financial barriers for families wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/children
- 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

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge and parents/guardians attending St Francis of Assisi OSHC.

| RESPONSIBILITIES | Approved provider and persons with management or control | Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge | Educators and all other staff | Parents/guardians | Contractors, volunteers and students |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 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 | √ | √ | | | |
| Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the nominated supervisor and staff | √ | √ | | | |
| Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at St Francis of Assisi OSHC and removing those barriers wherever possible | √ | √ | | | |
| Reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered | √ | √ | | | |
| Considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families | √ | √ | | | |
| In OSHC settings, where Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy is applicable, ensure that all subsidies a child is eligible for are applied to reduce cost to families (CCS and ACCS can be accessed | √ | √ | | | |
| Ensuring that the <i>Fees Policy</i> is readily accessible at the service (<i>Regulation 171</i>) | √ | √ | | | |
| Providing all parents/guardians with fee information (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>) | √ | √ | | | |
| Providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges (<i>refer to samples in Attachments 2 and 3</i>) upon enrolment of their child | √ | √ | | | |
| Ensuring fees are collected and receipted | √ | √ | | | |
| Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) | √ | √ | | | |
| Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees | √ | √ | | | |

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|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Notifying parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected (<i>Regulation 172(2)</i>), and ideally providing one term's notice. | √ | √ | | | |
| Addressing any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service in a timely manner | √ | √ | | | |
| Reading the St Francis of Assisi OSHC Fee information for families (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>) | | | | √ | |
| Notifying the approved provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees | | | | √ | |
| BOLD tick √ indicates legislation requirement | | | | | |



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

St Francis of Assisi, OSHC operates on a non-profit basis. Any surplus will be allocated to purchase equipment and resources for the children's program, minor upgrades and service improvements as specified by the Committee of Management. Fees will be set by the Committee of Management and are subject to change. Fees are charged on a per session basis, per child, for all booked sessions. Fees are set to cover the cost of the service and to meet the projected budget for the service.

Permanent and Booked Care

Fees for permanent and booked care will be charged weekly in arrears. Invoices are issued immediately when they are processed and returned from DSS. Accounts must be finalised by the due date on the invoice. Due to delay in processing from DSS, occasionally invoices may not be issued weekly. However, it is expected that families continue to make weekly payments. Fees for casual or emergency care are required to be paid on the day of care.

It is under the discretion of the Committee of Management that if a child does not fulfill their permanent position they will be asked to go casual.

Casual and Emergency Care

Fees must be paid for on the day of care.

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, including Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

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

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torre Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability

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.

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*)

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



RELATED POLICIES

- Complaints and Grievances
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions and Service Events
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

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
- investigating what measures can be taken to reduce any barriers to access the program, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- 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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#))

ATTACHMENTS



- Attachment 1: Fee information for families
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ATTACHMENT NO. 1

Fee information for families

St Francis of Assisi OSHC

1. Why fees are necessary

St Francis of Assisi OSHC provides a range of support options to parents/guardians experiencing difficulty with payment of fees (see below).

2. How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, the Committee of Management sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar services in the area
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards

Fees set for the year are only reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

3. Additional charges

Other charges levied by St Francis of Assisi OSHC are included: on the Statement of Fees and Charges. These include:

- **Cancellation of Care Fee:** The Families are required to notify the service of any changes to booking arrangements. Seven days notice is required in writing for cancellation of Permanent booked care or change of booking. Families who cancel for one week or more need to fill in a change of care form and a \$5.00 fee will apply. Families who do not notify the service of intention to cancel permanent/casual booked care will be charged the full session fee for a one week period. Families who have booked care for their child/ren are required to notify the service 24 hours in advance for casual changes/cancellation of booking arrangements to avoid session charges. Please note if children have permanent positions and are continuously cancelled out, they will be requested to go on a casual basis as this reflects staff ratio.
- **Activity and Excursion cost Fee:** In order to meet the developmental needs and interests of school aged children, special activities and excursions will form part of the program. Families are asked to contribute to the cost of these extra activities. Families will be notified in advance of any additional charges. These additional charges do not attract CCS. Families will be invoiced for these additional activities within the normal billing period.
- **Late Pick up Fee:** The After School Care Program closes at 6 pm each evening. Late pick up fees have been put into place to prevent any family from arriving at the service after the advertised closing time. They also ensure that educators are paid for the additional hours they are required to work due to the late pick up of children. The service charges the family \$1.00 per minute. The late fee is added to the child's weekly invoice for care. These additional charges do not attract CCB. A late fee will be charged for children remaining in care after the advertised closing time.

Late Payment/Non Payment of fees: All fees for care must be paid by the due date. Payment arrangements are negotiated with families experiencing difficulties. Accounts falling more than 2 weeks in arrears will be sent notification to pay by due date. This documentation will state date payment is

required and process which will be followed if payment is not received. A \$10 late fee will apply. Accounts falling more than 3 weeks in arrears (who have not contacted the service or arranged alternative payment arrangements) receive a phone call from the co-ordinator or committee representative, excluding the child from care until payment is made. Once payment has been received, and your child/ren still require care, they can then return to the program. If fees are not paid by the end of the term, Committee Members reserve the right to exclude child/ren from the program until payments have been received. If continuation of late payments occurs, Committee Members reserve the right to remove child/ren indefinitely. The account will then be forwarded to the school bursar who will take necessary steps to recover funds. Families excluded from the service due to non-payment of fees will be provided with information regarding family support and Financial Advising Services available in the local community. St Francis of Assisi, OSHC has the ability to access 13 weeks of Child Care Subsidy to support families experiencing difficulties. The Committee has the ability to waive fees under special circumstances.

Vacation Care: Any bookings received after the due date that is nominated on the information sheet will incur an extra cost.

- **Administration Fee:** Families will be charged an Administration Fee for any additional services incurred as a result of non-compliance to Policies and Procedures, ie Late Payment/ Non payment of fees, Change of Care Details, Non Attendance Fee, Non Collection of Children Fee, Cancellation of Care Fee, Late Pick Up Fee and Child Care Benefit Fee. The Administration Fee does not attract CCS. Families will be charged an Administration fee for any backdating of attendances which need to be resent to Centrelink.

Children who do not attend Fee: The educators will endeavour to ensure that children booked into the service arrive as intended.

- Daily Attendance Register/Sign In Book is completed as children arrive at the service.
- If a child/ren does not arrive at the service before 3.45pm, educators contact school office to confirm that missing child/ren attended school on that day.
- The school office is requested to make an announcement over the intercom/speaker requesting that the missing child/ren go immediately to the service.
- If missing child/ren has not arrived by 3.50pm the educator will contact the parent/guardian/emergency contact to determine whereabouts of the child/ren.
- Consult with peers regarding possible whereabouts
- If the parent/guardian/emergency contact cannot be contacted or the missing child/ren is supposed to be attending the service, the educator will contact the Principal or Committee of Management.
- If educators are unable to contact parent/guardian/emergency contact, educator will advise Principal, St Francis of Assisi Primary School.
- Educators to notify Police.
- Educators to notify the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development within 24 hours.
- When contact has been made with Police regarding the missing child, child must be sighted by Police to ensure child's safety.
- Have school photo of child available for Police.
- Continue to make contact with parent/guardian/emergency contact to obtain information regarding the child/ren's whereabouts.
- A \$5.00 administration fee will apply.

Children from School Office: If families have not collected their children from school prior to 3:45pm, the service of St. Francis of Assisi OSHC is available to children registered in the program, provided a vacancy exists. The school principal and teachers have the responsibility to ensure that: Registered children remaining in the school grounds after 3:45pm will be taken to the service by school staff. Families are charged a session fee for the child's attendance.

Handling of Fee: The Co-ordinator and Educators are the only people who will accept payment from families for care. Payments will be accepted through the following methods:

Direct Deposit :

Bank: National Australia Bank

BSB: 083-363

Account Number: 507 652 657

Account Name: St Francis of Assisi OSHC Service

Ref: Child's Name

When parents are in a credit balance: Balance remains for parents to utilize. A refund will be forwarded to the family once they leave the school.

Non Collection of Children: St Francis of Assisi, OSHC will ensure the safety of children not collected from the service by the closing time. St Francis of Assisi's OSHC closes at 6.00 pm. The following procedure will be implemented for children remaining at the service after this time.

- the educators will attempt to contact the parents/ guardians/authorised persons.
- If not contactable, educators will immediately contact the emergency contact numbers on the enrolment form.
- If not contactable, the educators will wait for the parents/guardians/authorised person until 6.30 pm.
- The children will be reassured and made comfortable whilst educators are trying to contact the parent/guardian/authorised person.
- If by 6.30pm, the parent/guardian/authorised persons have not been contacted, educators will contact the Co-ordinator/Deputy Principal/Principal for direction.
- If by 6:45pm, the parent/guardian/authorised persons have not been contacted, educators will contact the Police & Department of Early Childhood & Education. (ph: 1300338691
- The Service Provider/Approved Provider will be contacted to advise of the action offered by the Police or DEECD.

Fundraising - Fundraising is an additional aspect to the financial management of the service. All fundraising activities will have a specific purpose which stakeholders will be notified of. No family will be placed under pressure to participate in the fundraising activities of the service. All fundraising income is used in the way it is advertised to the families. Financial aspects of fundraising activities are reported to the Committee of Management upon completion of the activity.

Notification of change of care requirements/casual care arrangements via Email address –Families utilising email to advise change of care requirements/casual care arrangements, must notify the service 24 hours prior to care arrangement. Failure to do so, will result in a fee of \$10 being charged for each instance. Telephone notification of change of care requirements/casual care arrangements will always be accepted.