

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 (Regulation 171)	☐	☐			
Providing all parents/guardians with fee information (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	☐	☐			
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	?	?			
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 Services Australia (Centrelink). Accounts must be finalised by the due date on the invoice. Due to delay in processing from Services Australia (Centrelink), 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



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

Why fees are necessary?

The St Francis of Assisi OSHC fees are developed to maintain the service's financial viability.

How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, the Committee of Management considers:

- 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 to meet quality program standards

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

- **Registration:** A registration fee of \$50 per family must be paid at time of registration (per calendar year). It is vital that Registrations for OSHC are received 14 days prior to care required. Children cannot attend the program until the registration process is finalised, approved and payment is received.
- **Change of Care Fee:** Families must notify the service of any changes to booking arrangements. Seven days notice is required, in writing, for change of permanent booked care. Families who wish to cancel for one week (or more) must email the service and a \$5.00 change-of-care fee per family will apply. Families who do not notify the service of their intention to cancel permanent care will be charged the full session fee for a one week period.
Please note: Families who continually cancel permanent care bookings will be required to transfer their booking arrangement to casual care.
- **Cancellation of Care:** Full session fees will be incurred for any cancellation of care not received via email or phone 24 hours prior to the commencement of the session for which care is booked. Cancellation of care received after 6pm on Friday will not be considered 24 hours' notice for Monday bookings.
- **Activity and Excursion cost Fee:** To enhance the educational value of the program, special activities and excursions may be available. In some instances, these special events may incur additional charges for the family. Families will be notified in advance of any additional charges. These additional charges may 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. Care provided after the advertised closing time will incur \$2 per minute per child. This late pick up fee is added to the child's weekly invoice for care. This additional charge does not attract CCS.

- **Failure to log child in/out of the service fee:** A \$5 administration fee is charged (per family) on each and every occasion the parent/guardian omits to log their child in or out of the program. CCS does not apply to this fee.
- **Failure to log child in/out of the service using SmartCentral portal:** A \$5 administration fee (per family) is charged on each and every occasion the parent/guardian elects to log the child in/out of the service utilising a paper document. This administration fee is incurred to compensate for the additional administration tasks resulting from this practice.
- **Late Payment/Non Payment of fees:** All fees for care must be paid by the due date which appears on the weekly statement. If payment is not received by the due date, a \$10 late fee (per family) will be charged. Families with accounts falling more than 3 weeks in arrears (who have not contacted the service or arranged alternative payment arrangements) will receive a phone call from a member of the Leadership Team or Approved Provider advising that the child may be excluded from care until payment is received. Once payment has been received, and if your child/ren still requires care, they will be permitted to return to the program. If fees are not paid by the end of the term, a member of the Leadership Team or Approved Provider reserve the right to exclude child/ren from the program until payments have been received. If continuation of late payments occurs, Leadership Team or Approved Provider 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.

In the event a family is experiencing financial difficulty, they can apply for access to Additional Child Care Subsidy.

- **Vacation Care/In-Service Day:** Bookings received after the due date nominated on the information sheet (calendar) will incur an extra cost. Once applications are received, no changes can be made. Cancellations will incur full fee.
- **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. 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 Services Australia.
- **Children who do not attend Fee:** The educators will endeavour to ensure that children booked into the service arrive as intended.
 - Daily Attendance Register is completed as children arrive at the service.
 - If a child/ren does not arrive at the service before 3.30pm, 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 3.35pm 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

- If educators are unable to contact parent/guardian/emergency contact, educator will advise Principal St Francis of Assisi Primary School and/or Approved Provider.
 - Educators to notify Police.
 - Educators to notify the Department of Education and Training 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.
- **Late and Same Day Booking:** The fee structure includes an additional tier for bookings not received 24 hours prior to the commencement of the session for which care is required or bookings received on the same day of care required.
 - **Children from School Office:** If a child has not been collected at the conclusion of the school day, and the school principal or teacher brings the registered child to the service, families are responsible for the session fee.

Handling of Fee: 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.

Fundraising - Fundraising is an additional aspect to the financial management of the service. All fundraising activities will have a specific purpose for which stakeholders will be notified. 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.