

# FEE AND BOOKING POLICY

Quality Areas: NQS 7 - Governance and leadership

Policy Owner: Business Efficiency

Why this is  
*important*

## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

This document sets out the policy and procedure for payment of fees and booking requirements for all families using a Guardian Childcare and Education ('Guardian') Centre. Any family enrolled in a Guardian centre is to adhere to this policy.

All Guardian centres are cash-free. This ensures increased safety for the educators, team members and children at the centres as well as streamlining administrative functions. All enquiries relating to this policy are to be directed to the Centre Manager or the Portfolio Manager.

## 2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

Centre Leadership Team, and Families

## 3.0 What is our Policy:

### 3.1 Bond Payments

- A Bond amount as set out in the fee schedule issued by the centre, will be issued to the family for payment
- A Bond is required to secure enrolment for each child and is to be paid prior to the child's first day of attendance
- Families cannot start care at the centre until the appropriate Bond payment is received
- A Bond paid at the commencement of care will not be refunded until each of the following has occurred:
  - All fee requirements are met and there are no outstanding fees payable
  - Two (2) weeks' notice (in writing) has been provided to the centre to cease care
  - The child/ren's care at the centre has ended; and
  - The child must be enrolled and have physically attended for a minimum period of two (2) weeks before a bond can be refunded (excluding any period of orientation or discounted fees).

### 3.2 Payment of Fees

- For new families to enroll at a Guardian centre, that family must first complete an Enrolment Form and a Direct Debit Request Form. These documents must be completed in full and returned to the centre prior to the child/ren's first day of attendance
- Accounts are to be paid one (1) week in advance at all times
- If the family has not been issued with a Customer Reference Number (CRN) from Centrelink, full fees are to be paid until the CRN has been issued and Centrelink has advised the centre
- It is each family's responsibility to notify the centre should any changes take place which may affect that family's entitlement to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), as this may affect the Gap Fee
- If the family has been authorised or approved to receive Third-Party Funding, full fees are to be paid by the family until the Third-Party Funding has been paid to the centre
- No cash or cheques will be accepted at the centre
- Direct Debit is the only payment method accepted at the centre:
  - Families can elect to have their direct debit payments debited from either a nominated bank account or credit card. Further details can be found on the Direct Debit Request Form.

- Direct Debit payments will be debited on a weekly basis (Fridays only) and will be for an amount equal to the entire balance due for the current week, plus one week in advance.
- Limits will only be set under very special circumstances and are to be discussed and approved by the Portfolio Manager
- A Statement of Account will be issued to all families weekly via email (except families who salary sacrifice and where fees are paid by a Third-Party will not receive a statement).

## 4.0 CCS – Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is the main way the Government assists families with their child care fees, and is targeted to provide greater assistance to low- and middle-income families.

### 4.1 Child Care Subsidy Eligibility

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive CCS for a child. These include:

- The child must be aged 13 or under and not attending secondary school, except in certain circumstances where an individual may be eligible for a child who does not meet these criteria, such as children with a disability or medical condition in certain circumstances
- The individual must care of the child at least 2 nights per fortnight or have 14% per cent of care or bereceiving family tax benefit for the child
- The child must meet immunization requirements
- The individual, or their partner, must meet the residency requirements

In addition, to be eligible for CCS the individual must be liable to pay for care provided, the care must be delivered in Australia by an approved child care provider, and not be part of a compulsory education program.

## 5.0 Complying Written Agreement

As outlined on <https://guides.dss.gov.au/>

A CWA is an arrangement between an approved provider (1.1.A.90) and an individual (1.1.I.90), to provide child care in return for fees. It serves 2 main purposes:

- A child is taken to have started to be enrolled when an approved provider and individual enter into a CWA, and
- To be eligible for CCS for a session of care (1.1.S.40), an individual, or their partner (1.1.P.30), must have incurred a liability to pay for the session under a CWA.

Requirements for a CWA are set out in the CCS Sec Rules, Part 4 Division 1.

For further information please refer to

[2.6.5 CCS - requirements relating to CWA | Family Assistance Guide \(dss.gov.au\)](#).

## 6.0 Late Fee Payment

A late fee is payable when a parent or an authorised person has not collected the child prior to the Centre's closing time (\$25.00 for the first 15 minutes, then an additional \$5.00 per minute). The fee will apply from the closing time, with late fees added to the families account for the following direct debit payment. While extenuating circumstances may be considered in some situations (e.g., last-minute train strike or a traffic accident etc.), parents are responsible to make alternative arrangements for their child to be collected on time. If a parent knows they are going to be late, they should contact the centre via phone to inform educators or team members.

## 7.0 Public Holidays, Holidays, and Casual Days

- Centrelink will continue to pay CCS for up to 42 absences per financial year; an absent day only counts if the family would otherwise have received CCS on that day, and includes absences due to holiday, sickness or Public Holidays

- A discounted holiday fee (as set out in the fee schedule issued by the centre) is available to all families, provided the centre receives written notification two (2) weeks prior to the start date of the holiday. The holiday discount days may be taken on single days or in one-week blocks. The holiday discount days apply per financial year and are capped at the annual holiday discounted days listed in the table below. Any unused holiday discount days are forfeited at 30 June each year.

| Days Enrolled per Week<br>(Permanent Booking only) | Annual Holiday Discounted Days<br>(per Financial Year) |
|--|--|
| - 5  | 20   |
| - 4  | 8  |
| - 3  | 6  |
| - 2  | 4  |
| - 1  | 2  |

- All Public Holidays relevant to the state or Local Governing Area in which the Centre is located, where a Public Holiday falls on a child's regular (permanent) booked day, one (1) of the below two (2) options is available to families:
  - A) A public holiday discounted fee (as set out in the fee schedule issued by the centre) is available to all permanent bookings booked on an announced public holiday. This discount must be requested by the family before the public holiday occurs. The Public Holiday Discount may not be used where a Swap Day is being utilised for that same announced public holiday; **OR**
  - B) One (1) Swap Day may be taken where a Public Holiday falls on a permanent booked day of care. One (1) Swap Day is available per one (1) Public Holiday on any permanent day of care. Swap Days can only be taken after a Public Holiday has occurred and provided the centre receives written notification two (2) weeks prior to the requested date for the Swap Day to occur. Swap Days are subject to availability. A Swap Day cannot replace an existing permanent booked day. A Swap Day will be applied as default unless the Public Holiday discount is requested prior to the Public Holiday occurring (excluding 5-day families). Any unused swap days are forfeited at the end of the expiration period, as outlined as follows.
    - 1-July to 24-December Public Holidays (*Swap Day credits expire midnight Dec 24<sup>th</sup>*)
    - 25-December to 24-March Public Holidays (*Swap Day credits expire midnight Mar 24<sup>th</sup>*)
    - 25 March to 30 June Public Holidays (*Swap Day credits expire midnight Jun 30<sup>th</sup>*)
    - Casual bookings for extra days are welcome and will be charged at the normal daily fee (subject to casual day promotions).

## 8.0 Educator Loyalty Scheme

The Guardian Educator Loyalty Scheme is an employee benefit available to all existing Guardian employees. The current scheme has been in place from 2 July 2018, the terms of which are set out in the Employee Handbook.

## 9.0 Debt Management

- The Centre Manager will cease care if after two (2) consecutive weeks no payment has been received or no payment arrangement has been put in place
- If a payment arrangement has been agreed with a family, a Payment Arrangement Form is to be signed by the family and the Centre Manager
- Any payment arrangement put in place must not exceed 12 weeks

- If an account remains in arrears and is not settled, the family will be contacted, and the account will be sent to Guardian's preferred Collection Agency to commence full recovery of the outstanding amount as well as additional costs for using this service
- The cost of recovery action could be an additional 25% of the outstanding amount plus costs for serving documents of \$100.00 per time, court filing fee of \$200.00 depending on the individual court, and professional fees starting from \$800.00
- Guardian may also register a payment default against your credit file which may affect your credit rating and ability to obtain credit in the future.

### 9.1 End of Care

Families must provide two (2) weeks' prior written notice to the centre to advise of the end of care.

If the family has not provided the required two (2) weeks' prior notice OR the child/ren do not attend the centre within the notice period, under the Department of Education and Training requirements, full fees are to be charged and the family will not be eligible to receive CCS for that period.

### 9.2 Parent Refunds

- To be considered, the account must be in credit and within the Centre's payment terms
- All CCS and Direct Debit payments must be cleared. If these payments are pending, the refund could be delayed
- Refunds will only be processed on Tuesday and Friday mornings
- Please refer to the Parent Refund Procedure for further information.

### 9.3 Enrolment Form

- The Enrolment Form is a legal requirement under the National Regulations and governs the terms and conditions of the family's enrolment at a Guardian centre. It is important that all details provided in the Enrolment Form are true, complete and correct
- If circumstances change during a child/ren's enrolment at a Guardian centre, the family should notify the Centre Manager of the change in circumstances as soon as practicable.

## 10.0 Responsibilities:

| Who?  | How?  |
|---|---|
| <b>Educators and Teammembers WILL:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand this policy and be able to answer families' questions in relation to this policy</li> <li>• Be able to record any questions families may have in relation to this policy and pass this onto the Nominated Supervisor or Enrolments Team in timely manner to clarify and answer questions, where appropriate.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Nominated Supervisors WILL:</b><br><br><b>In the absence of the NS, the Responsible Person WILL:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure an updated centre fee schedule is on display for all families</li> <li>• Ensure all paperwork including CRN details of both child and parent claiming CCS is completed and accurate</li> <li>• Paperwork includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ fully completed and signed Enrolment Form (Part 1 and Part 2)</li> <li>○ copy of child's original birth certificate (signed and dated to verify that the original has been sighted)</li> <li>○ current Immunisation History Statement for the child (or Medical Immunisation Exemption Form)</li> <li>○ Medical Management Plan (including Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan, if applicable)</li> <li>○ Court orders/parenting orders/parenting plans (if applicable); and</li> <li>○ fully completed and signed Direct Debit Form</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Answer each family's questions regarding this policy as soon as practical. If unable to</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>answer a question, the Nominated Supervisor will seek to resolve by asking the relevant Government agencies for assistance, and will continue communicating with the family in the meantime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all children's attendances and absences are reported through the CCSS (QikKids)</li> <li>• Resubmit any attendance enquiries from families through the CCSS (QikKids), as required</li> <li>• Generate statements of account via email to each family as per the feeschedule for the centre</li> <li>• At the end of care for a child, enter details of the cessation of care into theCCSS (QikKids)</li> <li>• Ensure that any request from a family to change days shall be in writing and will print email/ document and staple/file with the Enrolment Form</li> <li>• Nominated Supervisor or Enrolments Team will issue Bond quotes to families</li> <li>• If parents/guardians of a child are separated at the time of enrolment, consider whether separate Enrolment Forms and Direct Debit Forms are required</li> <li>• If parents/guardians of a child subsequently separate during a child's enrolment, consider whether separate Enrolment Forms and Direct Debit Forms are required</li> </ul> <p><b>Process holiday discounts in QikKids accordingly and accommodate Swap Days where possible</b></p>   |
| <b>Approved Provider (Guardian Childcare &amp; Education) WILL:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure effective processes are in place to collect fees from families</li> <li>• Ensure training is provided to the Enrolments Team, administration team members and Centre Managers on how to manage the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) and QikKids</li> <li>• Ensure the policy remains current and aligned with Federal Government policy and requirements</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Family and Community WILL:</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay a Bond to secure a child's enrolment at the centre</li> <li>• Complete an Enrolment Form and Direct Debit Request Form and return these forms to the centre prior to commencement of enrolment. All information provided must be true, complete and accurate</li> <li>• Ensure that fees will be paid one week in advance at all times</li> <li>• Understand that if the CRN details are not provided to the centre, or the details provided are incorrect, the family will be responsible for paying full fees until such time as correct CRN details are provided</li> <li>• Provide two (2) weeks' prior notice in writing if there is any change in a child's days of attendance or to cease care, as outlined in the Enrolment Form</li> <li>• Provide two (2) week's prior notice in writing of any planned holiday, where the family requests to use the allowed Holiday Discount or to request a Swap Day</li> <li>• Provide written notice prior to the public holiday occurring should the family wish to use the public holiday discount</li> <li>• Ensure that, if family circumstances change during child/ren's enrolment, they notify the Centre Manager as soon as practicable (and complete new Enrolment Form's and Direct Debit Forms, if required)</li> <li>• Seek further information about CCS from the Department of Human Services which can be accessed using this link:<br/><a href="https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy">https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy</a></li> </ul> |

## 11.0 Changes to Policy

This Fee and Booking Policy is subject to change at the sole discretion of Guardian from time to time. Guardian will provide at least 14 days' prior notice to families of any change to this Fee and Booking Policy.

## 12.0 Tools and Resources

### The most important documents I need are:

- QikKids User Guidelines
- QK Daily Checklist for Centre Teams

### Other supporting documents will include:

- QikKids GWay Page
- QK General Enquiry: [QK- General Enquiry |](#)

### 13.0 Definitions

**Bond** A Bond is a security deposit paid by a family and held by Guardian to secure a child’s enrolment at a centre.

**Centrelink** Centrelink is part of the Australian Department of Human Services.

**Child care subsidy (CCS)** Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a subsidy offered by the Australian Government to eligible families to help with the cost of child care.

**Collection agency** A collection agency is a business that pursues payments of debts owed by individuals or businesses.

**Customer reference number (CRN)** Customer Reference Number (CRN) is a unique Centrelink identifier.

**Direct debit** Direct Debit is a payment method that enables Guardian to draw money directly from a family’s nominated bank account or credit card.

**Gap fee** The gap fee is the “out of pocket expense”. For example, the full daily fee less CCS equals the Gap Fee.

**National regulations** The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018.

**Third-party funding** Payments or subsidies (other than CCS) for child care fees paid by third party providers. For example, under the Adult Migrant English Program or additional child care subsidies from the Department of Human Services.

**Swap day** An additional (casual) day of care for a \$0 fee, where a family has been charged full fee for a Public Holiday that occurs on the child’s permanent booked day of care.

### 14.0 Additional Information

#### Can discounts be offered?

Yes. Family Assistance Law does not regulate what fees providers may charge for a session of care—this is a matter for providers. However, a fundamental principle and requirement under Family Assistance Law is that Child Care Subsidy is always calculated on the actual fee the parent is liable to pay for each session of care and reference this doc [Liability for payment | Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#)

### 15.0 References

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
- <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

### 16.0 Links to the National Law and Regulations

Section 168 Education and care services must have policies and procedures in relation to - (n) payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the education and care service.

|                       |                      |                         |                      |                          |          |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| <b>Policy owner</b>   | Business Performance | <b>Content author</b>   | Business Performance |                          |          |
| <b>Date published</b> | 1/4/2024             | <b>Document version</b> | V1.0                 | <b>Revision due date</b> | 1/4/2025 |

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