

FEE AND ENROLMENT POLICY

Quality Areas: NQS 7 - Governance and leadership

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Why this is important

Policy Owner: Business Performance

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

This document sets out Guardian Childcare and Education's Fee and Enrolment policy.

We seek to provide all families with access to high quality care and education. We are committed to enabling families to enrol in our centres and aspire for our Fee and Enrolment Policy, and the fee schedule at their chosen centre, to be transparent and understood prior to their enrolment.

This policy sets out the requirements of a successful fee and enrolment experience with us.

2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

All families enrolled in a Guardian Childcare & Education Centre

3. Family Responsibilities

Requirement to complete an enrolment form

All families must complete an Enrolment Form and a Direct Debit Request Form prior to commencing care.

These documents must be completed in full and returned to the centre prior to the child's first day of attendance.

All families are required to complete the enrolment form truthfully. Failure to do so may put the family's enrolment at risk of modification or cancellation.

The enrolment form acts as a Complying Written Agreement (**CWA'**) for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) purposes.

If your circumstances change during a child/ren's enrolment at a Guardian centre, the family must notify the Centre Manager of the change as soon as practicable.

Requirement to pay a Bond

All families must pay a bond as set out in the fee schedule issued by the centre.

The effect of paying a bond is dependent on the enrolment start date;

- i. If a start date is 6 weeks or less in the future, then the payment of the bond secures a place in the chosen centre.
- ii. If a family's start date is more than six weeks away, the bond provides a 'first right' to a place. If another family requests any of the same sessions with an earlier start date, the centre will contact the original family to offer the opportunity to move their start date forward. If declined, the enrolment will be offered to the other family, and the original family's bond will be refunded. If a bond has been paid and the family withdraws their enrolment before the commencement of care, Guardian reserves the right to retain the bond and not issue a refund

The child must be enrolled and have physically attended for a minimum period of four (4) weeks before a bond can be refunded (excluding any period of orientation or discounted fees). This includes withdrawing an enrolment before commencement of care.

A Bond will not be refunded until all fee requirements are met and there are no outstanding fees payable following the cessation of a child's care. Families should allow at least four (4) weeks for refunds to be processed.



Requirement to pay Fees in full and on time

Families must pay all Fees to the centre on time and in full, at least one (1) week in advance.

Direct Debit is the only payment method accepted surcharges and credit card fees apply as outlined on the direct debit form.

Payments are debited on a weekly basis for the entire balance due for the current week, plus one week in advance.

Fees are payable for all statutory Public Holidays (allowable absences and Holiday Discounts can be used on these days).

Families must provide a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) application. Full fees must be paid until the CRN is provided to the centre.

It is each family's responsibility to notify the centre of any changes which may affect that family's CCS entitlements.

If the family has been authorised or approved to receive Third-Party Funding, full fees are to be paid by the family to the centre until the Third-Party Funding has been paid to the centre.

Families acknowledge their enrolment is dependent on being up to date with all fee payments. If a family falls more than two (2) weeks behind on their fee payments their enrolment may be terminated.

We may, at our sole discretion, enter into a formal payment plan with a family. Any payment plan must not exceed 12 weeks in duration.

Any overdue amounts at the cessation of care may be sent to a collection agency for recovery with the family being responsible for any reasonable direct costs in relation to recovery.

Requirement to pay Late Collection fee

A late fee is payable if a child has not been collected prior to the centre's normal closing time. A late fee will be charged at \$25.00 for the first 15 minutes (or part thereof) and then an additional \$10.00 per subsequent 5-minute block or part thereof. Families acknowledge that this late fee is a genuine estimate of the costs that Guardian incurs from having to keep the centre open as a result of late collection.

Requirement to attend first booked session and the last booked session for CCS to be applied

Families eligible for the childcare subsidy (CCS) must attend their first booked session of care in order for CCS to be applied. Should the family not attend on their first day, CCS will not apply until the child's first actual day of attendance, and full fees will be payable by the family for those days not attended.

Upon ending care, families eligible for CCS must attend their last booked session of care in order for CCS to be applied. Should families not attend on their last booked day of care, cessation of care rules will apply so no CCS is paid from the last actual day of attendance to the last booked session of care. Full fees will be payable by the family for these days.

Requirement to provide two week's notice to cease care or reduce days

Families must give a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice to end care or reduce the number of permanent booked days of care. More information can be found in section "[5.0 Ending care or reducing booked days of care](#)" of this document.

4.0 Absences, Holiday Discounts, and Casual Days

Absence days

CCS will continue to be applied for up to 42 absences per financial year. See Services Australia for more information [here](#).

Holiday Discounts

A Holiday Discount is available for a certain number of days per year dependent on a family’s permanent booking days, as per the table below.

Days Enrolled per Week (Permanent Booked Days only)	Holiday Discount Days (per Financial Year)
5	20
4	8
3	6
2	4
1	2

Families must request Holiday Discounts in advance and provide at least two (2) weeks’ notice.

The percentage discount is set out in the fee schedule issued by the centre.

The holiday discount days may be taken in single days or in a block of one week of regular permanent booked days.

Any unused holiday discount days expire at 11.59pm on 30 June each year.

Public Holidays

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.
 - i) 1-July to 24-December Public Holidays (Swap Day credits expire midnight Dec 24th)
 - ii) 25-December to 24-March Public Holidays (Swap Day credits expire midnight Mar 24th)
 - iii) 25 March to 30 June Public Holidays (Swap Day credits expire midnight Jun 30th)

5-Day families will automatically have the public holiday discount (option a above) applied as cannot utilise a Swap Day.



Casual days

Should families require additional days of care, above their permanent booked days, then casual days of care can be requested. These are subject to availability and at the Centre's sole discretion.

5.0 Ending care or reducing booked days of care

Ending Care

A minimum of two (2) weeks' notice must be given to cease care.

Families must complete Guardian's End of Care Notification Form in order to cease care. The two (2) weeks' notice period commences on the day the centre receives this Form.

If the family has not provided the required two (2) weeks' notice, full fees for the two weeks will be charged.

If the child/ren do not attend the centre within the notice period (particularly their last day), the family will not be eligible to receive CCS for that period, in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Upon ceasing care, families will receive a refund of any amounts that are in credit on their account. All CCS and Direct Debit payments must be cleared. If these payments are pending, the refund could be delayed. Families should allow at least four (4) weeks for refunds to be processed.

Reduction of booked days of care

Families are required to provide at least two (2) weeks' notice in writing of any request to reduce the number of days they are enrolled for. The notice period starts from the date we receive your written request to reduce days. The approval of any request is at the absolute discretion of the centre.

6.0 Priority of Access

[Priority of Access Guidelines](#) ensure approved childcare services allocate places fairly when demand exceeds availability. Vacant places must be filled in order of priority:

- *Priority 1 for children at risk of serious abuse or neglect;*
- *Priority 2 for children of single parents or families where both parents meet the work, training, or study test;*
- *Priority 3 for any other children. Within these categories, additional priority is given to children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, families with a disabled member, low-income families, non-English speaking backgrounds, socially isolated families, and single-parent families. Services funded by employers for their employees' children may prioritize those children.*

Under the guidelines, a childcare service may require a Priority 3 child to vacate a place to accommodate a higher-priority child. If this unlikely situation were to occur, the family will be given at least 14 days' notice before the child is required to vacate the place. This policy ensures equitable access to childcare while addressing the needs of vulnerable families and those with higher priority.

7.0 Changes to Policy

This Fee and Enrolment Policy is subject to change at the sole discretion of Guardian from time to time.

8.0 Definitions

Bond A Bond is a security deposit paid by a family and held by Guardian to prioritise a child's offer of enrolment at a centre.

Centrelink Centrelink is part of Services Australia.

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.



Complying Written Agreement (CWA) A CWA is an arrangement between an approved provider (Guardian) and an individual (Family), to provide child care in return for fees. At Guardian, this is referred to as our Enrolment Form.

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 Services Australia.

References

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations, regulations 168 (2)(n) and 172(2)

Schedule 1: National Quality Standard, quality area 7, standard 7.3 and element 7.3.5

A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 (or equivalent)

INTERNAL USE ONLY

Implementation of this policy:

Who?	How?
Educators and Team members WILL:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand this policy and be able to answer families' questions in relation to this policy • 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.
Nominated Supervisors WILL: In the absence of the Nominated Supervisor, the Responsible Person WILL:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an updated centre fee schedule is available for all families • Ensure all paperwork including CRN details of both child and parent claiming CCS is completed and accurate • Paperwork includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ fully completed and signed Enrolment Form – all parts ○ copy of child's original birth certificate (signed and dated to verify that the original has been sighted) ○ current Immunisation History Statement for the child (or Medical Immunisation Exemption Form) ○ Medical Management Plan ○ Court orders/parenting orders/parenting plans (if applicable); and ○ fully completed and signed Direct Debit Form • Answer each family's questions regarding this policy as soon as practical. • If unable to answer a question, the Nominated Supervisor (or Responsible Person, as applicable) will refer the family to the relevant Government agencies for assistance • Ensure all children's attendances and absences are reported through the CCSS (QikKids) • Resubmit any attendance enquiries from families through the CCSS (QikKids), as required • Generate statements of account via email to each family as per the fee schedule for the centre • At the end of care for a child, enter details of the cessation of care into the CCSS (QikKids) • 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 • Nominated Supervisor or Enrolments Team will issue Bond quotes to families • If parents/guardians of a child are separated at the time of enrolment, consider whether separate Enrolment Forms and Direct Debit Forms are required • If parents/guardians of a child subsequently separate during a child's enrolment, consider whether separate Enrolment Forms and Direct Debit Forms are required • Process holiday discounts in QikKids as per policy
Approved Provider (Guardian Childcare & Education) WILL:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective processes are in place to collect fees from families • 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 • Ensure the policy remains current and aligned with Federal Government policy and requirements

Tools and Resources (Centre use only)



<p>The most important documents I need are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QikKids User Guidelines • QK Daily Checklist for Centre Teams 	<p>Other supporting documents will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QikKids GWay Page • QK General Enquiry: QK- General Enquiry Guardian Childcare & Education (freshservice.com) • QikKids How-To generate a free quote Guide
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References

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations, regulations 168 (2)(n) and 172(2)
- Schedule 1: National Quality Standard, quality area 7, standard 7.3 and element 7.3.5
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 (or equivalent)
- Priority of Access Guidelines, Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000

Policy owner	Business Performance	Content author	Business Performance
Date published	03/02/2025	Document version	V5
		Revision due date	03/02/2026
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Please note V1-V4 of this policy were known as the Fee and Booking Policy.