Fee Payment Policy

Objective

Albert Waterways Children's Centre is a non-profit organisation which operates solely on the fees paid for each child's attendance. Therefore, to ensure the Centre's operation is viable this policy will clarify the centre's fee structure for families. This policy explains the process of fee payment and the necessity of ensuring children's fees are paid on or before the due date and consequences for failure to pay fees on time. AWCC is committed to ensuring that children's safety, rights and best interests are the paramount consideration in all decisions, actions and practices including those relating to the payment of fees, recognising the importance of continuity of education and care for all children.

Related Policies and Procedures

Arrival and Departure Policy

Albert Waterways Children's Centre Family Handbook

Kindergarten Program Policy

Application of this policy

This policy applies to all families while their child is enrolled in the Centre. Should the need arise, the policy will be translated into appropriate languages.

FEE INFORMATION

Daily Fee

- Fees are charged for each session of care and vary depending on the age of the child in care.

- The daily fee is set by the Parent Management Committee and is reviewed at least annually. The Committee reserves the right to change the fees/ and or fee structure when necessary.
- Parents will be informed in writing of any changes to the fees or fee structure at least two weeks prior to said changes.
- Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to the Service, and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family's statement).
- Families are required to pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount- the 'gap' amount.
- Fees will not be charged for gazetted public holidays and Centre Closures e.g., Christmas - New Year break.
- Casual days (in addition to enrolled days) may be offered to families if available.
- Fees are payable every day when your child is enrolled in the Centre, regardless of absence due to illness, holidays etc.

Fee Payment

- **From 1st July 2023, Centrelink has mandated families to make electronic payments only.**
- Fees are invoiced fortnightly, two weeks in advance, with payment to be received on or before the invoice due date (one week after the invoice is issued). A paper copy is available if you do not have access to a computer or smart phone.
- Fees are required to be paid using the following **two** options:
    - Automated Merchant Bank Transfer (OWNA/Fat Zebra) Payment Merchant is the preferred payment method and can be set up to directly withdraw your payments on a fortnightly basis from your personal bank account. Fees and charges associated with the direct debit system are outlined upon enrolment. A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees.
    - Automated personal bank transfer – Centre BSB and account details are provided on the invoice. Use the child's first and last name as a reference.
- Each family can choose their method of payment, however if they ***prove*** unable to make consistent weekly payments, the Payment Merchant will be enforced to ensure their child's position in the Centre is maintained.

- If families wish to pay fees on a weekly or monthly basis, it is a requirement that the family pay in advance and are not in arrears.
- Families will be issued with a *Statement of Entitlement* on a fortnightly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements.
- The *Statement of Entitlement* will include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts.
- The *Statement of Entitlement* is generated using our CCS Software which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

Fundraising Fee

- The Fundraising fee is voluntary; we request **$10** per quarter per child.

Wait List Fee

- A non-refundable fee of **$25** is required along with the Wait List Application form, to take a placement on the centre's waitlist.

Welcome Pack Fee

- On enrolment, each child is issued a welcome pack including a hat, wet bag, and polo shirt. This fee is set by the Management committee at the beginning of each year.

Security Bond

- A security bond is payable as part of the enrolment process. The amount will be held on account until your child's final day, at which point the amount shall be refunded. The bond fee will be refunded to families if all accounts are paid in full, and no amount is outstanding when the child leaves the service. Please note the Security Bond is not to be used as payment for final attendance.
- The Security bond will be charged at **$300** for the first child in the family and **$200** for any further children enrolled simultaneously.
- As part of the enrolment process, we require to sight documents with proof of address, for example, a driver's licence or current utilities bill is ideal.

Late Fees

- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the Service. *Late fees* will be charged for any child picked up after 5.45pm.
- The centre charges the family $2.00 per minute per child and the fee will be automatically added to the family's account. Late fees are not eligible for the Childcare Subsidy.
- Families who habitually collect their child after 5.45pm (two strike rule), will be referred to the Parent Committee for review and your child's enrolment may be revoked. Parents are reminded to be mindful of the staff and their families.

Failure to pay and debt recovery procedure

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued one week after the invoice due date and then again after two weeks if the fees remain outstanding. The Management Committee will be notified at this stage.
- At any time of the debt recovery process the family will be encouraged to enter a debt agreement with the service to repay outstanding fees. A written contract will be provided for the family to sign outlining repayment plan details. The repayment plan will provide information as to the duration and amount of the repayments as well as steps that will be taken if the repayment plan is not adhered to.
- A child's position will be terminated if payment has not been received three weeks after the invoice due date, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the centre will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.
- The Management Committee and Nominated Supervisor make the final decision on the termination of a child's position in the centre.
- Upon a child finishing at the Centre, all fees must be finalised. If any amount of monies is left outstanding, the Centre reserves the right to use the services of a debt collection agency to retrieve the outstanding debt.

Financial difficulties

If families encounter a change in their financial circumstances, they should immediately inform the Administrator or Nominated Supervisor, so that a payment agreement can be negotiated.

- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink for additional fee assistance.
- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing)—to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect. The Nominated Supervisor is involved in determining children who may require additional support who are at risk of harm
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work)—to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Most families receive some form of fee subsidy from the Commonwealth Government, which provides direct fee relief to families.

- Parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their myGov account linked to Centrelink and provide documentation to support the CCS payment
- All eligible families are guaranteed at least 72 hours of subsidised child care per fortnight (3 days per week) regardless of activity levels
- Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy. The child must:
  - be a 'Family Tax Benefit child' or 'regular care child' and
  - be 13 or under and not attending secondary school and
  - meet immunisation requirements
- The person claiming the Child Care Subsidy, or their partner must:
  - meet residency requirements and
  - be liable to pay for care provided under a Complying Written Arrangement (their written agreement) with their childcare provider
- Childcare must be provided by an approved provider
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
  - family income estimate

- recognised participation
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- number of children in care
- type of early learning and child care Service

- Child Care Subsidy will be provided directly to the Service and this amount deducted from the parent/family account.
- Families must regularly check their details are correct and report a change in circumstance to Centrelink (family income, activity levels, relationship changes or any other changes to their circumstances).
- Any disputes with CCS payments are the responsibility of the family. The family will be referred to contact Centrelink directly for any enquiries regarding CCS payments.

Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend.
- Families must still pay the 'gap' fee to the Service if their child is unable to attend.
- Under the Child Care Subsidy, families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year, and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances.
- Additional absences can be claimed for the specified reasons as defined by the Family Assistance Law
- Records and evidence will be kept by the Service for each additional absence, where required.
- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via myGov.

Termination of Enrolment

- Parents are to provide **two weeks written notice** of their intention to withdraw a child from the centre.
- If termination from the Service is required without notification, families may lose their Child Care Subsidy, resulting in the requirement for full fees to be paid.
- In some circumstances CCS may not be paid for sessions if the child has not physically started care.
- Additionally, CCS may not be paid for absences submitted after a child's last physical day of care, unless conditions have been met as specified by Family Assistance Law.

Responsibility of Management

The Management Committee and Nominated Supervisor are responsible for:

- ensuring that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations are met
- ensuring the Service and all persons with management and control (PMC) comply with the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL)
- ensuring persons with management and control (PMC) are considered 'fit and proper' persons
- ensuring that children's safety, rights and best interests are the paramount consideration of all Service decisions and practices
- setting fees for children to enrol at the Service
- ensuring copies of our *Payment of Fees Policy* are readily accessible for families
- taking reasonable steps to ensure all educators, staff and volunteers follow the *Payment of Fees Policy* and associated procedure
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information
- providing families with regular statement of fees payable
- providing families with receipts of fees paid
- notifying families of any overdue fees
- providing families with reminder letters as required
- terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid
- discussing financial hardship considerations and payment plans with families, when necessary
- providing at least 2 weeks written notice to families of any fee increases or changes to the way fees are collected

Responsibility of Families

- Provide the Service with the correct enrolment details to facilitate the CCS claim, if required, including:
    - Centrelink Reference Numbers for the child and CCS claimant
    - Date of Birth for child and CCS claimant
- Ensure payment of fees as per policy
- Notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement
- Confirm their child's enrolment through the parents myGov account.

Sources

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Payment of service fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service Policy and procedure guidelines*

Australian Government Department of Education Child care discount for early childhood workforce

Australian Government Department of Education. (2026). Child Care Provider Handbook

Australian Government Department of Education *Early Childhood and Care*

Australian Government Department of Education (2024). *Help in an emergency*

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Policy Review Record

Date	Management Committee Name	Nominated Supervisors Name	Review Cycle	Next Review Date
March 2026	Ben Fagan	Tamara Fallon	Every year	March 2027