

# A-6 Fees

Epping Heights OSHC.

## NQS

QA. 6.1.3	Families are supported.
QA. 6.2.2	Access and participation.
QA. 7.1.2	Management systems.

## National Regulations

Reg. 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg. 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Reg. 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Reg. 181	Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider

## POLICY STATEMENT

We aim to provide a quality service which is affordable. Fee levels will be set by Management each year on completion of an annual budget and according to the Centre's required income.

## RELATED POLICIES

- Epping Heights OSHC Policy A-1: Hours of Operation
- Epping Heights OSHC Policy A-4: Enrolment
- Epping Heights OSHC Policy A-8: Dropping off and Picking Up
- Epping Heights OSHC Policy A-11: Maintenance of Records
- Epping Heights OSHC Policy A-15: Role of Management Committee
- Epping Heights OSHC Policy A-17: Privacy and Confidentiality

## PROCEDURE

### *SETTING FEES.*

Fees are to be set by Management, based on the annual budget and ensuring that the required income will be received to run the service efficiently and allow for future needs.

Fees will be reviewed annually at a minimum based on attendance and the Centre's ability to meet the running costs. Parents will be given at least 14 days notice of any changes in the fees as per regulation 172.

An annual 'Membership Fee' as set by Management, and visible in the fee schedule, is charged per family, whether the child is permanent or casual. The service cannot be used without the payment of this fee (see A-4: Enrolment Policy). This fee will be charged to the parent account on finalisation of the enrolment, and debited in next debit cycle

A 'Non-notification Fee' as set by Management, and visible in the fee schedule, will be charged if:

- The centre is not notified of absence before the end of a permanent or casual booking for a morning session (the session fee will still be charged), or
- the Centre is not notified of absence before the commencement of a permanent or casual booking for an afternoon session (the session fee will still be charged), or
- attendance at a session without a booking being made.

A 'Late Pickup Fee' as set by Management, and visible in the fee schedule, will be charged when any parent or authorised person collects their children after the Centre's closing time (see A-8: Dropping Off and Picking Up Policy).

A 'Non-Signage Fee' as set by Management, and visible in the fee schedule, will be charged when any parent, guardian or responsible adult neglects to or incorrectly/inaccurately signs their child in or out of the centre on the touch-screen.

Other fees for miscellaneous items such as water bottles, additional food, hats or broken windows may be charged at the discretion of the Director in consultation with the management committee.

### ***FEE PAYMENT***

Once a fortnight parents receive the previous fortnights invoice/statement of usage details via email. Where there is an uneven number of weeks in a school term, the statement with the final week of charges will be emailed in a single week cycle. It is expected that this invoice is paid within seven days of receiving the statement. Parents may also pay in advance if desired.

The centre will not take responsibility for email addresses incorrectly advised. Parent / Guardian email addresses can be changed via the centre portal.

Upon receiving a statement, any discrepancies or irregularities in a family account should be brought to the attention of the Nominated Supervisor or Becklyn ASAP.

Epping Heights OOSH is an Ezidebit only centre. This means that Direct Debit (Ezidebit) is the only method of fee payment available. All families enrolling with Epping Heights OSHC will need to enter bank account / credit card details as part of their enrolment via the online portal. Families will have their nominated bank account/credit card debited two days following statements being emailed. There are fees associated with the use of Ezidebit, visible in the Fee schedule, and accepted by parents when signing up through the portal.

Where a Family's nominated bank account/credit card dishonours, notification will be sent from Becklyn via email, requesting immediate payment and advising what actions are required to ensure future debits are successful. Dishonour Fees, visible in the Fee Schedule, may be charged by both Epping Heights OSHC and Ezidebit.

Families wishing to be considered for an EziDebit exemption need to email the Parent Management Committee (via the Centre email address) stating the reasons for such a request. Where an exemption is granted, Parents / Guardians will be expected to pay any outstanding amounts (listed on their statement) within 7 days. Failure to meet the payment terms will result in the overdue fees clause being applied

All fees are payable for permanent bookings, regardless of attendance at the session. This includes times when the child is absent due to illness or other circumstances and exclusion from the Centre due to non-immunisation in the event of a vaccine-preventable outbreak. Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is paid for absent days, where eligible – up to 42 days of allowable absences per financial year. All statements are inclusive of CCS discounts if the child has a 'confirmed enrolment' for CCS purposes, and is entitled to any discounts.

Families will not be charged when the Centre is closed on Industrial Action Days and Public Holidays. Fees for before and after school care will not be payable during vacation care time frames.

To cancel a permanent booking, the changes must be logged online by 9.00am Friday the week prior to the change. If a booking, once cancelled, is then required within two weeks, all fees that would otherwise have been paid in the intervening period must be paid in full prior to the new booking being accepted. If no notice is given, the normal weekly fees are to be paid.

Parents may access particulars of their fees at any time via the centre portal. If a Parent's enquiry regarding fees is particularly sensitive or complex, then an appointment should be scheduled with the Nominated Supervisor at an arranged time to ensure that proper supervision of the children attending the Centre is not compromised during these discussions.

**PARENT ENTITLEMENTS FOR FEE ASSISTANCE** The Centre is approved to offer Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to eligible families. This subsidy is paid to the Centre. Families must apply for CCS through Centrelink and this can take many weeks. Once a family has been approved for CCS, they must provide their CRN details so the Complying Written Agreement (CWA) can be setup in the CCS system. Once the CWA has been setup, the parent must login to the Centrelink Online services portion of MyGov, select Child Care Subsidy, then select Enrolments, and confirm each child's enrolment and CWA details by clicking the actions button. No CCS will be returned to the centre until the enrolments and CWA details have been confirmed for Epping Heights OSHC online. The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that all necessary forms are available and notices posted to inform parents of availability of CCS.

***OVERDUE FEES.***

Parents are encouraged to discuss any difficulties that they may have in paying fees with the Nominated Supervisor or Becklyn P/L, who handle collection of outstanding fees on behalf of the Management Committee. Becklyn will work with the Management Committee and Parent to make suitable arrangements for payment of fees as well as informing Parents of other avenues for financial support if required.

If no previous arrangements have been made regarding overdue fees the following procedure will apply:

- If payment has not been received within 7 days (from the statement send date), families are contacted by Becklyn P/L, via email with a reminder of outstanding fees, requesting payment within 2 business days.
- If following the next statement send, fees are still outstanding (from 7 days post statement send date), another reminder will be sent requesting payment within 2 business days.
- Prior to the next statement send, but following the two consecutive reminder emails being sent, a phone call to the family is made to confirm receipt of the email and the email address and establish a payment plan. This may involve payment of fees in full. Where a parent cannot be reached by phone, a message will be left, and an email sent confirming the circumstances and required action.  
Failure to respond to the phone call / email, or make payment as per the agreed payment plan will result in referral of the debt to the Management Committee, and recommendation of all future bookings being cancelled. The outstanding amount may be forwarded onto a Debt Recovery Agency. If a collection agency is engaged to recover monies, the parent will be liable for any costs, charges commissions and expenses reasonably and properly payable to such collection agency and/or solicitors relating to the recovery of such sum. Bookings will only be reinstated after proof of payment of fees has been provided and received by the service.
- Should a situation occur in which a booking is cancelled more than twice due to non-payment of fees, the enrolment at the Centre will be reviewed. The Management Committee will decide on the appropriate action.
- The Centre will pursue outstanding debts through normal commercial and legal means.
- Where a family is consistently late with making payments, this will be referred to Management for appropriate action. This may include the requirement for prepayment of bookings.

If children are left at the Centre whilst a booking/enrolment is cancelled, the child(ren) will be classified as abandoned and the relevant authorities will be advised.

### **Centre Closure Response Plan**

Due to any serious circumstances that render the service unable to operate (serious disease outbreak, natural disaster or damage), the service has in place a Centre closure response plan (created March 2020). Referral to these plans is recommended in such events.

Any decision for the service to close and to initiate the Centre Closure Response Plan will be made in alignment with current service policies and official recommendations through Management Committee/Director consultation. The Centre Closure Response Plan is not absolute and may be altered to suit and accommodate specific circumstances in relation to the closure and should be adjusted accordingly.

## **SOURCES**

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Privacy Act 1988
- Department of Human Services – ‘Assistance with Child Care Fees’

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