



# FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

## **POLICY RATIONALE**

Gordon OHSC supports a fee system that is affordable and accessible to all families and ensures the program maintains viability. Eligible families can access fee relief in the form of Child Care Subsidy (CCS). If you have any questions relating to your Centrelink benefits or entitlements, you must contact the Department of Human Services – Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The fees and charges policy is designed to inform families of their expected costs and their responsibilities in relation to payment methods. This is to ensure children can attend their chosen programs and excursions. It also details the process Gordon OHSC will take when fees are outstanding.

## **PROCEDURES**

- You must pay all Gordon OHSC accounts by the due date for payment via Direct Debit from a Bank Account or by Credit Card (Visa and Mastercard only). Fees and charges for Gordon OHSC Services are subject to change. Please refer to our website [www.gordonps.vic.edu.au](http://www.gordonps.vic.edu.au) for up to date fees and booking terms and conditions.
- Before and After Care: Statements are sent on a Monday for the previous weeks care. This payment is processed, in arrears.
- The payment date is stipulated on your statement on a weekly basis including but not limited to service fees, late fees, late payment fees, dishonour fees, late booking fees, merchant fees and cancellation fees. You will keep your bank account and credit card details up to date at all times.
- Bookings will not be accepted from families who have outstanding monies owing from previous programs.
- A receipt will be issued by the office for all bookings and payments made at the programs.

### **Banking of Fees**

Parents can pay by EFTPOS at the Gordon PS office or via Direct Deposit to the Gordon PS school account.

All payments must be made within one week of invoice.

### **Recording Fee Payment**

Gordon OHSC will record fee payments and bookings through a suitable administration package that meets Commonwealth Government requirements for claiming CCS payments and in line with the Child Care Management System (CCMS) requirements.

## Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- If you intend on claiming any subsidy for Gordon OHSC Services, it is your responsibility to supply Gordon OHSC with correct CRNs (which differ between Parents/Guardians and individual children), dates of birth and names via the Gordon OHSC online portal. This information in the Gordon OHSC portal account must match the information given to the Family Assistance Office and be provided to Gordon OHSC before your child's attendance at the Service. All information you provide to Gordon OHSC regarding entitlement to Child Care Subsidy must be correct, up to date and consistent with the information you provide to Centrelink. Until Gordon OHSC can verify your entitlement to Child Care Subsidy, you are responsible for paying full fees and charges for the use of the Service.
- Certified Written Agreement (CWA) – to receive your Child Care Subsidy via your Centrelink account:
  - once you have placed your bookings with Gordon OHSC it is your responsibility to confirm your Certified Written Agreement – CWA via your MyGov account more information on what a CWA is can be found <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>
  - The Gordon OHSC Service is a fully approved service for Centrelink purposes and will submit the registered child's attendances to Centrelink every Friday.
  - Gordon OHSC in accordance with CCS can only resubmit attendances up to a maximum of 28 days from your attendance.
  - Child Care Subsidy Accountability: Gordon OHSC will keep Parents/Guardians informed about the processes for securing CCS payments by providing on updating information on the Gordon OHSC website. Gordon OHSC Programs are Approved Services with the Department of Education (Federal).

## Child Care Subsidy Allowable Absences

Gordon OHSC will ensure that families receive CCS for days their child is absent from the program where the absences fall within Commonwealth Guidelines.

### Allowable Absence Procedures:

- Families are entitled to 42 absence days per child, per financial year, and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances (including illness of the child, a parent or sibling). In shared care arrangements, the allocation of 42 absences per financial year relates to the child, not each individual claimant.
- Under the Child Care Subsidy, when a child does not attend care on a day they are scheduled to attend, providers are able to claim an absence for the child up to 42 times in a financial year, so long as on the day the absence is claimed, Child Care Subsidy would have been claimed (i.e. the child would have otherwise been in care, and the family hasn't already reached their fortnightly entitlement of subsidised hours based on their activity test result).
- Once the 42 day allowable absences have been reached, CCS is not paid for any further absences, and full fees are charged. Additional absence days beyond the initial 42 allowable absences are available for the following reasons, defined in the Family Assistance Law:
  - *Your child, yourself, your partner or another person with whom the child lives is ill.*
  - *Your child is attending preschool.*
  - *Alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day.*
  - *Your child has not been immunised against a particular infectious disease, the absence occurs during an immunisation grace period, and a medical practitioner has certified that exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to your child.*
  - *The absence is because your child is spending time with a person other than the individual who is their usual carer as required by a court order or a parenting plan.*
  - *The service is closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency.*

- *Your child cannot attend because of a local emergency (e.g. because they are unable to travel to the service), during the period of the emergency or up to 28 days afterwards.*
- *You have decided that your child should not attend the service for up to seven days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency. Evidence will be required for additional absence days.*

### **Late Pick-Up Fees**

If a parent/guardian fails to pick up their child by the advertised closing time, the parent/guardian will be charged a late fee. This fee is to cover the additional costs of keeping the service open beyond the closing time of the service.

An educator with all required qualifications will remain at the service until the last child has been picked up.

### **Late Pick-Up Fee Procedures:**

- If the registered child is not collected from the Service by the advertised closing time, \$15 per 15 minutes per family will be charged. Payment of the late fee will be charged on the following Tuesday. All late attendances will be documented and noted on the final statement.
- Parents/Guardians are given clear notification that they should inform the program if they know they will be late.
- If this situation occurs more than three times in a program, the remainder of the bookings may be cancelled.

## **CANCELLATION OF CARE – FEES AND REFUNDS**

### **Before and After Care:**

Cancellations made within 48 hours of the session starting will incur the normal fee as an allowable absence and you will be charged accordingly. There are no charges for cancellations made at least 48 hours prior to the session start.

An existing booking will be successfully cancelled only when you cancel it on the Parent Portal. You are liable to pay all charges for all days that the registered child is booked in for the Service, and not cancelled within the cancellation period, regardless of whether the child attends the Service.

### **Overdue Fees**

- Gordon OHSC encourages Parents/Guardians to telephone the Gordon PS office to discuss any difficulties they may have in meeting payments and make suitable arrangements to pay, including the option of a payment plan.
- If payment of fees does not occur by the due date, your account may be suspended, and your bookings cancelled. If non-payment of fees continues then the debt will be referred to a collection agency, and any associated costs involved with using such agency will be at your expense.
- You will be unable to make any further bookings with Gordon OHSC while you have any outstanding debt for Services.

### **Excursion Fees**

Any additional costs for excursions or incursion activities are determined prior to the experience and communicated to families. It is not always possible for Gordon OHSC to absorb such costs and consideration to individual family and community circumstances will be considered.

## **REFERENCES**

ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)

Quality Area 7 – Leadership and service management

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011). R168

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