

# FEES POLICY – FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

QUALITY AREA 7 |



## PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines for:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees;
- ensuring the viability of Kensington Community Children's Co-operative, by setting appropriate fees and charges; and
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by Kensington Community Children's Co-operative.



## POLICY STATEMENT

### VALUES

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative is committed to:

- providing responsible financial management of the service, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable service, while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level for families;
- ensuring there are no financial barriers for families wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/children;
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians;
- advising users of the service about program funding, including government support and fees to be paid by parents/guardians;
- providing equitable access for families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and/or Early Start Kindergarten; and
- providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge and parents/guardians attending Kensington Community Children's Co-operative.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements	✓	✓			
Developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability	✓	✓			
Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the nominated supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's The Kindergarten Funding Guide ( <i>refer to Sources</i> )	✓	✓			
Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Kensington Community Children's Co-operative and removing those barriers wherever possible	✓	✓			
Reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered	✓	✓			
Considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families	✓	✓			
In long day care settings, where Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy is applicable, ensure that all subsidies a child is eligible for are applied to reduce cost to families (CCS and ACCS can be accessed in combination with the Early Start Kindergarten grants)	✓	✓			
Providing communication to families explaining their access to one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	✓	✓			
Clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way, and in the family's first language where possible	✓	✓			
Ensuring that the <i>Fees Policy</i> is readily accessible at the service ( <i>Regulation 171</i> )	✓	✓			
Providing all parents/guardians with fee information ( <i>refer to Attachments</i> )	✓	✓			
Providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges ( <i>refer to Attachments</i> ) upon enrolment of their child	✓	✓			
Providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement ( <i>refer to Attachments</i> )	✓	✓			

Ensuring fees are collected and receipted	✓	✓			
Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> )	✓	✓		✓	
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees.	✓	✓			
Notifying parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected ( <i>Regulation 172(2)</i> ), and ideally providing one term's notice.	✓	✓			
Addressing any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service in a timely manner	✓	✓			
Reading the Kensington Community Children's Co-operative Fee information for families, the Fee Payment Agreement and the Statement of Fees and Charges ( <i>refer to Attachments</i> ).				✓	
Signing and complying with the Fee Payment Agreement ( <i>refer to Attachments</i> )				✓	
Notifying the approved provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees				✓	
Providing the required documentation to enable the service to claim the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and/or Early Start Kindergarten, if eligible ( <i>refer to Attachments</i> ).				✓	
BOLD tick ✓ indicates legislation requirement					



## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### BACKGROUND - KINDERGARTEN

The Department of Education and Training (DET) (*refer to Definitions*) provides “per capita” funding for each child who is enrolled and attending a funded kindergarten program for two years before school.

From 2023 the Victorian Governments Free Kinder initiative will also apply to kindergarten programs. This will provide additional funding to service providers who elect to opt-in to Free Kinder and result in a free kindergarten program for those attending a sessional program; and reduce the fees of those enrolled in a kindergarten program integrated with Long Day Care.

DET also funds Early Start Kindergarten for three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from refugee or asylum seeker background and children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs as outlined in The Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Sources*).

*Regulation 168(2) (n) of Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* requires that funded kindergarten services have a comprehensive written fees policy, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. The policy must include a written statement about the fees to be charged and the payment process. All families must be informed of applicable term and annual fees at the time of enrolment. Services must also advise eligible families of the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (*refer to Definitions*) and/or or Early Start Kindergarten (*refer to Definitions*) arrangements. The fees charged

must comply with the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy requirements (*refer to Definitions*) and/or Early Start Kindergarten (*refer to Definitions*) and be responsive to the local community and the viability of the service. The Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Sources*) outlines the criteria covered in the policy.

## BACKGROUND – LONG DAY CARE

*Regulation 168(2) (n) of Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* requires that Early Childhood Education and Care services have a comprehensive written fees policy, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. The policy must include a written statement about the fees to be charged and the payment process. All families must be informed of applicable fees at the time of enrolment.

Childcare services providing approved child care must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017* (*refer to Legislation and standards*). The Commonwealth Government supports working parents/guardians in making early childhood education and care more affordable and accessible through the Child Care Package (The Package). The Package includes the Child Care Subsidy (*refer to Definitions*) and Child Care Safety Net (*refer to Definitions*). Together, they enable parents/guardians to participate in the workforce by making early childhood education and care affordable and accessible.

The Child Care Subsidy helps by assisting families with their child care fees and provides greater assistance to low and middle-income families

The Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged, or located in a regional or remote community. The Child Care Safety Net includes:

- **The Additional Child Care Subsidy:** which provides extra payment on top of the Child Care Subsidy for families who need more help. There are four different payments:
  - For families who need help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
  - For grandparents who care for their grandchildren
  - For families experiencing significant financial stress
  - For parents transitioning from welfare to work
- **The Community Child Care Fund:** which helps services stay open and available to children in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities.
- **The Inclusion Support Program:** which provides support to Early Childhood Education and Care services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services
- **Subsidised Care for Low Income Families:** who earn \$69,390 or less a year can access 24 hours of subsidised care per child per fortnight without having to meet the activity test.

## LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, including Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017



The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms (e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc) refer to section 5 of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (Vic).

**Centrelink:** The agency that delivers payments and services to parents/guardians on behalf of the Australian Government

**Child Care Safety Net:** Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged, or located in a regional or remote community. Supporting children to access quality early childhood education and care services

**Child Care Subsidy (CCS):** A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers. Further information can be found at: [www.dese.gov.au/child-care-subsidy](http://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-subsidy)

**Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy):** children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)

**Concession:** A Commonwealth Government entitlement providing concessions for low-income earners and other eligible people. This includes one of the following:

- a Commonwealth Health Care Card
- a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
- a Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or White Card
- Refugee or Asylum Seeker visa (200-204, 786 or 866)
- Bridging visas for any of the above Refugee or Asylum Seeker visas
- Multiple Births (triplets or more)

**Early Start Kindergarten (ESK):** Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher. ESK is available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- known to child protection.

These children can also access free year-before-school kindergarten through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

**Early Start Kindergarten extension grants:** provides a free or low cost year-before-school kindergarten program for children:

- not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

- who participated in Access to Early Learning in the previous year or are from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or known to child protection. A child is not required to access ESK in the previous year to access the ESK extension grant.

**High priority families:** as defined in the Kindergarten Guide this includes:

- Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
- Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets)
- Children with additional needs, defined as children who:
  - require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program
  - require a combination of services which are individually planned
  - have an identified specific disability or developmental delay

**Excursion/service event charge:** An additional charge required to meet the cost of special events or excursions that occur in response to emerging children's program needs. Events that are planned ahead and are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget do not incur this additional charge (refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy).

**Fees:** A charge for a place within a program at the service.

**Late collection charge:** A charge that may be imposed by the approved provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (*refer to Attachments*)

**LDC application fee:** A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in the long day care program at the service.

**Wrap around care:** care that is provided by a kindergarten service to kindergarten children outside of the 15 hours per week program.



## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training): [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)
- Child Care Package: Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): [www.dese.gov.au](http://www.dese.gov.au)
- The constitution of Kensington Community Children's Co-operative

### RELATED POLICIES

- Complaints and Grievances
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions and Service Events
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

## EVALUATION



In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to affordability, flexibility of payment options and procedures for the collection of fees;
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy;
- investigating what measures can be taken to reduce any barriers to access the program, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- monitor the number of families/children excluded from the service because of their inability to pay fees,
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice;
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required; and
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

## ATTACHMENTS



- Attachment 1: Fee information for families – Sessional Kindergarten 2023
- Attachment 2: Fee information for families - Long Day Care with Kindergarten 2023
- Attachment 3: Fee information for families – Long Day Care (no Kindergarten) 2023
- Attachment 4: Statement of Fees and Charges – Sessional Kindergarten 2023
- Attachment 5: Statement of Fees and Charges – Long Day Care with Kindergarten 2023
- Attachment 6: Statement of fees and charges – Long Day Care (no Kindergarten) 2023
- Attachment 7: Fee Payment Agreement
- Attachment 8: Withdrawal of Care

## DOCUMENT CONTROL TABLE



<b>DRAFTED BY</b>	KCCC Management	<b>VERSION NO.</b>	5.0
<b>RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>	General Manager	<b>VERSION DATE</b>	September 2022
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	Board	<b>REVIEW DATE</b>	August 2023

## ATTACHMENT 1.

### FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES – SESSIONAL KINDERGARTEN 2023

#### 1. General information and context

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides funding for each child enrolled and attending kindergarten in the two years before school as a contribution toward the costs of providing the program. From 2023 the Victorian Governments Free Kinder initiative will also apply to kindergarten programs. This will provide additional funding to service providers who elect to opt-in to Free Kinder and result in a free kindergarten program for those attending a sessional program; and reduce the fees of those enrolled in a kindergarten program integrated with Long Day Care.

DET also provides Early Start Kindergarten funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, from a refugee or asylum seeker background or children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs.

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative provides a range of support options to parents/guardians experiencing difficulty with payment of fees (see below).

#### 2. How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, the Board sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service;
- the level of government funding provided for the program, including the Free Kinder initiative and Early Start Kindergarten;
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants;
- the fees charged by similar services in the area;
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees;
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards; and
- requirements of The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training) available from the DET website: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

Once fees are set for the year, they will only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if enrolments drop and the service is at risk of not being able to meet its expenses.

#### 3. Other charges

Other charges levied by Kensington Community Children's Co-operative are included on the Statement of Fees and Charges. These include:

**Excursion/service event charge:** At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (*refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy*).

**Late collection charge:** A charge that may be imposed by the approved provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (*refer to Attachment*).

**Non-refundable Cooperative Members levy:** This levy is retained by the service and is included in the total fees charged by the service.

#### 4. Statement of fees and charges

A statement of fees and charges will be provided to families on enrolment (*refer to Attachment 4-6*).



## 5. Fundraising

Not all service costs are covered by DET per capita funding, and Free Kinder funding. Fundraising is undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

## 6. Subsidies

### Early Start Kindergarten

Early Start Kindergarten gives eligible children 15 hours of free kindergarten a week for two years before starting school.

To be eligible, the child must be three by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten and meet one of the following criteria:

- be from a refugee or asylum seeker background
- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- your family has had contact with Child Protection.

Contact the service for further information.

## 7. Payment of fees

For sessional kindergarten, there will be no fees payable by parents in 2023. The Department of Education (DET) will provide funding for each child enrolled at the service. Families can only access this funding at one (1) service and may not be enrolled at multiple services at the same time.

## 8. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from Kensington Community Children's Co-operative or alternatively families may contact the local council.

## 9. Notification of fee changes during the year

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified 14 days in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

## ATTACHMENT 2.

### FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES – LONG DAY CARE WITH KINDERGARTEN 2023

#### 1. General information

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative abides by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017* (refer to *Legislation and standards*). The Child Care Subsidy helps by assisting families with their child care fees and provides greater assistance to low and middle-income families. The Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged or located in a regional or remote community.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) also provides funding for each child enrolled and attending kindergarten in the two years before school as a contribution toward the costs of providing the program. From 2023 the Victorian Governments Free Kinder initiative will also apply to kindergarten programs. This will provide additional funding to service providers who elect to opt-in to Free Kinder and result in a free kindergarten program for those attending a sessional program; and reduce the fees of those enrolled in a kindergarten program integrated with Long Day Care.

#### 2. How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, Kensington Community Children's Co-operative sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service;
- the level of government funding provided, including the Free Kinder initiative;
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants;
- the fees charged by similar services in the area;
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees;
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards;
- requirements of Child Care Package: [www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package](http://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package); and
- requirements of The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training) available from the DET website: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

Once fees are set for the year, they will only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if enrolments drop and the service is at risk of not being able to meet its expenses.

#### 3. Other charges

Other charges levied by Kensington Community Children's Co-operative include:

**Excursion/service event charge:** At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*).

**Late collection charge:** A charge that may be imposed by the approved provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (refer to *Attachment 7*).

**LDC application fee:** A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in the long day care program at the service.

**Non-refundable Cooperative Members levy:** This levy is retained by the service and is included in the total fees charged by the service.

#### 4. Statement of fees and charges

A statement of fees and charges will be provided to families on enrolment (refer to *Attachments*).

#### 5. Payment of fees

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative will regularly review payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations.

Fees will be invoiced on a fortnightly basis in advance and will be accompanied by payment instructions. Invoices will show any childcare subsidy payments made by the Commonwealth Government and the remaining gap fee. The "Victorian Government Free Kinder offset" will be applied after the childcare subsidy has been allocated and the remaining balance is to be paid by parents/carers by the date indicated on the invoice. Families are expected not to allow fees to fall into arrears. Receipts will be provided for all fee payments.

If Parents/guardians are experiencing difficulty in paying fees, they are requested to contact the Bookkeeper or the Management Accountant to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

## 6. Cancellation of booking

Families are asked to provide four weeks' notice of the cancellation of a booking in the Long Day Care with Kindergarten program. Fees will continue to apply for the four weeks' notice period.

## 7. Unpaid fees

If fees are not paid by the due date, the following steps will be taken:

- An initial reminder letter will be sent to parents/guardians with a specified payment date and will include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Where payment is still not received, families will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan.
- Failure to attend the meeting and continued non-payment may result in a second and final letter notifying parents/guardians that the child's place at the service may be withdrawn unless payment is made or a payment plan is entered into within a specified period of time. This letter will also include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Kensington Community Children's Co-operative will continue to offer support and will reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector.
- If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.
- No further enrolments of children from the parents/guardians will be accepted until all outstanding fees have been paid.

## 8. Refund of fees

Fees are non-refundable. There will be no refund of fees in the following circumstances:

- a child's short-term illness
- public holidays
- family holiday during operational times
- closure of the service for staff training days
- closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

## 9. Fundraising

Fundraising is undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

## 10. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from Kensington Community Children's Co-operative or alternatively families may contact the local council.

## 11. Notification of fee changes during the year

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified 14 days in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

## ATTACHMENT 3.

### FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES – LONG DAY CARE (NO KINDERGARTEN) 2023

#### 1. General information

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative abides by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017* (refer to *Legislation and standards*). The Child Care Subsidy helps by assisting families with their child care fees and provides greater assistance to low and middle-income families. The Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged or located in a regional or remote community.

#### 2. How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, Kensington Community Children's Co-operative sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service;
- the level of government funding provided, including the Free Kinder initiative;
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants;
- the fees charged by similar services in the area;
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees;
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards; and
- requirements of Child Care Package: [www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package](http://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package)

Once fees are set for the year, they will only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if enrolments drop and the service is at risk of not being able to meet its expenses.

#### 3. Other charges

Other charges levied by Kensington Community Children's Co-operative include:

**Excursion/service event charge:** At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*).

**Late collection charge:** A charge that may be imposed by the approved provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (refer to *Attachments*).

**LDC application fee:** A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in the long day care program at the service.

**Non-refundable Cooperative Members levy:** This levy is retained by the service and is included in the total fees charged by the service.

#### 4. Statement of fees and charges

A statement of fees and charges will be provided to families on enrolment (refer to *Attachments*).

#### 5. Payment of fees

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative will regularly review payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations.

Fees will be invoiced on a fortnightly basis in advance and will be accompanied by payment instructions. Invoices will show any childcare subsidy payments made by the Commonwealth Government and the remaining gap fee is to be paid by parents/carers by the date indicated on the invoice. Families are expected not to allow fees to fall into arrears. Receipts will be provided for all fee payments.

If Parents/guardians are experiencing difficulty in paying fees, they are requested to contact the Bookkeeper or the Management Accountant to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

## 6. Cancellation of booking

Families are asked to provide four weeks' notice of the cancellation of a booking in the Long Day Care (no Kindergarten) program. Fees will continue to apply for the four weeks' notice period.

## 7. Unpaid fees

If fees are not paid by the due date, the following steps will be taken:

- An initial reminder letter will be sent to parents/guardians with a specified payment date and will include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Where payment is still not received, families will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan.
- Failure to attend the meeting and continued non-payment may result in a second and final letter notifying parents/guardians that the child's place at the service may be withdrawn unless payment is made or a payment plan is entered into within a specified period of time. This letter will also include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Kensington Community Children's Co-operative will continue to offer support and will reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector.
- If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.
- No further enrolments of children from the parents/guardians will be accepted until all outstanding fees have been paid.

## 8. Refund of fees

Fees are non-refundable. There will be no refund of fees in the following circumstances:

- a child's short-term illness
- public holidays
- family holiday during operational times
- closure of the service for staff training days
- closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

## 9. Fundraising

Fundraising is undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

## 10. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from Kensington Community Children's Co-operative or alternatively families may contact the local council.

## 11. Notification of fee changes during the year

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified 14 days in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

## ATTACHMENT 4.

### STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES – SESSIONAL KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM 2023

#### Hours

##### 4 year old Sessional Kindergarten

15 hours per week, over 2 days, during school terms. Days and session times to be confirmed upon enrolment.

##### 3 year old Sessional Kindergarten

7.5 hours per week on 1 day, during school terms. Days and session times to be confirmed upon enrolment.

#### School Term Dates 2023

Term 1 – Monday 30 January 2023 – Thursday 6 April 2023

Term 2 – Monday 24 April 2023 – Friday 23 June 2023

Term 3 – Monday 10 July 2023 – Friday 15 September 2023

Term 4 – Monday 2 October 2023 – Wednesday 20 December 2023

#### Kindergarten Attendance Fee

\$0

The 3 year old and 4 year old Sessional Kindergarten programs do not incur an attendance fee.

#### Late Collection Fee

\$1 per 1 minute after the conclusion of the Sessional Kindergarten program.

The late collection fee outlined above will be applied when Parents/Guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the Sessional Kindergarten program.

#### Cooperative Members Fee

One off, non-refundable \$5 fee.

#### Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and Early Start Kindergarten

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and Early Start Kindergarten (will continue to be available for currently eligible services to support the placement of children meeting the KFS criteria.

#### Children turning three during the year

Families with children born between January and April can choose which year to start Three-Year-Old kindergarten. These children can start in the same year they turn three, or in the year they turn four years of age.

## ATTACHMENT 5.

### STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES – LONG DAY CARE WITH KINDERGATEN 2023

#### Long Day Care Application Fee

\$25

#### Daily Fee

\$136.50 (for 3 days per week only)

You are required to pay fees for all days you enroll your child/ren, even if your child/ren is absent due to illness, holidays or other days off. Fees are payable two weeks in advance.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per capita funding as a contribution toward the costs of providing a kindergarten program. The service meets the balance of costs for the long day care with kindergarten program, through charging fees.

In 2023, DET will also provide \$2,000 per child enrolled in a Long Day Care with Kindergarten program. This will be applied to your account as a "Victorian Government Free Kinder offset" after the childcare subsidy has been allocated. The remaining balance is to be paid by parents/carers by the date indicated on the invoice.

#### Hours

Long day care hours: 7:30am – 6:00pm for 3 days per week for 50 weeks a year

Please note – KCCC has an annual closure period for 2 weeks at the end of every year. You will not be charged fees during this closure period.

**15 hours per week** of kindergarten will be provided by an Early Childhood Teacher being **included in your child's long day care room for these 3 days**, for 5 hours per day, during school terms. This can be offered on a pro-rata basis for 3-year-old kindergarten until 2029. In line with DET funding rules, there is no option for a pro-rata program for 4 year old kindergarten.

#### School Term Dates 2023

Term 1 – Monday 30 January 2023 – Thursday 6 April 2023

Term 2 – Monday 24 April 2023 – Friday 23 June 2023

Term 3 – Monday 10 July 2023 – Friday 15 September 2023

Term 4 – Monday 2 October 2023 – Wednesday 20 December 2023

#### Late Collection Fee

\$1 per 1 minute after 6pm.

#### Cooperative Members Fee

One off, non-refundable \$5 fee.

#### Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

For more information on Child Care Subsidy, refer to Fee information for families.

#### Fee Payment

After your Child Care Subsidy information has been linked to the Centre and the Family Assistance Office (FAO), your fees will be calculated. The "Victorian Government Free Kinder offset" will be applied after the childcare subsidy has been allocated. The remaining balance is to be paid by parents/carers by the date indicated on the invoice. You will receive accounts fortnightly, calculated two weeks in advance.

Direct debit through our DebitSuccess payment system is the preferred form of payment. Direct deposit is also available where families can deposit fees directly to KCCC. Account details will be printed on your invoice.

## ATTACHMENT 6.

### STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES – LONG DAY CARE (NO KINDERGARTEN) 2023

#### LDC Application Fee

\$25

#### Daily Fee

\$147

You are required to pay fees for all days you enroll your child/ren, even if your child/ren is absent due to illness, holidays or other days off. Fees are payable two weeks in advance.

#### Hours

Long day care hours: 7:30am – 6:00pm Monday to Friday for 50 weeks a year

Please note – KCCC has an annual closure period for 2 weeks at the end of every year. You will not be charged fees during this closure period.

#### Late Collection Fee

\$1 per 1 minute after 6pm.

#### Cooperative Members Fee

One off, non-refundable \$5 fee.

#### Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

For more information on Child Care Subsidy, refer to Fee information for families.

#### Fee Payment

After your Child Care Subsidy information has been linked to the Centre and the Family Assistance Office (FAO), your fees will be calculated. You will receive accounts fortnightly, calculated two weeks in advance.

Direct debit through our DebitSuccess payment system is the preferred form of payment. Direct deposit is also available where families can deposit fees directly to KCCC. Account details will be printed on your invoice.

#### Alternative LDC Offerings

As required, based on the needs of the community and places available at the service, KCCC may offer LDC programs that differ to the standard 10.5 hours per day.

These programs will be offered at the calculated hourly rate for the LDC program that year, and the parameters for the alternative programs (such as hours and dates the program is offered) will be separately outlined.



## ATTACHMENT 7 FEE PAYMENT AGREEMENT

This agreement covers all of the following services offered at KCCC in 2023:

- Long Day Care (No Kindergarten)
- Long Day Care with Kindergarten
- Sessional Four-year-old and Three-year-old Kindergarten

Please complete this form and return to Kensington Community Children's Co-operative Ltd with your enrolment form.

### Fee payment contract

Child's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/guardian's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

- I/We acknowledge fees for *Long Day Care* and *Long Day Care with Kindergarten* are due 2 weeks in advance upon enrolment. Four (4) weeks written notice is required to cancel/reduce any permanent booking.
- I/We acknowledge that I/we understand there is a different daily rate charged for *Long Day Care with Kindergarten* (3 days per week) due to the additional funding provided by the state government to support these programs. Long Day Care days attended by my/our child outside these 3 days will be charged at a different daily rate.
- I/We acknowledge that I/we understand the Victorian Government Free Kinder offset will be applied to my *Long Day Care with Kindergarten* fees after CCS has been applied.
- I/We acknowledge that payment in advance secures your childcare placement therefore payment is required whether your child attends or not. Fees are not payable when the Centre is not in operation over the Christmas/New Year period. Fees are payable where a Public Holiday falls on your usual child care days.
- I/we acknowledge that the three-year-old and four-year-old sessional kindergarten programs are funded by the state government and no attendance fees are charged for these programs. Other fees relating to late collection and a co-operative membership fee does apply.
- I/we acknowledge that I can only access funding from the state government for kindergarten at one (1) service at a time and that I may not be enrolled at multiple services for kindergarten at the same time.
- I/we agree to pay fees by the due date on the invoice.
- I/we understand that fees are non-refundable.
- I/we acknowledge that if fees are not paid by the due date, Management will implement the late payment of fees procedures, as outlined in the *Fees Policy*, which could result in the withdrawal of my/our child's place at the service and no further enrolments until the outstanding fees are paid.
- I/we agree that if my/our financial circumstances change and I/we am/are unable to pay as agreed, I/we will immediately notify the Bookkeeper, the Management Accountant and/or the General Manager to discuss alternative payment options.
- I/we acknowledge that I/we have received and read the service's Fee information for families, which outlines the procedure for payment of fees.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (parent/guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Note: invoices, receipts and collection of fees will be in accordance with the Kensington Community Children's Co-operative Ltd *Fees Policy*.

## ATTACHMENT 8 WITHDRAWAL OF CARE



<insert date>

Dear <insert name>,

### WITHDRAWAL OF CARE

You previously received a letter relating to unpaid fees. This was then followed up with a further request to attend a meeting to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan.

You have not complied with either of these requests for fee payment.

As per our Fees Policy, the Board of Directors of Kensington Community Children's Cooperative (KCCC) now informs you that the Service will be withdrawing care of your child/ren as from <insert last day>.

Where at a later date you seek to use KCCC again, all previous bad debts must be paid in full before your re-admission to KCCC will be considered.

Kind Regards

<insert name>

General Manager