

**CANTERBURY WESTLAND KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION (Inc)****POLICY: KINDERGARTEN FEES (2021)****RATIONALE**

The Board is committed to maintaining the provision of high quality early childhood education services.

To achieve this, policies will be implemented to provide an appropriate level of income to support the delivery of this service. This includes participating in the government's *20 Hours ECE* for those children aged three, four or five years, who are eligible.

In addition, the Board has a statutory responsibility to ensure that any income from fees received will be used appropriately and accounted for accurately.

**PURPOSE**

This policy aims to provide clear and transparent information to parents/caregivers and staff (both teaching and administration) concerning procedures around the setting and collection of fees, and the rules that apply in relation to fees.

This policy relates to all Kidsfirst Kindergartens (hereby referred to as Kidsfirst), takes effect from 01 March 2021 and replaces all previous fees policies.

**POLICY CHANGES**

One calendar months' notice will be given to parents/caregivers of any changes to this policy.

**FEES**

1. Children who are three, four and five years of age are eligible for the government's *20 Hours ECE*. For any hours not claimed as the government's *20 Hours ECE* and up to six hours per day, fees will remain at \$6.00 (inclusive of GST), per hour, for all kindergartens.

For any hours booked over 6 hours per day fees will remain as a charge of \$7.50 (inclusive of GST) per hour or part thereof.

Kidsfirst reserves the right to reduce a child's booked hours per week to include only those hours being claimed as the government's *20 Hours ECE* if regular weekly /fortnightly payments for chargeable hours are not received.

2. From 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 the Kidsfirst Board has agreed to continue to subsidise any child who is aged two and up to three years up to a maximum of 20 ECE hours per week for free referred to as *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours*.

This offer is dependent on parents/caregivers committing to use their child's government funded *20 Hours ECE* with Kidsfirst when their child becomes eligible from the age of three. Any booked hours over *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours* per week will continue to be charged at \$6.00 (inclusive of GST) per hour. Subject to the following:

- 2.1 Settlement of any outstanding debts, or regular weekly/fortnightly repayments towards such debts, must be in place before a parent/caregiver can take advantage of *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours*.
  - 2.2 Failure to keep up regular weekly/fortnightly payments for chargeable hours may jeopardise the *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours* free offer.
3. Children aged 0-2 years old will continue to be charged for enrolled hours of up to six hours per day at a rate of \$6.00 (inclusive of GST) per hour or part thereof. For any hours booked over 6 hours per day fees will continue to be charged at \$7.50 (inclusive of GST) per hour or part thereof.
  4. The Board will review the fee structure on a regular basis, based on recommendations from the Chief Executive.
  5. Parents/caregivers will be asked to sign a fee contract as part of the Enrolment Agreement (Section D).
  6. Fees will be charged by the Kidsfirst's Head Office and forwarded via email or through the kindergarten. Payments are to be made directly into the Kidsfirst's nominated bank account or in person at the Head Office premises. (For further information please refer to points 30 and 31 of this policy.)
  7. Any queries about a fee, invoice or an account should be directed to Head Office.  
Ph: 03 338 1303 or 0800 4 KIDSFIRST (0800 454 373)  
e-mail: infocare@kidsfirst.org.nz
  8. Fee income will be coded to the individual kindergarten and used to assist with meeting the costs incurred of that kindergarten.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR FEES**

9. The Enrolment Form and Agreement to Fee Schedule form a legally binding contract between Kidsfirst and the parent/caregiver. Accordingly, the parent/caregiver is personally responsible for the payment of fees.

10. In the event that Kidsfirst need to take steps to recover overdue or unpaid fees, recovery will be sought from the parent/caregiver.
11. If more than one parent/caregiver has signed the Agreement to Fee Schedule, then all who have signed the document will be jointly and severally liable for the payment of any fees.

## **FEE CHARGING**

12. Head Office will be responsible for producing invoices for all children who incur a fee charge, on a fortnightly basis. Invoices will show the fees due (after all rebates or discounts have been applied), record payments made and the total payment expected if applicable.
13. Fees will not be charged when a Kidsfirst kindergarten is closed during term breaks, nor for other periods when the kindergarten is closed such as public holidays or emergency closures.
14. Fees will be charged as normal for any child absences, including (but not limited to) sickness or holidays.
15. Where government funding stops for a child – due to the Ministry of Education’s ‘Three Week Rule’ or ‘Frequent Absence Rule’ (refer to points 16 and 17 below) - Kidsfirst reserves the right to collect full fees (all booked hours) from parents/caregivers set at the rate of government funding that has been lost to the Association. This is dependent on the type of the government funding rate that the child attracts and the age of the child.

The government funding rates will be placed on the Parent’s Noticeboard within the kindergarten and available on our current online platform for whānau. These rates will be updated, as and when, the government changes the funding rates.

16. The ‘Three Week Rule’ limits the period of time to three weeks that the government will fund a child’s continuous absence.

If parents/caregivers are requesting an extended absence over three weeks, they may choose to pursue either of the following:

- 16.1 To pay full fees (all booked hours) in total on or before the due date for the period of absence, thereby securing the child/ren’s place upon return.
- 16.2 Relinquish the place and be placed at the top of the waiting list on their return or known date of their return until a place becomes available.

16.3 Should an extended absence be due to an illness that requires exclusion from the kindergarten then the kindergarten will provide an *'EC13 Medical Certificate to support application for exemption from absence rule for Special and/or Health Needs'* form. This form needs to be completed by the child's Doctor or other Registered Medical Professional and returned to the kindergarten.

17. The 'Frequent Absence Rule' requires that the enrolment agreement signed by parents/caregivers, matches a child's actual attendance pattern for at least half of each calendar month.

## **TWO WEEKS NOTICE**

18. Parents/caregivers will be asked to give two (2) weeks written notice of a child leaving the kindergarten, except in the case of a child who leaves to attend a primary school or another Kidsfirst service. This allows time for the kindergarten to arrange for another child to begin attending and take the vacated place.

18.1 Written notice can be given via email or letter to the kindergarten– phone messages or verbal requests are not deemed sufficient to give notice.

18.2 Once two weeks' notice is given, the child may continue to attend for those two weeks and fees will be charged as per usual if applicable. If the child leaves immediately, or no notice is given, then the child will be removed from the roll immediately and an invoice for the full two (2) weeks fees will be generated, at the Government funding rates (refer to point 15).

## **OPTIONAL CHARGES \***

19. Kidsfirst does not request optional charges from parents/caregivers.

20. Individual kindergartens may ask parents/caregivers to cover the direct cost of special excursions and/or entertainment as each individual situation arises.

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\* Optional charges are a request for a payment that parents may choose whether or not to make. Optional charges must apply for a specific purpose, which can be one-off or ongoing.

**Reference:** Ministry of Education Funding Handbook, September 2020

## SIGNING OF THE ENROLMENT AGREEMENT

21. Once the Enrolment Agreement has been signed and a start date given for a child, he/she must attend within one day of that start date or full fees (at the Government funding rate) for any subsequent days(s) will be generated until the child is removed from the roll.
22. Funding for absences beyond this first day (and only up to one (1) week) may be claimed from government funding and therefore parents/caregivers will not be charged if:
  - 22.1 the absence is due to illness or other reasons beyond the parent/caregiver's control.

**and**

  - 22.2 there is an enrolment agreement for the child, stating the planned start date, which was signed and dated by the parent/caregiver prior to the child starting.

**and**

  - 22.3 the reason for the absence has been documented with a medical certificate or letter from the parent/caregiver explaining the absence.

## LATE FEE

23. Due to Ministry of Education licensing requirements, children must be collected on time. A **late fee of \$30.00** (including GST) will continue to be charged for every 15 minutes (or part thereof) until the time the child is collected as per the child's enrolment agreement.

## DISCOUNTS

24. Parents/caregivers with more than one child who are using their full government's *20 Hours ECE* or *Kidsfirst 20 Hours ECE* entitlement at the kindergarten for all of their children, will be given a discount of 10% for each additional child.
 

Children of Kidsfirst staff who are using their full government's *20 Hours ECE* or *Kidsfirst 20 Hours ECE* entitlement will be given a 10% discount for each child.
25. From time to time the Kidsfirst Board may make available special offers for reduced fees at selected kindergartens.

## WINZ SUBSIDIES

26. Kidsfirst will encourage parents/caregivers to access WINZ subsidies to assist in the payment of fees.
27. These subsidies cannot be claimed for hours being used for the government's *20 ECE hours* or *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours*.
28. The Head Teacher will ensure WINZ information is available to parents/caregivers.
29. Parents/caregivers who are eligible and receive a WINZ subsidy are responsible for:
  - 29.1 any shortfall between the subsidy paid and the normal fees due.
  - 29.2 the normal fees due until WINZ subsidies are paid and Kidsfirst receives a letter of confirmation from WINZ.
  - 29.3 for renewing the subsidy, if appropriate.

## PAYMENT OF FEES

30. Parents/caregivers will be asked to pay their account within seven (7) calendar days of the date of the invoice. Payments can also be made in advance.
31. Payment of fees can be made:
  - 31.1 electronically, via internet banking or automatic payment.
  - 31.2 direct to Head Office, 43 Birmingham Drive, Middleton, Christchurch – Office hours are Monday to Friday 8.00 am – 5.00 pm. No EFTPOS facilities are available – cash only.
  - 31.3 at any branch of ANZ Bank. Parents/caregivers will need to take the Kidsfirst bank account details and their child's reference number (both are displayed on the invoice).

## TERMS OF PAYMENT

32. Kidsfirst reserves the right to collect all outstanding debts from parents/caregivers at the parents/caregivers expense, and advises parents/caregivers that all steps will be taken to recover the outstanding fees.
  - 32.1 If fees are not paid one (1) week after the date due, Kidsfirst will contact the parent/caregiver in writing via email or through the kindergarten to make payment arrangements, with notice that failure to meet payments **may** result in the child's timetable being reduced to those hours being claimed as *government's 20 ECE hours* or *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours*.

- 32.2 If a debt remains unpaid three (3) weeks after the date due, Kidsfirst will send a 'Final Written Notice' to the parent/caregiver via email or through the kindergarten stating that if full payment is not made the child's timetable **will** be reduced to those hours being claimed as the government's *20 ECE hours* or *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours* only. The child's timetable will remain reduced to hours being claimed as the government's *20 ECE hours* or *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours* only, until the debt has been cleared.
- 32.3 Parents/caregivers must undertake to repay debt at a minimum of \$10.00 per week over and above any ongoing weekly fees.
- 32.4 Parents/caregivers must retain bank statements and any receipts as proof of payment for any fees.
- 32.5 Should there be a remaining unpaid debt once a child has left kindergarten, then this amount will be transferred to any currently enrolled sibling's account in the first instance, otherwise it will be referred to a debt collection agency and any collection fees incurred will be passed onto the parent/caregiver.
33. Fees paid/unpaid by individual parents/caregivers are confidential to the kindergarten teaching team and Head Office personnel and the nominated debt collection agency.

### **CREDIT BALANCES**

34. When an invoice shows a credit balance, the child has left the kindergarten for a period of more than six months and has no siblings attending any other Kidsfirst service, the credit balance will be treated as a donation to the Association.
35. If a parent/caregiver has a credit balance on their Kidsfirst account and the child has since left the kindergarten and there are no other siblings attending any other Kidsfirst service, the parent/caregiver can have this credit balance refunded.
36. Kidsfirst will endeavour to contact the parent/caregiver to advise them of the credit balance using the contact information that has been provided in the Enrolment Agreement.
37. The credit balance will be refunded to parent/caregiver's nominated bank account within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of their bank account number by Kidsfirst.
38. If the parent/caregiver have not responded to Kidsfirst's attempt(s) to contact them and/or provided details of their nominated bank account within six (6)

months from the date that the child (or children) left the kindergarten, the credit balance will be forfeited and permanently retained by Kidsfirst as a donation to Kidsfirst.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

39. The Head Teacher will ensure accurate records of all children's enrolments, and attendance details are kept, and provide information to government agencies and Head Office personnel as and when required.
40. The Chief Executive has the responsibility of monitoring the overall fee collection and implementation of this policy.

### ***Office Use:***

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Board Policy  
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