

CANTERBURY WESTLAND KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION (Inc)**POLICY: KINDERGARTEN/CENTRE FEES (2019)****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 ECE Hours per week 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, in line with the philosophy and values of the Association.

PURPOSE

This policy aims to provide information to parents/caregivers and teaching staff concerning procedures around the setting and collection of fees and the rules that apply in relation to fees.

This policy relates to all Kidsfirst early childhood education services, takes effect from 01 January 2019 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 ECE hours. For any hours not claimed as the government's 20 ECE hours, fees will be charged at \$6.00 per hour (inclusive of GST), effective from 1st January 2019, for all Kidsfirst services.

This is subject to Kidsfirst Kindergartens reserving the right to reduce a child's booked hours per week to include only those hours being claimed as the government's 20 ECE hours if regular payments for chargeable hours are not received.

2. From 1st January 2019 the Kidsfirst Board has agreed 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's 20 ECE Hours with Kidsfirst when their child becomes eligible from the age of three. Any hours over Kidsfirst's 20 ECE Hours per week will be charged at \$6.00 per hour (inclusive of GST) subject to the following:
 - 2.1 settlement of any outstanding debts, or regular repayments towards such debts, must be in place before a parent/caregiver can take advantage of Kidsfirst's 20 ECE hours for children who are aged two - three years.
 - 2.2 failure to keep up regular payments for chargeable hours may jeopardise the Kidsfirst's 20 ECE hours free offer for children who are aged two– three years.
3. Children aged 0-2 years old will be charged for all enrolled hours at a rate of \$6.00 per hour (inclusive of GST).
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 Kindergartens' Head Office and payment made directly into the Association's bank account or in person at the Head Office premises. (For further information please refer to points 26 and 27 of this policy.)
7. Any queries about a fee, invoice or account should be directed to Head Office.
8. Fee income will be transferred to the individual kindergarten's/centre's account held at Head Office to assist with meeting the costs incurred of that kindergarten/centre.

FEE CHARGING

9. 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.
10. Fees will not be charged when a Kidsfirst service is closed during term breaks, nor for other periods when the kindergarten/centre is closed such as public holidays.
11. Fees will be charged as normal for any child absences, including (but not limited to) sickness or holidays.
12. Where government funding stops for a child – due to the Ministry of Education’s ‘Three Week Rule’ or ‘Frequent Absence Rule’ (refer to points 13 and 14 below) - Kidsfirst Kindergartens 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 which is dependent on the type of subsidy 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/centre and on Educa. These rates will be updated, as and when, the government changes the funding rates.

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

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

- 13.1 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.
- 13.2 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.
14. The ‘Frequent Absence Rule’ ensures 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

A period of notice is required when a child leaves a kindergarten/centre. This allows time for Kidsfirst Kindergartens to arrange for another child to begin attending and take the vacated place.

15. Parents/caregivers will be asked to give two (2) weeks written notice of a child leaving the kindergarten/centre, except in the case of a child who leaves to attend a primary school.

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

15.2 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 an invoice for the full two (2) weeks fees will be generated, at the Government funding rates (refer to point 12).

OPTIONAL CHARGES¹

16. Kidsfirst Kindergartens does not request optional charges from parents/caregivers.
17. Individual kindergartens/centres may ask parents/caregivers to cover the direct cost of special excursions and/or entertainment as each individual situation arises.

SIGNING OF THE ENROLMENT AGREEMENT

18. 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.

¹ Optional charges are a request for a payment that parents may choose whether or not to make for a specific purpose, which can be on-off or ongoing that:

- is for the education and care; and
- is above what is required to meet the regulated standards; and
- can be separated out and measured

Reference: Ministry of Education Funding Handbook

19. 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:

19.1 the absence is due to illness or other reasons beyond the parent/caregiver's control.

and

19.2 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

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

LATE FEE

20. A **late fee of \$30.00** (including GST), effective from 01 January 2019, will be charged for every 15 minutes (or part thereof) until the time the child is collected if a child is not collected at the conclusion of their booked time.

DISCOUNTS

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

WINZ SUBSIDIES

22. Kidsfirst will encourage parents/caregivers to access WINZ subsidies to assist in the payment of fees for kindergarten/centre.

23. These subsidies cannot be claimed for hours being used for the government's 20 ECE Hours or Kidsfirst's 20 ECE Hours.

24. Head Teachers will make WINZ information available to parents/caregivers.

25. Parents/caregivers who are eligible and receive a WINZ subsidy are responsible for:
- 25.1 any shortfall between the subsidy paid and the normal fees due.
 - 25.2 the normal fees due until WINZ subsidies are paid and Kidsfirst receives a letter of confirmation from WINZ.
 - 25.3 for renewing the subsidy, if appropriate.

PAYMENT OF FEES

26. Parents/caregivers will be asked to pay their account within seven (7) working days of the date of the invoice. Payments can also be made in advance.
27. Payment of fees can be made:
- 27.1 electronically, via internet banking or automatic payment.
 - 27.2 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.
 - 27.3 at any branch of ANZ Bank. Parents/caregivers will need to take the Kidsfirst Kindergartens' bank account details and their child's reference number (both are displayed on the invoice).

TERMS OF PAYMENT

28. Kidsfirst Kindergartens reserves the right to collect all outstanding debts from parents/caregivers at their expense, and advises parents/caregivers that all steps will be taken to recover the outstanding fees following the delivery of the 'Final Written Notice'.
- 28.1 If fees are not paid two (2) weeks after the date due, Kidsfirst Kindergartens will contact the parent/caregiver in writing to make alternative 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.

- 28.2 If a debt remains unpaid four (4) weeks after the date due, Kidsfirst Kindergartens will send a 'Final Written Notice' to the parent/caregiver 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.
- 28.3 Parents/caregivers must retain bank statements and any receipts as proof of payment for any fees.
29. Fees paid/unpaid by individual parents/caregivers are confidential to the kindergarten/centre teaching team and Head Office personnel.

RECORD KEEPING

30. The Head Teacher will keep accurate records of all children's enrolments, attendance details and provide information to the Ministry of Education and Head Office personnel as and when required.
31. The Chief Executive has the responsibility of monitoring the overall fee collection and implementation of this policy.

Office Use:

Date policy first drafted: July 2007

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Next policy review: June 2019

Computer file name: Fees Policy

Policy located: Operations Manual
Board Policy Folder
Operational Policy Development Standing Committee Folder