

KINDERLEA FEES POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability of Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool, by setting appropriate fees and charges
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool is committed to:

- providing responsible financial management with the underlying knowledge and understanding that the service is a non-funded, Not-For-Profit organisation, including the establishment of fees that will result in a financially viable service, while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level
- ensuring any money made is used to cover the costs of providing the day-to-day operations and to plan and provide for the future of the service
- providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians
- advising users of the service about fees to be paid by parents/guardians

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Person with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day-to-Day Charge, educators and parents/guardians with an enrolled child, or who wish to enrol a child at Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool's income is from primarily fees, and is required to meet all the additional costs incurred by the service in the delivery of the children's program.

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

DET requires that 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, as required under Regulation 168(2)(n), and the payment process. All families must be informed of applicable term and annual fees at the time of enrolment.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)

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

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the General Definitions section of this manual.

Application fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service. This is non-refundable.

Confirmation fee: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. This is non-refundable.

Fees: The payment for the services provided by the centre for the period the child is enrolled in the educational program.

Late collection charge: A charge that may be imposed by the Committee of Management when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (refer to Attachment 1 – Fee information for families).

Not-For-Profit organisation: An organisation that will generally need to make and spend money, if only to cover the costs of providing their services, day to day operations, and to plan and provide for the future.

Refundable levy: An upfront payment that will be refunded upon participation of parents/guardians in certain service events (refer to Attachment 1 – Fee information for families).

5. HOW FEES ARE SET

As part of the budget development process, the Committee of Management sets fees each year for the programs of the Kinder, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the Kinder
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar Kindergartens in the area
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards
- fees set for the year are only reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

6. 2020 and 2021 STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES

Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued prior to the end of term and must be paid by the due date.

	3 Hours/week Fees (\$)	6 Hours/week Fees (\$)	9 Hours/week Fees (\$)
Application fee	\$20	\$20	\$20
Confirmation fee	\$100	\$100	\$100
Term 1	\$265	\$490	\$735
Term 2	\$265	\$490	\$735
Term 3	\$265	\$490	\$735
Term 4	\$265	\$490	\$735
Working bee levy	\$60 (refundable)	\$60 (refundable)	\$60 (refundable)
Total	\$1240	\$2140	\$3120

- **Application fee:** This \$20 payment is to cover administrative costs associated with processing a child's initial application for a place at the service and is payable at the time of submitting an application. The fee is non-refundable.
- **Confirmation fee:** This \$100 payment secures a child's place at the service and is payable on acceptance of enrolment. The fee is non-refundable
- **Refundable levy:** The participation of parents/guardians is encouraged by the service and can help to keep costs more affordable. Payment will be refunded to parents/guardians on participation in working bees and Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool major fundraising community events (minimum of 2 different participation times). The major community events are undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional resources for the service. While participation in these events is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. This also provides opportunities for families to come together. Eligible families will be given a Refund Application Form. This must be returned to Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool prior to the end of the year the child was enrolled
- **Non-refundable fee:** An amount that is retained by the service and is included in the total fees charged by the service

Late collection charge

The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child

15-29 mins	\$20
30-44 mins	\$50
Every 15 mins thereafter \$40	

7. PAYMENT OF FEES

The Committee of Management regularly reviews payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations. Fees are invoiced to parents/guardians directly via email and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice.

An invoice for Term 1 fees will be issued in the month prior to the AGM. These fees must be received in full prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to secure your child's position in the program (provisional on confirmation of immunisation records).

For Terms 2, 3 and 4, an invoice will be issued no later than 2 weeks prior to the end of term for the following terms fees. Invoices must be paid within 14 days and prior to the commencement of the new term. For children enrolled after the commencement of a term, a pro rata invoice will be issued and must be paid in full within 14 days of the child's commencement at the Kinder. Receipts can be provided for fee payments upon request.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the treasurer via Kinderlea 3 Year Old PreschoolTreasurer@gmail.com to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The Privacy and Confidentiality Policy of the Kinder will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

Accepted Payment Methods

Fees may be paid by:

Credit/debit card online and will be processed through the Kinderlea Stripe Account (this may incur processing fees, these fees will be shown prior to the payment being submitted) or

Electronic transfer as per the details below:

Account Name: Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool 3 Year Old Preschool

BSB: 633 000

Account Number: 152 071 429

Please use the invoice number or your child's name as your reference of payment.

Unpaid Fees

If fees are not paid by the due date, the steps detailed in 'Appendix 3 – Management of Unpaid Fees' will be followed.

8. REFUND OF FEES

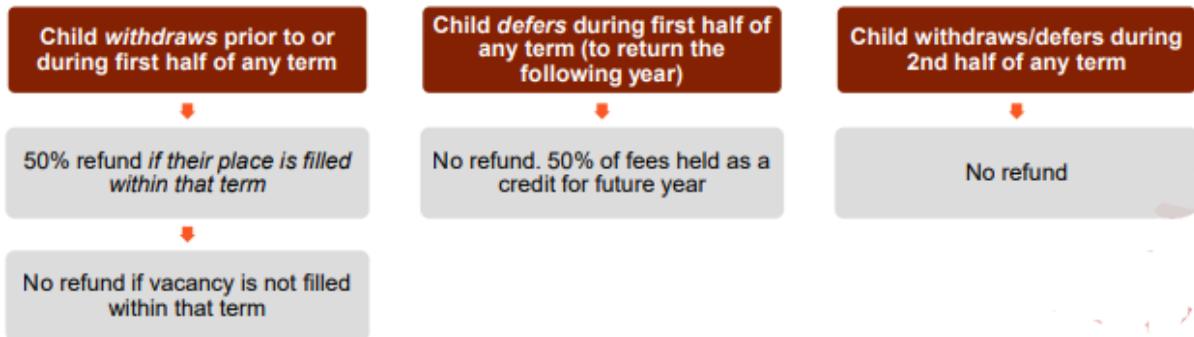
Refunds for family withdrawing or deferring the program

There will be no refund of fees unless the fee refund request is submitted to the Committee of Management in writing within 30 days of the notification of withdrawal or deferment of a position.

Such written refund requests will be assessed subject to the criteria below:

- If a child is withdrawn from the kinder prior to the start of a new term or during the first half of a term, 50% of that terms fees will only be refunded if that vacancy is filled within that term.
- If a child is withdrawn during the second half of a term, no refund will be given.
- If a child defers in the first half of a term 50% of that terms fees will be either refunded if the vacancy is filled or held until the child recommences the following year. If a child defers in the second half of the term no refund will be given.
- Special circumstances may be considered on an individual basis by the Committee of Management.

Refer to flowchart below for explanation of refunds for children withdrawing/deferring from the program.



There will be no refund of fees when a child is absent from a session due to any of the following:

- A child's short-term illness
- Public holidays
- Family holiday during operational times
- Closure of the pre-school for staff training days
- Closure of the pre-school for one or more days when a qualified educator is absent and a qualified reliever is not available
- Closure of the pre-school 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.

Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services is available from the kindergarten and a list can be supplied to those families who require it.

9. CHILDREN TURNING THREE DURING THE YEAR OF ENROLMENT

Children who turn 3 between the beginning of term 1 and 30th April can commence at the start of term 1 if the additional ratio's required for children under 3 can be accommodated. Full fee payment from the first day of Term 1 is required.

10. LATE ENROLMENTS

For families wishing to commence later in the year, and "hold" a position, the process will be as follows:

- If the late enrolment is taking place prior to the commencement of a term the kinder will require a non-refundable confirmation fee PLUS the full terms fee PLUS the maintenance levy, in order to hold the position. The position will only be held upon total payment made or payment plan arranged.
- If the late enrolment takes place during the current term, with the child commencing immediately, a non-refundable confirmation fee PLUS pro rata of the current terms fees PLUS the maintenance levy will need to be paid prior to the child commencing at the kinder.

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 one term in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- The constitution of Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool 3 Year Old Preschool

Service policies

- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
- *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Person with Management and Control are responsible for:

- 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* (refer to Sources) if applicable
- considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool 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
- 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 *Fees Policy* is readily accessible at the service (Regulation 171)
- providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges upon enrolment of their child
- collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable
- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* 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 (Regulation 172(2)), and ideally providing one term's notice.

The Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day-to-Day Charge is responsible for:

- assisting the Approved Provider in developing this policy
- implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the Approved
- considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool and removing those barriers wherever possible
- considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families
- communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way and in the family's first language where possible
- providing all parents/guardians with a fee policy
- providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges
- collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable
- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees

- notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.

Teachers and educators are responsible for:

- assisting in developing this policy
- supporting families in considering options for payment when affordability is an issue
- informing the Approved Provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Fee Policy* and understanding the statement of Fees and Charges
- acknowledging their commitment to paying all fees via the enrolment form
- notifying the Educators or Committee of Management if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees

EVALUATION

To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, all Educators supported by the Committee of Management 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
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Management of Unpaid Fees

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Committee of Management of Kinderlea 3 Year Old Preschool 3 Year Old Preschool on 13th October 2020

REVIEW DATE: JULY 2021 (OR PRIOR IF REQUIRED TO MEET CHANGES TO REGULATIONS)

ATTACHMENT 1 – MANAGEMENT OF 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.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted by phone to confirm receipt of the reminder letter and to follow up payment of unpaid fees.
- 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 Kinder may be withdrawn unless payment is made or a payment plan is entered into within a specified period of time.
- The Committee of Management 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 Kinder, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.