

Fees and Kindergarten Funding Policy

Quality Area 7

Standards

- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership*
 - Standard 7.1.2: Management Systems – *Systems are in place to manage risks and enable effective management and operation of a quality service.*

Policy

This policy will provide guidelines:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability of Williams House Kindergarten by setting appropriate fees and charges
- Priority of Access - the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by Williams House Kindergarten Policy statement
- Williams House 'opted out' of the Victorian Government 'Free Kindergarten Initiative. This means that Williams House does NOT offer 'Free Kindergarten 'to either our 3 or 4-year-old programs.
- Families are responsible for payment of Termly fees.
- Families must complete a 'One funded Kindergarten Place Declaration' prior to starting their Kindergarten year. This is completed through our EnrolNow enrolment system on kept on file.

Payment of fees

The Committee of Management will regularly review payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations.

Fee Statements

Fees will be invoiced to parents/guardians directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions. 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 service. Receipts will be provided for all fee payments.

Termly kindergarten fees and fees for term extension care will be charged together, but will be allocated separately on the families termly invoice for reference.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the office on 5241 3556, 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.

Payment Options:

Once a child's offer is confirmed, families will be asked to complete a direct debit form through EnrolNow, our enrolment system. Families will be asked to nominate a bank account or card they wish to have termly fees debited from.

☑ Termly – Statements invoiced 14 days prior to Direct Debits being processed from families nominated account.

- Casual Extended Care Bookings: All casual extended care booking is paid for on confirmation via an email link that families can confirm and pay directly using a credit or bank account details. Once this booking is confirming and pay in full, no refund is given for non-attendance.

Absenteeism for Extended Care

NO refunds or reduction in fees applies when children do not attend the centre, due to illness, holidays or parents R.D.O's. Casual Sessions are paid in full on booking & are not refundable for non-attendance.

Statement of Fees

Invoices and fee statements will be emailed to families in advance of fees being due.

Subsidies

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Your child will be eligible for a fee subsidy under the following circumstances:

- Your child is identified by a parent, career or legal guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- Your child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth (triplets or more); and /or
- Your child holds, or has parents or guardian who holds, one of the following:
 - Commonwealth Health Care card
 - Commonwealth Pensioner concession Card
 - Department of Veterans Affairs Gold or White card
 - Refugee visa (subclass 200)
 - Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203)
 - Bridging visas, A- E
 - In-country Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 201)
 - Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202)
 - Temporary Humanitarian concession visa (subclass 786)
 - Protection visa (subclass 866)
 - Women at risk visa (subclass 204)

Claiming the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS)

Williams House claims the Kindergarten fee subsidy on behalf of eligible families. In order to do this, as part of the enrolment process, parents are required to send a copy of their child's current and valid concession card/visa to the office to be kept on file.

Please also note:

- If the eligible concession card expires during the year, families are asked to contact the office, to update the expired card/visa with a current updated copy.
- If the eligible concession card/visa expires throughout the year & is NOT reissued, and /or a copy is not provided to the office upon request, families will be required to pay full fees, as the subsidy will no longer apply.

Priority of Access

The Department of Education and Training have Priority of Access Guidelines. Every approved service must abide by these guidelines to ensure access to *High Priority Children*:

- 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
- 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*

Early Start Kindergarten Grant (ESK)

Targeted funding for vulnerable or Aboriginal children to attend a free kindergarten program two years before school Funding is provided for each child who is:

- Identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or is known to Child Protection.
- Three years old by 30 April in the year of enrolment

Early Start Kindergarten Extension Grants.

Early Start Kindergarten extension grants are available to assist vulnerable and Aboriginal children who are not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy to access a free kindergarten program in the year before school Funding is provided for each child who meets all the criteria:

- The child is at least four years old on 30 April in the year in of enrolment.

Second year of kindergarten funding (4-year-old Kindergarten)

For children who have delays in key areas of development and would benefit from a second year of kindergarten, as determined by an early childhood teacher. Funding is provided for each child who:

- Is observed by an early childhood teacher as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning (see the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework) and
- Will achieve better outcomes through a second year of kindergarten than they would at school. If a child at our Service is demonstrating delays in key outcomes of learning and development, a second.

The five key outcome areas identified in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development framework will be assessed:

- o Outcome 1: Identity
- o Outcome 2: Community
- o Outcome 3: Wellbeing
- o Outcome 4: Learning
- o Outcome 5: Communication

In regard to Second Year of Kindergarten funding, educators will complete the following assessments with consent from the child's parent/carer. Complete all required documentation including:

- o Ongoing child observations (as required)
- o Second year discussion
- o Second year statement
- o Second year checklist

Liaise with other professionals as required, including but not limited to:

- o Preschool Field Officer
- o Early Childhood Intervention Service Worker
- o the child's Maternal and Child Health nurse
- o Family doctor or other allied health professionals

Transition learning and development statements.

A Transition Learning and Development Statement (Transition Statement) is required for every child transitioning into school in the following year. The Transition Statement is a tool for families and educators to share information about a child's learning and development. It is designed to assist schools, particularly Prep teachers, to:

- o build relationships with the child and family.
- o Identify the child's capabilities and interests.
- o Understand how the child can best be supported as they transition into school.
- o Plan for individual children's learning responding to their strengths, abilities, and interests. In fourth term, the Kindergarten Teacher will provide each family with a completed Transition

Statement for their child. With parental permission, the Kindergarten Teacher will pass the statement on to the nominated school.

Going to kindergarten if your child is six years old

Children can go to kindergarten when they're six years old if they have a disability, developmental delay or it's a special situation. If your child will turn six before or while they're in their first or second year of funded kindergarten, you must get an exemption from starting school.

Self-Funded Kindergarten Placements

Williams House do not currently offer self-funded places. Self-funded placements are bound by many restrictions, such as, a self-funded enrolment having to withdraw from a program due to an enrolment of a child who qualifies for 'priority of access'. Williams House believes that this would have a negative outcome on both a child and family.

We encourage families to think about when they wish to start their child at Williams House, to avoid the complications of being 'young' for school entrance (Prep). Children are never guaranteed a second year of 4-year-old Kindergarten (see Second Year of funding), so the option of self-funding another year prior to school may not be an option.

Williams House do not offer self-funded places for children who turn 3 years old mid-year, in the year prior to their funded 3-year-old kindergarten year.

Other fees/charges

- **Kindergarten fee deposit:** This payment secures a child's place at the service and is payable on acceptance of offer. The deposit is retained as part payment on first term fees. Families experiencing hardship should also discuss any difficulties with the service.

- **Excursion/service event charge:** Excursions fees are inclusive of termly fees.

- **Bush Kinder Levy**

Bush kinder fees are inclusive of termly fees, including bus travel as required and resource costs associated with the program.

Late collection charge: Williams House management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Committee of Management/Board.

- **Cancellation of places:** When a child is withdrawn from one of our programs, the following applies.

3-year-old Kindergarten: A minimum of one term notice is required.

4-year-old Kindergarten: A minimum of one term notice is required.

Extended care: A minimum of one term notice is required. If families give notice and we have a waitlist for that particular session, then we will waive the remaining term fees, from the date that the new enrolled child has commenced.

Support services

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

Sources include but not limited to:

Funding information and forms:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderdatacollection.aspx>

Kindergarten Funding Rates:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundrates.aspx>

Kindergarten Information Management System (KIM) access:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderim.aspx>

The Kindergarten Funding Guide (2016):

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/funding/The%20Kindergarten%20Guide%202016.pdf>

- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2020 - Reg 181. ACECQA: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/national-regulations>
- *Early Start Kindergarten*: www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/earlystart/
 - *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*: www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/

Date Reviewed: February 2025