CatholicCare
DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

# Children's Services

# OSHC Fee

## Policy

Version: 1.0
Approved: 19 August 2026
Review due: August 2028
Document ID: 12011-082

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# What do we believe?

At CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay, we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and hold this at the centre of our decision making and practice. We believe in the principle of paramountcy of the safety of children. This means that the safety, wellbeing, and best interests of the child are the primary consideration in all decisions, actions, and practices. Where there is a conflict between the interests of a child and those of adults or the organisation, the child's safety and wellbeing will always come first.

We believe that access to high-quality education and care should be supported by fair, transparent and equitable fee practices. As a not-for-profit organisation, we are committed to keeping fees as affordable as possible while ensuring the delivery of safe, high-quality education and care that meets all legislative, regulatory and operational requirements. We recognise that every family's circumstances are different and are committed to working respectfully and collaboratively with families, providing clear information about fees, Child Care Subsidy, payment expectations and available support to promote ongoing access to our services wherever possible.

# What are we going to do?

We will establish and administer fees in a fair, transparent and consistent manner that complies with all relevant legislation and Child Care Subsidy requirements. We will provide families with clear information about fee schedules, payment methods, invoicing, subsidies, deposits, notices and any additional charges before enrolment and throughout their child's attendance. We will maintain accurate financial and attendance records, communicate promptly regarding any changes to fees or outstanding accounts, and work collaboratively with families experiencing financial hardship to explore appropriate support and payment arrangements where possible. Through responsible financial management and open communication, we will support the ongoing sustainability of our services while ensuring children continue to have access to high-quality education and care.

# How will it be done?

## Setting of fees

CatholicCare works to keep fees as affordable as possible. However, there are times, due to rising costs and changing funding provisions by the government, that fees need to be raised. When this is the case, we will advise you in writing prior to any increase taking effect.

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) are funded by the Federal Government and eligible families will receive Child Care Subsidy.

Fees are determined by location, size of service, age range of children, required staffing and administrative requirements and application of any State or Federal Funding.

A one-off administration fee is charged at the time of enrolment; please refer to the services fee schedule which can be found in your enrolment pack.  Any subsequent children of the same family being enrolled will be charged a smaller administration fee.

For services transferring to CatholicCare, a reduced administration fee will be charged for families already enrolled; new families will be charged the full fee.

# Change of fees

CatholicCare reviews their fees throughout the year, and fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of two weeks written notice is given to all families.

CCS hourly rate caps may be increased by the CPI at the commencement of each financial year; any CCS hourly rate increases are governed by CCS and are automatically adjusted through the CRM system.

# Payment of fees

A holding deposit is not applicable for enrolling in an OSHC service.

| | |
|---|---|
| **What will be charged** | Fees are charged for each session of care and gap fees will vary dependant on individual family eligibility for Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Where this is applicable. |
| **Compliance Written Agreement (CWA)** | To receive CCS payments, the service is responsible for creating a Compliance Written Agreement (CWA) with the parent of or individual responsible for the fees.<br>Confirmation of the Compliance Written Agreement (CWA) is generated by the CRM System and is signed by the parent/individual. Any change to this agreement must be in writing and be reflected on the current CWA. |
| **Enrolment Notice** | The service then submits an 'enrolment notice' in the Child Care Subsidy system when the above arrangement has been entered into and must report the attendance of the child. This is done through The CRM System.<br>If a family disagrees with the details of the enrolment, they will notify the service via their Centrelink online account to correct any errors or resolve matters. CCS payments will not be processed until the matter is resolved and the enrolment is confirmed. |
| **Who gets the CCS payment** | CCS is paid directly to CatholicCare Children's Services and applied to the family's fortnightly fee (visible on a family's statement). |
| **Gap Fee** | Families are required to pay the difference – the Gap Fee - between the fee charged and the CCS amount. All payments must be made through electronic transfer mode.<br>Fees must be kept two (2) weeks in advance of a child's attendance.<br>Families are provided a fortnightly invoice, reflecting payments charged, CCS payment applied, and Gap fee invoiced for payment. A dated receipt is provided for each payment via email. |
| **Statements Issued to Families** | Families will be issued with a Statement on a fortnightly basis in accordance with fee payment and Regulatory requirements.<br>The Statement will include details of the sessions of care provided and the amount of fee reductions through CCS entitlements.<br>The Statement is generated using the CRM System which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislations. |
| **Fees paid through Direct Debit** | Fees are to be paid fortnightly through a direct debit system. Alternatively, and by prior arrangement, fees may be paid through BPAY/Credit Card, but only for specific circumstances. If families wish to pay fees on a weekly or monthly basis, it is a requirement that the family pay in advance and are not in arrears.<br>Fees and charges associated with direct debit system are outlined upon enrolment. A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees. |
| **Invoicing** | Invoices are emailed to families every fortnight showing the current balance and fees required for the following fortnight in advance. Fees are to be paid fortnightly, via Direct Debit or by BPay. Dates for the fee period are printed on the invoice. |
| **Two weeks in Advance** | Fees are payable for two (2) weeks in advance for every session that a child is enrolled. This includes pupil free days, sick days, and family holidays but excludes periods when the Service is closed across the Christmas period. The Service may be directed to close due to periods of local emergency such as bushfire, flood or a pandemic. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Public Holidays** | If a session of care falls on a public holiday, families are required to pay normal fees. |
| **Full session charged** | Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day). |

# Overdue fees

If fees are overdue by more than two (2) weeks, the Coordinator will request immediate payment to ensure your child's enrolment is not cancelled. If there are outstanding fees by more than two (2) weeks after receiving the invoice, parents will receive the first overdue notice. If payment has not been received within the following fortnight, then a second notice of nonpayment will be sent. **Parents are informed that their child's enrolment will be terminated if payment of fees in arrears is not met in the specified time frame.**

Parents should advise the Coordinator at the earliest possible opportunity if they have difficulty in paying fees. Payment Plans can be made available for families experiencing financial hardship.

# Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) provides extra help with the cost of early childhood education and care to families facing difficult or challenging circumstances. ACCS will usually cover all of a child's early childhood education and care fees.

To get ACCS you must be eligible for CCS, and you need to be 1 of the following:

- An eligible grandparent getting an income support payment
- Transitioning from certain income support payments to work
- Experiencing temporary financial hardship
- Caring for a child who is vulnerable or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

Families cannot apply for ACCS themselves. Where a child or family is identified as needing support, the approved provider may apply for the subsidy on behalf of the family.

The provider will discuss support options with the family, establish eligibility and complete the required application and supporting documentation. The provider may also be required to refer the family to an appropriate support agency in accordance with Family Assistance Law.

Families generally need to have a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) claim lodged and be assessed as eligible for CCS before ACCS can be paid. In limited circumstances, the provider may be able to apply under a Provider Eligible Arrangement where a CCS eligible parent or carer cannot be identified.

Where approved, ACCS is paid directly to the approved provider and applied to the family's childcare account as a fee reduction.

Families who believe they may be eligible should speak with their Service Coordinator to discuss their circumstances and available support.
caring for a child who is vulnerable or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

# Child Care Subsidy System (CCS)

- Our service will comply with the Australian Government requirements to be an approved education and care service for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy (CCS), reporting requirements and any other requirements for claiming and administering CCS will be maintained by the service.
- Families should be aware that Services Australia may withhold a percentage of their Child Care Subsidy entitlement to reduce the likelihood of overpayments at the end of the financial year. Any questions regarding CCS withholding should be directed to Services Australia.
- It is the enrolling parent/guardian's responsibility to register for CCS through their myGov account, provide their projected annual income, activity levels and the name of our service.
- All fees are charged at the full rate. Each family's eligibility for CCS is then calculated, and the service forwards these funds. Deductions may then be made to each individual family's accounts.
- Any changes in a family's financial circumstances may result in changes or cancellation of CCS. It is the family's responsibility to keep their details on myGov up to date and to contact Services Australia. if they wish to dispute assessments or discuss it further.
- Families will only be eligible for CCS if child care attendance records are accurately completed and signed by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult, and other eligibility requirements are met.
- Families are entitled to forty-two (42) allowable absence days for each registered child in each financial year. CCS is paid for these days, provided that the child would normally have attended on that day, and fees have been charged.
- Additional absences can be claimed when the first 42 days have been used. Supporting documentation may be required for approval of additional absences.
- All documentation pertaining to CCS will be kept for the specified period of time and made available to Australian Government Officers on request.

# Document retention

Itemised individual ACCS and CCS documents and retention regulations

| CCS Documents | Dates required for retention |
|---|---|
| • A record of attendance for each child for whom care is provided (regardless of eligibility for Child Care Subsidy), including records of any absences from care<br>• Statements or documents demonstrating that additional absence days more than the initial 42 absence days satisfy requirements (see Reporting absences)<br>• Copies of invoices and receipts issued for the payment of childcare fees<br>• Copies of all Statements of Entitlement issued, and any statements issued to advise that there was a change of entitlement. | Records are to be retained for 7 years from the end of the year the care was provided. |
| • Complaints made relating to Family Assistance Law | To be kept at the service and accessible when required |
| • ACCS Documents | Records are to be retained for 7 yeasts from the end of the year the care was provided. |
| • The CRM System | All records on the CRM system software are retained and available to the service when required. |

# Late pickup fees

If you are delayed and cannot get to the service in time for closing, please arrange for an alternate authorised person to pick up your child/ren and call the service to let them know. Two (2) staff are required to remain at the service after hours if a child has not been picked up. If families arrive after closing time a late fee will be charged.

Children must be collected no later than the advertised closing time. Please see example below for charges. This time will be calculated by the time listed through the Electronic Sign In on a per family basis.

To ensure appropriate staffing arrangements are maintained after the service closes, the following late collection fees will apply:

- $25 for the first 15 minutes after the service closes.
- An additional $10 will be charged for every subsequent 5-minute period (or part thereof) until the child is collected.

*Example:*

| Closing Time 18:00 | Charge |
|---|---|
| 18:00 – 18.15 | $25 |
| 18:20 | $10 added to initial $25 |
| 18:25 | $20 added to initial $25 |

# Non-notification of absence fee

It is very important that the OSHC service is notified as soon as possible if your child is going to be absent on any day they are booked to attend. Families can notify the service by phone, voicemail, text message or through the service's approved communication platform.

**Please note: It is not sufficient to only advise the school that your child will be absent. The OSHC service must also be notified.**

If a child is booked to attend OSHC and does not arrive as expected, the service will follow its Safe Arrival and Departure Policy and Delivery and Collection of Children Policy to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.

Parents and Guardians are required to notify the OSHC service if their child will be absent for any reason, including:

- Your child is unwell or unable to attend school.
- Your child has been collected from school by a parent, guardian or another authorised person.
- Your child is attending a friend's house or another activity after school.
- Your child has left school early due to an appointment, illness, injury or another reason.
- Your child will be absent due to a family holiday or other planned absence.
- Your child will not be attending OSHC for any other reason.

Failure to notify the OSHC Service of a child’s non-attendance will result in a $10 non-notification fee being charged to the families.

For further information regarding the safe arrival, departure and collection of children, please refer to the Safe Arrival and Departure Policy and Delivery and Collection of Children Policy.

## Casual childcare days

Vacancies permitting, extra days may be available to families on a casual basis charged in addition to your permanent booking. Please see the Coordinator if you require any extra days. To ensure a space at the service a permanent booking is advised. **A casual position is not secured without prior written confirmation.**

**Note:** The fees for casual days must be paid in addition to your permanent bookings and may not be swapped for permanent days. Casual days in Out of School Hours Care are charged at a set, higher rate to the permanent rate. Please refer to the service fee schedule for rates. Once booked, a casual day requires a 24h hour notice for cancellation of the booking.

## Changes to permanent bookings

Changes to permanent bookings in OSHC services, including termination of your child's permanent booking, require two (2) weeks written notice to be provided to the service Coordinator. Remaining fees are still payable for this two-week period. Permanent booked days cannot be swapped or changed during the notice period for the purpose of avoiding notice period fees. For example, if a family cancels a Monday booking and requests a Thursday booking instead, the two-week notice period and applicable fees for the original Monday booking will still apply.

Please note: If your child does not attend their final booked day of attendance, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) may be removed from the date of your child's last actual attendance through to the end of the notice period. This is a CCS requirement and may result in the full fee being payable for any absences during this period.

## Vacation care fees

Vacation Care Fees will be invoiced within the fee payment fortnightly cycle. If you have booked your child into vacation care however need to cancel the booking, a minimum 2 weeks' notice prior to the commencement of vacation care is required. If your child does not attend a booked day, you will be invoiced for the day.

Your booking will not be finalised until your enrolment form is completed in full including current payment details. Casual bookings can only be made with 48 hours' notice. For any late bookings you will need to speak directly with the coordinator of your service.

## Holidays & Public Holidays

Service opening hours and closure periods are indicated in the parent handbooks, listed on the service website and available at www.startingblocks.gov.au.

Fees apply for the days your child is permanently booked into the service (including public holidays that fall within the school Term dates). This includes days when children are away on holidays during term time and days when children are away due to ill health.

Parents receiving Child Care Subsidy can use their Absences during this time.

# Third Party provider

CatholicCare Children's Services uses a CRM system to manage enrolments, attendance records, fee administration and Child Care Subsidy (CCS) requirements.

The CRM System is used to:

- Manage enrolment information and arrangements for care;
- Record attendance and absences;
- Submit required CCS enrolment notices and session reports;
- Issue Statements of Entitlement, invoices and receipts; and
- Provide families with secure electronic sign in and sign out using a unique access code.

Childcare fees are collected via the payment methods approved by CatholicCare, including direct debit, BPAY and credit card. CCS payments are received directly from Services Australia and applied to each family's account.

CatholicCare maintains appropriate security measures, record keeping practices and auditing processes to ensure compliance with the Family Assistance Law and all applicable legislative requirements. Access to the is restricted to authorised staff who have received appropriate training and are responsible for administering enrolments, attendance and fee management.

# Handling Money

CatholicCare Children's Services is committed to ensuring that all financial transactions are managed safely, securely and in accordance with organisational financial procedures.

**Fee Payments**

Families are required to pay childcare fees electronically via Direct Debit or BPAY. Cash payments for childcare fees are not accepted.

Educators working directly with children are not responsible for processing fee payments. Fee administration is managed by authorised staff in accordance with CatholicCare financial procedures.

**Fundraising**

Fundraising activities must have a clear purpose and be conducted in a manner that is ethical, inclusive and equitable for all children and families.

Families will be informed of the purpose of the fundraising activity and how the funds will be used. Where applicable, receipts will be issued for monies received.

All funds raised must be processed through CatholicCare's approved financial systems and banking processes. Cash received through fundraising activities must not be used for direct purchases or retained outside approved financial procedures.

All fundraising activities must be approved by the relevant Practice Manager and conducted in accordance with CatholicCare's Fundraising and Donations Policy.

**Security and Financial Controls**

Access to safes, financial records and any cash holdings is restricted to authorised staff only.

CatholicCare maintains appropriate financial controls, record keeping and auditing processes to ensure the secure management of all monies received by the service.

# Who is responsible?

| Roles | Responsibilities |
|---|---|
| **Approved Provider** | • Ensure the service operates in line with the Family Assistance Law and Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations<br>• Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements.<br>• Developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability.<br>• Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at the service and removing those barriers wherever possible.<br>• Providing parents/guardians with a regular statement of fees and charges.<br>• Ensuring that the Fees Policy is readily accessible at the service.<br>• Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.<br>• Ensuring a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service.<br>• Enter into a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) with a parent or guardian, to provide education and care services in exchange for fees. A CWA is an agreement between the education and care service and a parent or guardian. It will include:<br>• The provider and parents contact names and details<br>• The date the arrangement is effective from<br>• The child or children's full name and date of birth<br>• Session days and start/end times<br>• Details of the fees to be charged<br>• Update any changes to the Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) as required<br>• The service's current fee schedule, including session types, session lengths and applicable fees, is available to families upon enrolment and on request.<br>• Ensuring the service complies with the current Start Strong for Community Preschools program guidelines, including fee relief, declaration and record-keeping requirements.<br>• Ensuring one completed fee relief declaration and consent form is obtained for each child before fee relief is applied.<br>• Maintaining accurate records of fee relief applied and updating procedures when program requirements change. |
| **Practice Manager** | • Ensure the Fee Policy is implemented consistently across all Children's Services.<br>• Monitor compliance with relevant legislation, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) requirements, organisational financial procedures and funding agreements.<br>• Approve fundraising activities in accordance with CatholicCare's Fundraising and Donations Policy.<br>• Support Directors and Coordinators in managing complex fee matters, outstanding accounts and financial hardship arrangements where required.<br>• Monitor service fee administration practices to ensure accurate record keeping, financial accountability and compliance.<br>• Support continuous improvement by reviewing fee management practices and implementing improvements where required. |
| **Administration** | • Accurately administer enrolments, Compliance Written Agreements (CWAs), CCS enrolment notices and attendance records through the approved CRM system.<br>• Prepare and distribute invoices, statements, receipts and other fee related documentation in accordance with legislative and organisational requirements.<br>• Process fee payments, direct debit arrangements and account reconciliations in accordance with CatholicCare financial procedures.<br>• Maintain accurate financial and enrolment records, ensuring documentation is securely stored and retained for the required legislative timeframes. |

| Roles | Responsibilities |
|---|---|
| | • Assist families with general enquiries relating to fees, payment options, Child Care Subsidy and account balances, referring complex matters to the Director, Coordinator or Practice Manager as appropriate.<br>• Maintain confidentiality and ensure only authorised personnel access financial and family information.<br>• Support Directors and Coordinators in monitoring outstanding accounts and implementing approved payment plans where required.<br>• Monitor service fee administration practices to ensure accurate record keeping, financial accountability and compliance.<br>• Support Directors and Coordinators in managing complex fee matters, outstanding accounts and financial hardship arrangements where required. |
| **Nominated Supervisor** | • Providing parents/guardians with a regular statement of fees and charges.<br>• Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable.<br>• Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.<br>• Ensuring a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service. |
| **Educators** | • Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisors |
| **Parents / Guardians** | • Reading this policy and referring any questions, queries or concerns to the nominated supervisor.<br>• Obtain a Customer Reference Number from Services Australia (Centrelink)as soon as practical before enrolment at the service.<br>• Record the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending care.<br>• Pay for any booked day of education and care which falls on a public holiday. |

# National Quality Standards (NQS)

| Quality Area 7: Governance & Leadership | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7.1 | Governance | Governance supports the operation of a quality service that is child safe |
| 7.1.2 | Management Systems | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service that is child safe |
| 7.1.3 | Roles and Responsibilities | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service |

| Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations | |
|---|---|
| S. 2A | Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children |
| S. 3A | Paramount consideration |
| 111 | Administrative space |
| 168 | Education and care services must have policies and procedures |
| 111 | Administrative space |
| 168 | Education and care services must have policies and procedures |
| 170 | Policies and procedures to be followed |
| 171 | Policies and procedures to be kept available |
| 172 | Notification of change to policies and procedures |
| 181 | Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider |
| 183 | Storage of records and other documents |
| 184 | Storage of records after service approval transferred |

# Related documents

## CatholicCare policies

- *Financial Management Policy*
- *Fraud Prevention Policy*

## Children's Services policy

- *Enrolment, Waiting List Orientation and Termination Policy*

## Forms

- *First Notice of Non-payment Letter*
- *Second and Final Notice of Non-payment Letter*

# Resources

## External

- *Child Care Subsidy | myGov*
- *Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy child wellbeing - Department of Education, Australian Government*
- *Services Australia*
- *Child Care Subsidy - Services Australia*
- *Centrelink Online Account Help - Child Care Subsidy*
- *Department of Human Services*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*
- *Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act (2017)*

# Glossary

**ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authorities**

The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.

**ACCS**

Additional Child Care Subsidy

**CCS**

Child Care Subsidy

**Child Paramountcy**

Child paramountcy refers to the obligation to ensure that the best interests, safety, and wellbeing of children are paramount above all other considerations. All decisions, practices, and actions must prioritise the protection and wellbeing of children, particularly where competing interests exist.

**DCJ**

Department of Communities & Justice

**MFA**

Multi Factor Authentication – is a process which requires multiple methods of authentication from independent categories of credentials to verify a user's identity for a login or other transaction.

**OSHC**

Out of School Hours Care

**Practice Manager**

A practice manager oversees and supports a cluster of services within a local area. They work with the Nominated supervisor to ensure services operate safely, meet legal and quality requirements, and follow organisational policies. They do not work directly with children day to day.

**PRODA**

Provider Digital Access – is an online verification and authentication system, enabling secure access to government online services.

**Risk Assessment**

A systematic process of evaluating the potential likelihood and consequences of risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.

**Technology One (TechOne)**

CatholicCare's Enterprise Resource Planning software system for accounting.

# Sign off and review

This document remains valid until it is either superseded by a new version or officially revoked.

CatholicCare values your input and welcomes feedback on this policy. Your suggestions help us improve and better support your work. Please send any feedback to policy.updates@catholiccaredbb.org.au.

| Version | Authorised by | Approved date | Review cycle | Review due |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.0 | General Manager Children's Services | 19 August 2026 | 2 years | August 2028 |

# Revision history

| Version | Description | Author | Amendment date |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.0 | Policy | Practice Manager - Quality, Compliance & Business Development | 19 August 2026 |