

Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens

FEES AND PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

CONSIDERATIONS:

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS	Standard 7.1
NATIONAL LAW ACT & NATIONAL REGULATIONS	Regulations: 168, 171, 172
OTHER	Australian Government Family Assistance Law

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Service is committed to providing a high quality educational program that is able to be accessed at an affordable fee for families.

RELEVANT FORMS/MATERIAL:

- Kindergarten Enrolment Form
- Kindergarten Handbook
- Funded Kindergarten Program Statement of Fees – Kindergarten Services
- Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS): Funding Requirements
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Children’s Record Keeping Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Access, Orientation and Communication Policy
- Kindergarten Service, Service Agreement with The Gowrie (QLD) Inc.

SOURCES:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (Queensland).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Queensland Department of Education Website.
- Queensland Government, (2020). Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS): Funding Requirements.
- My Child website www.mychild.gov.au

(Accessed 2020)

REVIEWED: March 2020

Date of Review: September 2021

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & SERVICE PROVIDERS	
BACKGROUND	<p>Regulation 172 (2) states “The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that parents of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.”</p> <p>In addition to this as an Approved Kindergarten Program Provider the Service has an obligation under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme to ensure that the subsidy which is received, assists with the costs of delivering an Approved Kindergarten Program and ensuring cost is not a barrier to access for families. For example; fees take account of socio-economic circumstances of families in the community and are then published to explain components of the fee structure.</p>
PROCEDURE	
WHAT THE SERVICE SHOULD DO DISPLAYING INFORMATION	<p>The Approved Kindergarten Program Providers are required to display at the Service and publish online the Service fee information including structure and inclusions.</p> <p>The Department's <u>Funded Kindergarten Program Statement of Fees template forms</u> are to be used by Kindergarten Services and long day care services with an Approved Kindergarten Program to publish their fees.</p> <p>Displaying and publishing fees using this format helps parents to make an informed decision when choosing a Kindergarten program for their child.</p> <p>Where a Service does not have their own website they are to provide an electronic copy of their statement of fees to be displayed on the Lady Gowrie Qld website, as the Services Central Governing Body.</p>
DETERMINING FEES	<p>The Executive Committee as Approved Provider of the Service is responsible for the setting of the fees and the management of the collection of fees for the Kindergarten, in accordance with fee information provided to families on their enrolment at the Service.</p> <p>The Kindergarten Service is to establish the fees and any associated levies and distribute this information to families prior to the commencement of the Kindergarten year or on enquiry of enrolment where enrolment takes place during the course of the calendar year.</p> <p>The fee information shared with families must include information about the total annual fee amount, including all non-refundable components (such as excursions, maintenance costs etc.), any refundable levies (if applicable) and how families will be notified of fee changes throughout the year (if applicable).</p> <p>The Kindergarten Service will need to consider the fee structure in regards to a breakdown of the annual and weekly cost per child in the</p>

	<p>Kindergarten Program and how this is reflective of the program being accessible to all families.</p> <p>In planning the Service budget the Approved Provider is to notify the The Gowrie (QLD) of any increase in fees and considerations which were made in making the decision of this increase.</p> <p>Lady Gowrie Qld will then discuss any anomalies or concerns regarding a possible barrier to access for families and maximizing the eligible-age cohort (those children turning 4 by June 30 in the year they are attending) with the Approved Provider.</p> <p>The fees for attendance of a non-eligible age child are determined by the Executive Committee as Approved Provider. The Approved Provider is encouraged to discuss any fee changes in comparison to the Approved Program Fee for eligible aged children, with Lady Gowrie Qld as the Services Central Governing Body.</p>
<p>WAIT LIST AND OR ENROLMENT FEE</p>	<p>The Kindergarten Service must advise families of any deposit required to secure a place on the waiting list or to accept an offered place, refundable deposits should not act as a barrier to enrolment.</p> <p>In addition to this, Lady Gowrie Qld encourages Affiliated Services to consider the time frame, from when an offer of enrolment may be offered and the commencement of the Kindergarten year, for the child's year of attendance.</p> <p>Families must be informed of notification periods and processes should their family circumstances change and they are no longer undertaking the enrolment. Lady Gowrie Qld encourages the Kindergarten Service to refund the enrolment fee in full, where the family advises of cancellation of enrolment by the 31st of October the year before attendance. Refund of enrolment fees from the 31st of October should be considered on an individual circumstance basis by the Executive Committee.</p>
<p>PAYMENT OF FEES</p>	<p>The Kindergarten Service is to outline the process of issuing fee invoices and payment of fees in the Kindergarten Service handbook, which is provided to families prior to finalisation of enrolment.</p> <p>The Kindergarten Service is encouraged to consider offering a variety of ways for families to undertake the payment of fees including full term payment, part term payment schedules or fortnightly payment schedules. Providing flexible payment schedules such as this or the opportunity to negotiate levies with the Approved Provider, is supportive of the Service demonstrating that the program is accessible to all families.</p> <p>The Kindergarten Service Handbook should also outline the procedure which will be followed when fees are in arrears and the action which will be undertaken if fees are not paid.</p> <p>When issuing fee invoices personal fee information of individual families should not be able to be viewed by other families, including receipt of funds paid (e.g. if placing in family pockets the money value is not visible).</p>

	<p>The Service will notify parents/guardians at least 14 days in advance of any changes to fee structure and payment processes.</p>
<p>QKFS PLUS KINDY SUPPORT</p>	<p>The Kindergarten Service is to inform all families of eligible-aged children of the availability of QKFS Plus Subsidy, which they may be eligible for and the process in regards to attaining this subsidy. This notification may be through information in the Kindergarten Service Handbook, posters displayed at the Service, information included in newsletters or fee invoice.</p> <p>The Queensland Government has through the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS), assisted Kindergartens via funding subsidies to enable the Kindergarten to charge fees to families that promote no barrier to access for families in their communities. Further assistance is available to those families of eligible-aged children who meet one of the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Care Card holders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Families, including foster carers, of an eligible-aged child present their current Australian Government Health Care Card (HCC). The HCC must be sighted and a copy kept by the Service. The HCC must name the enrolled child, whether it is the child's own card or a card belonging to their parent / guardian; or • A current Australian Government Pension Concession card with automatic Health Care Card entitlements ; or • Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card; or • or formal communication, such as a letter, from the relevant agency stating the intent to issue a Health Care Card. <p>The Service should take a copy of the card and keep the copy as a record;</p> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies as being Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or Australian South Sea Islander. The family identifies their child as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or Australian South Sea Islander and this is recorded on their Enrolment Form, which must be signed and kept by the Service as a record; <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple births Available to families with multiple births of 3 or more eligible-aged children. Proof of date of birth for these children is required. Services should keep a copy as a record. <p>It is important to clearly explain to all families with children of eligible-age at the time of enrolment how the QKFS Plus Kindy Support subsidy is reflected in the Service's fee structure, and how it will be paid and</p>

	<p>applied to the individual families' statement of fees.</p> <p>The QKFS Plus Kindy Support Subsidy is passed on directly to eligible families as a fee reduction.</p> <p>The SEIFA Subsidy (if applicable to the Service) is partially passed on directly to all eligible aged children families as a fee reduction to reduce out-of-pocket expenses. Any remainder part of this subsidy is allocated to reduce the enrolment fee for all eligible age children.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ENROLMENT RECORDS</p>	<p>The Kindergarten Service is to ensure that all enrolment records and attendance records are accurate and kept in accordance with legislation requirements.</p> <p>Please refer to the Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Children's Record Keeping Policy.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">LONG DAY CARE AFFILIATED SERVICES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service will implement Child Care Subsidy (CCS) as per the information in the Child Care Provider Handbook. • Services will advise families that information relevant to fees and charges is also lodged through CCS as per Federal Government requirements for Child Care Subsidy, via the Service third party approved software and the program which the Service uses. • Families complete a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) on enrolment with the Service. The enrolment record and child's file includes information regarding the Complying Written Agreement (CWA). • For those Services which are in receipt of QKFS as a Long Day Care program, Services should apply QKFS Plus Kindy Support payments to families on a weekly / fortnightly basis to comply with the Australian Government Family Assistance Law.