



## PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE

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# PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE (PHWMCC) FEES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## Introduction

PHWMCC has a commitment to ensuring our fees are as affordable as possible and that all families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce these fees. Prompt payment of fees allows us to plan with certainty

The setting and payment of fees takes into account all requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)* (National Regulation), Australian Tax Office, and the *Privacy Act 1988*. All records held at the service will be maintained in accordance with the PHWMCC Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. Families will be provided with accurate fees statements and clear information regarding fee payment processes.

The current funding model will determine how fees are set, and have clear guidelines and spending rules. As such PHWMCC will abide by these.

## Aim

To enable PHWMCC to provide high quality early education and care for children we need to ensure we are financially viable at all times. Our financial health and access to our preschool will be maximised by ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment.

## Procedure

### **PHWMCC Funding**

As a community based preschool, PHWMCC receives funding from:

- NSW Department of Education (DoE). The current funding model is Start Strong Funding which has two components - Program Funding and Fee Relief Funding. The Program funding applies to all children for 15 hours (2 days) of Preschool. The Fee Relief funding applies to families who choose to access it from PHWMCC and is also only for 15 hours (2 days of Preschool)
- Disability and Inclusion Program (DIP) funding from the DoE for individual children with additional needs
- Grants for specific projects (on a submission and approval basis)
- Parent payment of fees
- Parent fundraising
- Maintenance Levy
- Enrolment Levy

### **Start Strong Funding**

To be eligible for Start Strong Funding a child will need to be:

- at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year and not in compulsory schooling; and
- attending an early childhood education program (PHWMCC)

Start Strong Program Funding currently funds 4 year old children at 100% of the base rate of funding, and 3 year old children are funded at 50%.

To access the Start Strong Fee Relief funding, parents must sign a declaration form nominating to access this additional fee reduction through PHWMCC.

### **Fee Setting**

- Fees will be set each year by PHWMCC Management Committee in order to meet budget requirements for the year. Fees are reviewed twice each year or as needed.
- There will be different fees set for children who are eligible for the full rate of Start Strong funding and those who are not eligible i.e. non-equity 3-year-old children
- Three year old children who are ineligible for the full rate of Start Strong funding will attract a higher fee to attend PHWMCC.
- Families who choose to access the Start Strong Fee Relief funding will have their fees further reduced.
- PHWMCC will charge higher fees for any hours of enrolment above 15 hours, as these hours are unfunded. The amount will be determined by the Management Committee.
- Fees are set as an annual fee and divided by 40 weeks to get an average weekly fee. The annual fee includes payment for Public Holidays.
- Families will be given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any changes to fees.

### **Equity Fees**

- Children who are from a low income family, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family, or a child who has a disability or additional needs will have access to reduced fees. Equity fees will be set annually by the PHWMCC Management Committee.
- Low income families must present their Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card in order to receive equity fee.
- Families will be advised on the PHWMCC website and in the PHWMCC Parent and Family Information Handbook, and through the orientation to preschool process that reduced fees are available.
- Any applications for equity fees will be kept confidential.

### **Advanced Part Payment – only applies to families enrolled up to and including 2023**

- All families will be asked to pay an Advance Part Payment Term 4 (APPT4) to confirm their child's position at PHWMCC for the following year of enrolment. This fee will be deducted from the child's Term 4 fees or refunded to the parents nominated bank account in Term 4. It is not refundable at any other time of the year.
- The APPT4 is for the position offered for the following year, eg. paid in 2022 for a position in 2023.
- If families decide not to continue with the position offer after they have paid the APPT4, they must notify the preschool in writing by the due date nominated in the position letter of offer in order to receive a half refund.
- Families who defer the position offer after they have paid the APPT4 will receive a half refund if they notify the preschool by the date specified in the position letter of offer. After this date, families will forfeit all of the APPT4.
- The APPT4 is not transferrable to another child, or the next year if families request deferral of enrolment.

## **Enrolment Fee – Commencing in 2023 for 2024 families**

- All families will be asked to pay an Enrolment Fee or Re-enrolment Fee to confirm their child's position at PHWMCC for the following year of enrolment. This is a non refundable administrative cost.
- In 2023 new children who will be enrolling for 2024 will be invoiced \$200, and children who will be returning for their second or third year of preschool will be invoiced \$100
- The Enrolment Fee and Re-enrolment Fee is for the position offered for the following year, eg. paid in 2023 for a position in 2024.
- If families decide not to continue with the position offer after they have paid the Enrolment Fee or Re-enrolment Fee, they must notify the preschool in writing by the due date nominated in the position letter of offer in order to receive a half refund.
- After this date, families will forfeit all of the Enrolment or Re-enrolment Fee.
- The Enrolment Fee or Re-enrolment Fee is not transferrable to another child, or the next year if families request deferral of enrolment.

## **Termly Payment of Fees**

### Fees

- Parents receive a termly invoice for each child.
- Term 1 invoices are usually issued over the Christmas holidays for payment by week 3 of term 1.
- Terms 2, 3 and 4 are distributed in week 8 of the term prior.
- Fees are payable for the entire term by week 2 except in term 1.
- Payment of fees in instalments is available by arrangement with the office.
- Payment of fees in instalments will need to be paid in full by the second last week of term, with the exception of term 4, when all fees are due in full by the end of November.
- Fees will be required for any days the child would normally attend. No refunds are given for illness or family holidays taken during term time.
- Any changes to this schedule will be given in advance to parents.

### Payment of fees

- Fees are to be paid in full, unless by prior arrangement, by the due date.
- Payment is to be either by direct bank transfer, credit card or direct debit from a credit card. Payment by credit card incurs a 1.5% transaction fee. Direct debit from a credit card does not incur the 1.5% fee.
- If fees are not paid by the due date, and arrangements have not been made for payments by instalments, in week 3 a reminder and an additional \$10 late payment fee will be charged. Subsequent reminders will be issued fortnightly and will incur an additional \$10 late payment fee for each reminder.
- If payment is not made by week 6 of a term, this matter will be referred to the Management Committee of the preschool. If payment is not received by the end of a term, the child's position at preschool may be forfeited.
- A process of fee recovery will be engaged in the case of unpaid preschool fees.

### Notice of withdrawal

- 4 weeks written notice during term time must be given when withdrawing a child, or 4 weeks in lieu of notice will be levied
- A full terms written notice must be given when withdrawing a child during or from Term 4, or all of Term 4 fees will be levied

- Any changes to this would be at the discretion of the Director and in consultation with the Management Committee.

## **Late Fees**

- A late fee of \$20 will be levied for families who arrive between 3:45 and 4pm.
- For families who arrive after 4pm, an additional \$1 per minute after that will also be levied.
- This late fee will be invoiced separately.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Approved Provider**

- Ensure the service operates in line with the *Education and Care Services National Law 2010* and *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.
- Comply with funding agreements.
- Review the budget to determine fee income requirements.
- Develop a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high quality program and maintaining service viability.
- Consider any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at the preschool and removing those barriers wherever possible.
- Ensure that the Fees Policy is readily accessible at PHWMCC.
- Notify parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Review fees twice annually.

### **Nominated Supervisor**

- Ensure all families are made aware of preschool fees and available subsidies on enrolment.
- Ensure a termly fee invoice is given to all families at the end of the previous term.
- Ensure that families are aware of the Fees Policy.
- Collect all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to equity fees, where applicable.
- Join in advocacy actions designed to reduce the cost of early education and care fees for families wherever possible.

### **Early Childhood Educators**

- Refer parent's / guardian questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor.

### **Families**

- Record the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending PHWMCC.
- Read this policy and referring any question, queries or concerns to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Sign that they have read and understood the Fee Payment Procedure letter procedure on enrolment at PHWMCC.
- Ensure all fees are paid in advance unless arrangements have been made to pay in instalments.
- Provide 4 weeks notice of withdrawal from the preschool. If child does not attend during this 4 week notice period, full fees will still be payable by the family.
- Pay full fees for withdrawal during Term 4.
- Notify the Nominated Supervisor if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the preschool will review this policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the preschool will ensure that families of children at the preschool are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the preschool; a family's ability to utilise the preschool; the fees charged or the ways in which fees are collected.

<b>Related legislation:</b>	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 168 (2) (n) Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) Privacy Regulation 2013
<b>Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks:</b>	National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership Standard 7.1 Start Strong Funding Guidelines Disability and Inclusion Funding Guidelines
<b>Sources:</b>	Community Early Learning Australia – Fees Sample Policy Department of Education Funding Program Guidelines
<b>Relevant Documents:</b>	PHWMCC Privacy and Confidentiality Policy PHWMCC Enrolment and Orientation Policy PHWMCC Position Letter of Offer PHWMCC Fee Payment Procedure letter PHWMCC Parent and Family Information Handbook
<b>Policy reviewed:</b>	Nov 2022
<b>Next review date:</b>	Nov 2025