



Fees Policy

NQS

QA7	7.1.2	Management systems - Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
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Seaford District Community Children's Centre is a child focused service working collaboratively with families, professionals and the community, building capacity for lifelong care and education.

AIM

Parents fully understand fee payment procedures and requirements, and pay their child care fees on time.

RELATED POLICIES

Orientation for Children Policy

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

IMPLEMENTATION

ENROLEMENT

An enrolment fee will be charged for each child (as per fee schedule) when lodging an enrolment form with centre.

This is non-refundable if your child does not take a place at our service.

Upon enrolment families must pay a bond deposit of **two week's full fees**.

PERMANENT BOOKINGS

Seaford District Community Children's Centre (SDCCC) gives priority to permanent bookings and follows the priority of access guidelines as determined by Department of Human Services.

A permanent booking is when a child is booked in for any session that is repeated on an ongoing weekly basis until two weeks written notification is provided to cease the fixed bookings.

A minimum booking of one day of care will be charged.

Fees apply to absences for all permanent bookings.

CASUAL BOOKINGS

A casual booking is any booking that is not ongoing. We accept casual booking requests where availability allows.

Fees will apply to absence on a casual booking.

CENTRE BASED CARE

Centre Based Care (CBC) - childcare 6.00am-6.00pm will be charged at a daily rate or a weekly discounted rate.

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Before School Care (BSC) 6.00am-8.30am will be charged at a sessional rate only.

After School Care (ASC) 3.00pm-6.00pm will be charged at a sessional rate only.

Fees will apply to all absences.

EARLY FINISH OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

If your permanent ASC booking falls on an "Early finish day" your booking will be changed to an "Extended After School Care" charge. Your permanent ASC booking will be charged and fee applied regardless of attendance.

VACATION CARE

Permanent OSHC clients

- Bookings for Vacation care will only be accepted for permanent clients when OSHC fees have been paid up to and including the last day of the current term.
- Vacation Care booking requests will only be accepted in writing.
- Payment for excursion costs will be required at booking time.
- Payments and are non refundable if the excursion is not attended.
- Only when payment is received will the booking request be processed and accepted **subject to availability**.

Casual OSHC and Vacation Care clients

- Bookings request for Vacation care will only be accepted for casual clients when OSHC fees have been paid up to and including the last day of the current term.
- Vacation Care booking requests will only be accepted in writing.
- A maximum of 5 booking request days will be charged upfront before a Vacation Care booking is accepted.
- Payment for excursion costs will be required at booking time.
- Payments and are non refundable if the excursion is not attended.
- Only when payment is received will the booking request be processed and accepted **subject to availability**.

TARNDAL NATURE KINDERGARTEN - UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PRESCHOOL

Children enrolled into the Universal Access to Preschool program will be charged as per Centre Based Care. To secure an enrolment to our Tarndal Nature Kindergarten program a non refundable fee of \$50.00 will be charged and off set against the first account for the program.

TRANSPORTATION

Seaford District Community Children's Centre does not charge for the transportation of children between its services.

CANCELLATIONS

Centre Based Care & OSHC permanent bookings require two weeks' notice in writing if a child is to be permanently withdrawn from care. Once a casual booking is made with any CBC, BSC, ASC, VAC service there is no option to cancel and will incur a charge regardless of absence from care. OSHC excursions coinciding with Pupil Free/School Closure days and Vacation Care days will be charged regardless of any absence from care.

BOOKING AND BILLING NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE

To ensure your requirements are being addressed we recommend all notifications regarding the booking, billing and cancellation of Centre Based Care, Out of School Hours Care & Vacation Care be done through the Seaford District Administration between the hours of 9:00am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday. Administration takes no responsibility for requests and changes that are not made in writing and signed and dated by the client.

BOND

Upon enrolment the SDCCC will charge an upfront bond of two weeks, which is the full fee rate of each new child's enrolment within the service. This bond amount is subject to variation during the child's enrolment with SDCCC based upon their permanent weekly booking status. This bond amount will be offset against any monies outstanding at the end of the child's enrolment with the service. Once the bond is offset against the client's tax invoice any credit amount will be refunded to the account holder via internet banking funds transfer only.

As per the fee policy cancellation rule two weeks' notice must be provided for a child to be permanently withdrawn from care however, where there is no intention to use care for that period, SDCCC will charge the rate of the full fee exclusive of any CCS entitlement.

Under family assistance office law sessions are unable to attract CCS after a child ceases to be in care. In this circumstance the bond will be used to offset against this charge and the client may not be entitled to a refund of the bond.

SDCCC based upon their permanent weekly booking status. This bond amount will be offset against any monies outstanding at the end of the child's enrolment with the service. Once the bond is offset against the client's tax invoice any credit amount will be refunded to the account holder via internet banking funds transfer only.

ABOUT THE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (CCS)

Department of Human Services/Centrelink is the government agency that administers Child Care Subsidy. Seaford District Community Children's Centre has no control over the amount of CCS the agency provides to your account, over payments or debt recovery.

Families are responsible to ensure they are entitled to the correct amount of CCS that SDCCC applies to their account in good faith.

We may provide an estimate of the fees you are to pay after removing the estimated CCS, however failing to meet the commitments required to receive the CCS can result in a subsequent CCS debt owed to the agency.

Child Care Subsidy is available to all families who are Australian Residents if the child meets immunisation requirements and parents meet eligibility requirements. Entitlement is determined by an activity test which determines the number of hours of subsidised care to which families are entitled.

<i>Hours of activity per fortnight</i>	<i>Maximum number of hours of subsidy per fortnight</i>
8 hours to 16 hours	36 hours
More than 16 hours to 48 hours	72 hours
More than 48 hours	100 hours

A broad range of activities meet the activity test requirements, including paid work, self-employment, unpaid work in a family business, active job hunting, volunteering or studying. You can also include reasonable travel time to and from a place of activity to the centre. In two parent families, both parents must meet the activity test, and subsidy hours are calculated on the lower number where parents have different levels of activity. There are exemptions for parents who legitimately cannot meet the activity test requirements. Low income families who do not meet the activity test can access 24 hours of subsidised care per fortnight.

The percentage of subsidy a family receives is based on their estimated combined annual income. All families wishing to access Child Care Subsidy need to complete an online Child Care Subsidy assessment through their myGov account. Assessment asks families to provide information about their expected combined family income, activity level of parents and types of child care service being used.

The Additional Child Care Subsidy may be available to help support:

- families needing help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
- grandparents on income support who are primary child-carers
- families in temporary financial hardship
- families moving to work from income support

Families can claim Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy online by signing into their myGov and completing a Child Care Subsidy claim. If eligible, the Subsidy will be paid directly to the service on families' behalf and we will reduce the fees owed. This can occur after our service enters families' enrolment information online, and families confirm their enrolment information through their myGov account. Until Child Care Subsidy details are available, families will need to pay full fees.

ALLOWABLE ABSENCES

Families are entitled to receive Child Care Subsidy for up to 42 days in a financial year where their child is absent, for example due to illness, public holidays and parental leave. Evidence to support these 42 absences is not required. Once 42 absence days have occurred in a financial year, Child Care Subsidy can only be paid for any additional absences where they are taken for a reason defined in the Family Assistance Law and there is evidence to support these.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

Seaford District Community Children's Centre uses software registered with the Department of Education & Training (DET) to process Child Care Subsidy by reporting electronically to DET. We will issue weekly statements (with the child/children's full name/s, date of care, date of payment etc) detailing the fees paid and

the amount of Child Care Subsidy received. Parents' My Gov accounts will also have how much care families have received and how much Child Care Subsidy has been paid. If families pay more than the fee amount required to their Child Care Account, the amount will be credited to the family's child care account. No reimbursement or change will be given.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Centre Based Care, OSHC & Vacation services are closed on Public Holidays. SDCCC charges for Public Holidays. Public holidays will be counted as an absence day for CCS if:

- The child would normally have attended the service on the day if it were not a public holiday and
- Fees are charged in respect of the absent child for the day

ILLNESS

When a child is absent from care due to illness the booked session will still be charged.

ANNUAL LEAVE HOLDING FEES

Annual leave holding fees are charged to families to reserve their permanent place in the centre when their child is absent from care due to holidays for no more than two **entire booking weeks** in a financial year.

- Two weeks' notice in writing must be given to be eligible for a 50% holding fee charge for allowable absences due to parental holidays for no more than two entire booking weeks, as per a client's standard booking week, in a financial year

Cancellations for illness or annual leave in advance will be charged as above. Early return from notified absences will only be honoured at the discretion of the Director dependent upon centre capacity as per regulatory requirements.

CEASATION OF ALL CARE

Under Family Assistance Law allowable absences are not available for any days after the child stopped attending the service. In this instance, where a child is absent from care that still falls within the SDCCC fee policy cancellation requirements the full fee of the booking will be charged exclusive of any CCS entitlements. SDCCC is unable to report these days as allowable absence days.

Centrelink considers care to have ceased where the service has not been utilised for a period of 8 weeks or greater

- If your child/children were absent resulting in a period of 8 weeks or greater, the agency will create a debt that is calculated back to the last day care was provided.
- Any booked sessions after the last day care was provided (absent days for example) would result in a CCS debt

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Parents must sign the electronic attendance records, including when their child is absent from care. This allows the SDCCC to comply with Family Assistance Law and various Government regulations and is necessary to make sure that parents receive the correct amount of Child Care Subsidy. Every collection authority has their own digital pin please see administration for collection.

LATE PICKUP

Late pickup fees are charged to meet the overtime costs for staff that are required to stay behind with the latecomer's child. A late pick-up fee of \$20.00 per ten minutes or part thereof will be charged for each child not picked up by the close of each session.

If a child is still at the centre an hour after closing time, and no person can be contacted, the child will be referred to Department for Child Protections' **Crisis Care (13 16 11)** who provides an after-hours response to immediate child abuse and neglect matters and in consultation with the **SAPOL (13 14 44)**. In such circumstances all local solutions will be explored in the first instance to ensure the safety and well being of the child. Three repeated offences of late pick-ups will result in cancellation of care at the discretion of the Director. Child care staffs caring for children are mandated notifiers, who are required by law to report suspicion of neglect to the appropriate authorities.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Accounts are processed on a Tuesday once CCS drops into the centre for the previous week of care. All fees for permanent users must be paid weekly and accounts brought to a nil balance. Casual care users must pay up front on

booking. Accounts paid in advance will have credits offset against future billings and will only be refunded to the account holder upon cessation of the account holder's booking with the service.

Separate centre based care and out of school hours care accounts are provided by Seaford District Administration late Tuesday afternoon or the day proceeding a public holiday via email. SDCCC **does** charge for bookings that fall on a public holiday. A charge will be applied each term for clients who have elected to receive a printed invoice by not providing their email address for electronic mailing of weekly invoices.

For the security of children and employees, SDCCC **does not** accept cash payments. Accounts can be paid via credit card, EFTPOS, Internet funds transfer and Centrepay through Centrelink. Credit card facilities will be available for payment of accounts through Administration between 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday. Account details for Internet funds transfers can be found in the top right hand corner of the weekly tax invoice.

PROCEDURE FOR OUTSTANDING FEES & DEBT COLLECTION

- Accounts must be brought to a nil balance each week.
- Accounts outstanding over 14 days will be emailed to the account holder with a past due notice on the account. Payment is expected immediately.
- Accounts that remain outstanding after 21 days will be sent to the account holder with an urgent reminder letter informing the account holder that if payment is not made immediately the outstanding debt will be sent to the Debt Collection Agency and all care will be cancelled until the debt is paid in full. A penalty will apply.
- A three letter limit is placed on the amount of times a person can receive a 21 day urgent notification before a client is suspended from using the service indefinitely.
- Families returning to the centre from cancelled care or a debt collection agency process may be entitled to reinstate care after payment is made in full depending upon available places within the service. Upon doing so they will incur a two week bond based on the maximum weekly fee of the service or a \$100.00 bond charge, whichever is greater.
- Families returning to the centre from cancelled care or a debt collection agency process will be required to pay accounts at the end of each billing week only. If accounts fall into 7 days and over care will be cancelled and they will be suspended from using the service indefinitely.

ACCOUNT REFUNDS

Seaford District Community Children's ONLY refunds accounts in credit upon cessation of ALL care once the final billing generation is completed.

- Refunds will be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer.
- The account holder must provide in writing account details.
- Overpayments or payment in advance will NOT be reimbursed to the account holder but be offset against future bookings.
- It is the responsibility of the account holder to monitor account balances by checking emailed tax invoices weekly.

FEE INCREASES

Fees are reviewed annually as stated under the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Families will be notified at least 14 days before making any change that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

PROBLEM WITH PAYMENT

If you are having difficulties paying fees please see the Director or Administration team before the outstanding amount becomes too far in arrears. All matters will be handled in the strictest confidence and a negotiated payment plan can be worked out with the client at the discretion of the Director. Defaulting on a negotiated payment plan will result in the account being sent directly to the debt collection agency and all care cancelled.

EMPLOYEE CHILD CARE USAGE

Employees of the SDCCC may access the service for centre based care, universal access to preschool and out of school hours care whether they require care for work related or non work related purposes. In doing so, employees must adhere to the same policies and procedures as stated in the Fee Policy and Parent Fee Agreement.

CENTRE FEES AND CHARGES

maximum fee exclusive of Child Care Subsidy % Reductions

PERMANENT BOOKING: is when a child is booked in for any session that is repeatedly ongoing each week until two weeks' written notification is provided to cease the fixed booking.

CASUAL BOOKING: is any booking that is not ongoing. A casual booking is any booking that is not ongoing. We accept casual booking requests where availability allows. Once a casual booking is made with any CBC, BSC, ASC, VAC service there is no option to cancel and will incur a charge regardless of absence from care.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Applies to Centre Based Care, Out of School Hours Care and Vacation Care fees

CENTRE BASED CARE

<u>PERMANENT BOOKINGS</u>	<u>CASUAL BOOKINGS</u>
Per week \$545.00	Per day \$115.00
Per day \$112.00	

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE FEES (OSHC) & VACATION CARE (VAC)

<u>PERMANENT BOOKINGS</u>		<u>CASUAL BOOKINGS</u>	
Per Week (BSC&ASC)	\$247.00	Before School Care Session	\$26.00
Before School Care Session	\$23.00	After School Care Session	\$31.00
After School Care Session	\$28.00		
Early Finish (combined ASC)	\$38.00		
Vacation Care Day	\$66.00		
Pupil Free (School Closure) Day	\$66.00		

ADDITIONAL CHARGES

NEW ENROLMENTS

An Administration fee is charged for new & returning enrolment for each service.

1st Child \$20.00, 2nd Child \$18.00, 3rd Child and each child thereafter \$16.00

LATE FEES

A late pick up fee of \$20.00 per ten minutes or part thereof will be charged for children not picked up by the close of each session.

TARND A NATURE KINDERGARTEN

A booking fee of \$50.00 is required when an offer of enrolment is made for the Tarnda Nature Kindergarten program. This is non-refundable if your child does not take a place in the Tarnda Nature Kindergarten program. This booking fee will be taken as part of your security deposit once your child takes a place in our Tarnda Nature Kindergarten and off set against the first account for the program.

PAYMENT PENALTY

A payment penalty of \$10.50 will apply to accounts for each week they are outstanding 21 days and over.

EXCURSION/INCURSION

Charges will vary depending upon the programmed activity of which parents will be notified. OSHC excursions coinciding with Pupil Free/School Closure days and Vacation Care days will be charged for regardless of the cancellation rule. Excursion charges are additional to care provided, do not attract CCS.