

Mallee Track Health and Community Service

Title: Fees Policy

Manual: Early Years Services

Scope: MTHCS Early Years services including Child Care (Occasional Care) and Kindergarten programs.

Responsible Position: Director of Community Services

1. OUTCOME - This policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- The setting, payment and collection of fees.
- Ensuring the viability of Early Years Programs, by setting appropriate fees and charges.
- The equitable and non-discriminatory fees across all Mallee Track Health and Community Services (MTHCS) Early Years Services.

2. VALUES - MTHCS is committed to:

- Providing responsible financial management of the service, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable service, while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level.
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts.
- Ensuring there are no financial barriers for parents/guardians wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/children.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians.
- Advising users of the service about program funding, including government support and fees to be paid by parents/guardians.
- Providing equitable access for families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.
- Providing equitable access for families eligible for the Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Kindergartens:

- Funding for Kindergarten programs is through the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET). Refer to the [Kindergarten Program Funding Guide](#).
- MTHCS kindergartens receive funding at the rural per capita funding as a contribution towards the costs of the four-year-old kindergarten program. Income from other sources, primarily fees, is required to meet all the additional costs incurred by the service in the delivery of the children’s program. In addition, the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (refer to Definitions) enables eligible families to attend a funded kindergarten program at no cost.
- DET also provides funding for eligible three-year-old programs as per the roll out scheme and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection.
- Kindergartens also receive School Readiness Funding (SRF) to support equity. This funding is based off Departmental Equity (Social Disadvantage) data for the year prior enrolments at the service.

3.2 Mallee Minors Child Care Centre:

- Funding to support the Child Care service is received through the Commonwealth Department of Education’s Child Care subsidy scheme. Refer to the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) for up to date information on this funding.

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- A set fee per hour for families is charged to access the service. Families are encouraged to apply through MyGov for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and/or Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS). The CCS and ACCS is paid to MTHCS and passed on to parents/guardians in the form of a fee reduction. The fee reduction is based on combined family income and activity test that families are required to complete through their MyGov account.

There are 3 components of the child care package:

1. Child Care Subsidy (CCS): simplified and streamlined means tested CCS with a minimum level of activity required to be eligible.
2. Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): to provide targeted assistance for disadvantaged communities, vulnerable children, and their families to access child care by reducing or in some cases eliminating the out of pocket contribution required by parents under the CCS while supporting parents into work. There are 4 elements of ACCS which provide additional subsidy support for CCS eligible families who meet specific criteria. These are child well-being and/or grandparent carers and/or transition to work and/or temporary financial hardship.
3. Community Child Care Fund (CCCF): provides supplementary funding through both a competitive and a restricted non-competitive grant opportunity (eligible to Budget Based Funded specified services) to provide sustainability support for eligible child care services to operate viably and ensure continuity of child care services during transition.

Staff and families are encouraged to go to the [Australian Government Services Australia website](#) to learn more about their subsidy including withholding amount and end of year balancing.

4. **DEFINITIONS**

Child Care Safety Net: Government body funding to provide targeted assistance for disadvantaged communities and vulnerable children and their families while supporting parents into work. This has three components 1. Child Care Subsidy, 2. Additional Child Care Subsidy and 3. Community Child Care Subsidy.

Centrepay: *Centrepay is a free bill paying service. Families can use Centrepay to arrange regular deductions from their Centrelink payment direct to MTHCS. Refer to [Centrepay - What Centrepay is - Services Australia](#).*

Code Red: Declared by the Department of Health to support safety of the community during extreme weather conditions. Services must close on this day and staff and children are not to be onsite.

Complying Written Arrangement: A written arrangement between a child care provider and an individual to provide child care in return for fees. The arrangement includes certain required information.

Concession Cards: A Commonwealth Government entitlement providing concessions for low-income earners and other eligible people. Details are available at: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/concession-and-health-care-cards>

Custom Data Support: Independent agency that provides administrative support to MTHCS to ensure we are meeting the compliance requirements to administer the CCS.

Debit Success: A service where by parents/guardians are able to pay weekly, fortnightly or monthly via direct debit or credit card on the day they select. A form providing bank details and giving permission will be required to be completed.

Early Start Kindergarten: A funding program that enables three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to attend a

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kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/early-start-kindergarten.aspx>

Excursion / Service Event Charge: An additional charge required to meet the cost of special events or excursions that occur in response to emerging children's program needs. Events that are planned ahead and are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget do not incur this additional charge. Refer to [Excursions and Service Events Policy](#).

Family Assistance Law: Broad term that encompasses a number of different legislation outlined in policies legislation section.

Fees: A charge for a place within a program at the service.

High Debt: An account that has accumulated a debt of \$200 or higher.

Inclusion Support: The Inclusion Support Program is designed to assist child care services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers. It funds providers to build their ability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services so that these children can learn and develop alongside their peers.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS): A state government subsidy paid directly to the funded service to enable eligible families to attend a funded kindergarten program or funded three-year-old place at no cost (or minimal cost) to promote participation. Details are available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/how-much-kindergarten-cost.aspx>

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy – Fees Policy: Provides operational guidelines for services administering the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and can be found in the Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderdatacollection.aspx>

Late Collection Charge: A charge that may be imposed by the Approved Provider, Licensee when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program.

Provider Entry Point (PEP): Part of the Child Care Subsidy System through which providers can apply for provider and service approval. PEP enables them to access information, add or remove a service, make notice of a change in their circumstances, and give enrolment notices and session reports for Child Care Subsidy.

Relevant Arrangement: An arrangement between the provider and individual for the care of a child which does not meet the requirements for a Complying Written Arrangement. This type of enrolment notice is used where a provider is sure the family does not wish to claim Child Care Subsidy for the sessions of care they are going to provide or the eligibility is not confirmed.

Voluntary Parents / Guardians Contribution: A voluntary payment for items not directly related to the provision of the children's program. Attendance at the service is not conditional on this payment.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

5.1 The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements.
- Developing a fee policy that balances the parents/guardians capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability.
- Supporting the implementation and reviews of this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, EYPL, EYM, the Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge and any other Early Years staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's

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Victorian kindergarten policy and Jobs for Families Package procedures and funding criteria.

- Ensuring that this policy is based on the principles of the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and the Child Care Safety Net subsidy (refer to Definitions).
- Reviewing the number of families experiencing financial hardship and the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered.
- Considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families.
- Clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally sensitive way, and in the family's first language where possible.
- Providing all parents/guardians with a copy of the document containing fee information for families
- Providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges upon enrolment of their child, and ensure that the Fees Policy is readily accessible at the service
- Providing all Mallee Minors Child Care Centre parents/guardians with a Complying Written Arrangement or Relevant Arrangement (see Definitions).
- Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable.
- Complying with the service's [Privacy and Confidentiality Policy](#) regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees.
- Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Ensuring a notice outlining fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to Early Years Services.

5.2 The Early Years Program Leader (EYPL) and Early Years Manager (EYM) is responsible for:

- Assisting the Approved Provider, in developing this policy, and ensuring that this policy is based on the principles of the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and the Child Care Safety Net Subsidy (refer to Definitions).
- Implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisors, Persons in Day to Day Charge and any other Early Years Staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's Victorian kindergarten funding guide and Child Care Provider handbook.
- Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at any Early Years Program and removing those barriers wherever possible.
- Implementing the procedures for over-due accounts and debts.
- Communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way and in the family's first language where possible.
- Providing all parents/guardians with information on fees and charges at the time of enrolment (offer a copy of Parent Handbook & Fees Policy).
- Providing all parents/guardians with a Complying Written Arrangement or Relevant Arrangement.
- Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable.
- Complying with the service's [Privacy and Confidentiality Policy](#) regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees.
- Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.

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- Ensuring a notice outlining fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to Early Years Services.
- Informing the Approved Provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service.
- Assisting Admin with charging out accounts 4 weeks before the end of the financial year.

5.3 Nominated Supervisors, Persons in Day to Day Charge and any other Early Years staff are responsible for:

- Informing the EYPL or EYM of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service.
- Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to fees or the fees policy to the EYPL or EYM.
- Assisting the Approved Provider, EYPL and EYM, as required, in sighting supporting documentation for access to the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and the Child Care Safety Net subsidy.

5.4 Parents / Guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and following the Fees Policy.
- Ensuring their account is paid in accordance to this procedure
- Completing online enrolment information and complying with the fees agreement.
- Notifying the EYPL, EYM or Nominated Supervisor of their service if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees.
- Providing the required documentation to enable the service to claim the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy or Inclusion Support if applicable.
- Applying online to complete the application to claim CCS and ACCS if applicable.
- Providing the required information to claim the ACCS if applicable.
- Paying their account in full by the end of the financial year

6. IMPLEMENTATION

- Arrangements for fees vary between centres, the following outlines how fees can be paid. Applicable fees are clearly displayed at each centre and parents/guardians are notified of fees and costs at enrolment.
- All Fees will set by MTHCS.
- Fees are collected by MTHCS.
- Fees are nominated in each Services Parent Handbook/Information Booklet.
- A receipt is issued once payment has been processed. This will include the parents/guardians account name, date of payment, amount etc.

7. CHILD CARE

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7.1	<p>Fees:</p> <p>Programs eligible to claim Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy Long Day Care (3 Year Old Kindergarten – Ouyen only) Ouyen and Sea Lake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day fee or Half day fee. <p>Integrated Service Underbool and Murrayville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day fee or Half day fee. <p>Children accessing Long Day Care after Kindergarten at Underbool and Murrayville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session Fee. <p>Children accessing Wrap Around after Sea Lake Kindergarten:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session Fee. <p>Children accessing Child Care after School at Ouyen, Sea Lake, Underbool and Murrayville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session Fee. <p>Bus fee – Ouyen service only.</p>
7.2	<p>Fee Subsidies:</p> <p>To claim the Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy, families will need to complete an online Child Care Subsidy assessment using their Centrelink online account through myGov:</p> <p>https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy?from=groupmessage&isappinstalled=0</p>
7.3	<p>Statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A statement will be issued by Mallee Minors Child Care Centre; including child's name, date attended, date absent and fees due. This will be utilised as a Statement of Entitlement and will include any subsidies the family has claimed. • Statements are issued on a fortnightly basis 2 week in advance of service provided. • Accounts will be charged out 4 weeks before the end of financial year, which is expected to be paid in full before the end of financial year. • MTHCS receive compliance advice from Custom Data Support on an ongoing basis to ensure we are compliant with Family Assistance Law in administering the requirements of the commonwealth funding received through the CCS.
7.4	<p>Permanent Bookings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent bookings are available for families who wish to reserve a place for their child on a regular day or session with in that year. A permanent booking for your child means that you must pay for their attendance regardless of whether they are absent for illness or other reasons with the acceptance to the Absence Rule. • Parents/guardians will not be charged a session fee if the booked day falls on a public holiday, if the service cancels the program or if a casual booking can be made in place of the permanent booking. Parents/Guardians may be charged on Local Emergency Days including Code Red days. • Families will be required to complete a Complying Written Arrangement (see Definitions) if claiming the subsidy, or a Relevant Arrangement (see Definitions) if not

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claiming the subsidy within the online enrolment process. All families must confirm booking arrangements prior to enrolling into care.

7.5 **Changes / Updated Booking:**

- If a permanent booking needs to be changed i.e. Mondays need to be changed to Tuesdays, staff are to complete a change of enrolment form or print out email conversation for child's record and notify family if the change involves a different fee. This will override the Complying Written Arrangement or Relevant Arrangement as processed as part of the original enrolment process.
- The individual will receive a notice through the MyGov system when their enrolment is updated, but they will not usually be required to confirm updates. Individuals can review the updated details and may disagree with the update if they believe it does not reflect the terms of their Complying Written Arrangement. The provider will be notified if an individual disagrees with an update to an enrolment by the Department through the provider entry point.
- Where an individual disagrees with the enrolment update, Child Care Subsidy will not be paid for sessions of care submitted for that enrolment (after the disagreement occurs) and will be processed only when there is agreement. An individual can disagree with parts of an enrolment at any time (not just when a new enrolment is created) through their Centrelink online account.

7.6 **Casual Bookings:**

Casual bookings are available for families whose needs vary from week to week. Families booking children in for 3 regular sessions would be considered a permanent booking unless approval from management i.e. 3 Mondays in a row.

Casual bookings will be cancelled before any permanent bookings when workforce issues are experienced by the service.

Families will be required to complete a Complying Written Arrangement if claiming the subsidy or a Relevant Arrangement (see Definitions) if not but they will have to note that attendance is on a casual basis – they do not need to define the days of attendance in advance or specify agreed time of attendance.

Same Day Bookings:

Signing in and out on the kiosk will provide sufficient evidence on confirmation of booking.

In Advance Bookings:

A request will be required for in advance bookings. These can be completed by:

- Hand written note; or
- Text message; or
- Phone call to Admin; or
- Email:
 - Stating Child's name, day, date, session type and service e.g. John Citizen Monday 25-6-18 Full Day Ouyen CC.
 - Confirmation will be Emailed or Text back to the family confirming the booking.

Admin will confirm your request by text, written note or email.

7.7 **Absent Days:**

- The Family Assistance Law allows for 42 absent days per child, per financial year for which Child Care Subsidy are received. These absences can be taken for any reason, without the need for families to provide documentation. This is to ensure continuity of

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CCS for families where they are required to pay for child care when their child/ren are absent from care, Due to situations such as illness (for the child, parent, sibling or other individual with whom the child lives), parental leave and other absence reasons.

- If a child is absent for more than one session of care on the same day, this is counted as one absence. For example, one absence will be counted where a child is absent for both Kindergarten and after Kinder Wrap Around sessions on the same day.
- MTHCS keep records of each absence for each child, and both families and services will have visibility (through the MyGov and Provider portals) of a child's year to date absence count.
- If your child has a permanent booking and they will be absent, you are required to contact the Ouyen Mallee Minors Child Care Centre Office as soon as possible. A message can be left on the answering machine for after-hours calls.
- Absences will be noted, dated and initialled on the booking sheet.
- Normal fees will be billed for all absentees.

In order to have your co-contribution to your child care fees waived:

- You must have given prior notification or notified the Ouyen Mallee Minors Child Care Centre Office on (03) 5091 0292 by 8:00 am the morning of your child being absent and;
- Another child (within the Regulations of Staff/Child ratios) on a waiting list is able to fill the absent booking at the Centre your child would have attended.

7.8 Greater than 42 absent days:

If a child is absent for more than 42 days in a financial year, your service may still be able to charge a fee to families and receive the subsidy. However, for this to occur, the absence must be due to specific reasons or full fees for your booking will be charged. There is no limit on these days but you may be required to provide documentation to support the absence.

The additional absence days reasons are:

- Illness (with a medical certificate), or another absence due to sickness of the child, a carer, carer's partner or sibling, supported by medical certificates.
- Temporary closure of a school or pupil-free days.
- Up to 28 days following a period of local emergency and the service is closed or the child is unable to travel to the service due to the emergency.
- Shared care arrangements due to a court order, parenting plan or parenting order, where a copy has been provided to the service.
- The child is not immunised, the absence occurs during the immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner certifies exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child.
- Attendance at Preschool.

7.9 Cancelling a Booking:

If a child does not attend any session for 14 consecutive weeks, their enrolment will automatically end and all absences reported during this period would need to be repaid.

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Permanent Bookings:

Should you wish to end your child's permanent booking at any service, you must give written notice to:

- The service you attend; or
- The Ouyen Office; or
- An email to earlyyears@mthcs.vic.gov.au; or
- Text Message to 0437 337 854.

Casual Bookings:

If you wish to cancel your child's casual booking you must give notice by 3.00pm the afternoon before your child is due to attend. This can be done by:

- Calling the Ouyen Mallee Minors Child Care Centre office (during office hours); or
- Texting a message to 0437 337 854.

If this does not occur, the normal booking fee will be charged.

Cancellations will be noted, dated and initialled on the Booking Sheet.

Cessation of Care (CCS Handbook)

- An enrolment will end for Child Care Subsidy purposes if a child does not attend a session of care for 14 continuous weeks. The provider will be notified after four weeks of no sessions of care being reported. If the child starts attending the service again after 14 weeks or more, the provider will need to re-establish the Complying Written Arrangement with the individual and submit a new enrolment notice.
- No Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy is payable for any session of care that occurs after the last day a child physically attended care at the provider.
- This means that if a provider submits absences for a child after the last day a child physically attended child care, no Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy is payable for those absences, and any Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy that is paid for these absences must be returned to the Australian Government.
- This also applies to enrolment notices which are automatically ended by the Child Care Subsidy System or where the provider ends an enrolment notice by updating it with an end date.
- Similarly, a child care service is taken to have permanently ceased providing care for a child on the day the child last physically attends a session of care under an enrolment. This means that absences submitted after a child last physically attends a session of care are not eligible for Child Care Subsidy.
- If a family has confirmed their child's last day at a service, but that child does not attend their last booked session of care, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any days after the child's last physical attendance at the service.
- If a provider continues to charge fees for sessions on days after a child has left the service because the family did not give the agreed period of notice, Child Care Subsidy will not be payable for these sessions of care. If absences are reported in the above circumstances and Child Care Subsidy is incorrectly paid, these amounts must be remitted to Services Australia and if not will be recovered from the service.

7.10 Late Collection Fee:

- Each Centres opening and closing times must be strictly adhered to.
- It is the parent's responsibility to have taken the child into their care by these times.

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- If a child is collected late,
 - Early Years Staff will notify Admin, the EYPL or EYM, who will record this information on the Booking Sheet
 - The parent will still sign the child out on Sign in/sign out Kiosk.
 - Early Years Staff will assist the family by having a conversation about alternate arrangements that could be made for the collection of the child.
 - EYPL or EYM will contact the parent to notify them of their first and final late collection warning.
- If a child is recorded as being collected late after the first and final warning, a late fine will be imposed to meet additional staff costs:
 - \$1 per minute per child. If a family is in default more than 3 times, the fine will double.
- If we are unable to contact anyone (including authorised nominees) and a parent has not contacted the Centre by end of session/day:
 - Staff will wait with the child until parents or authorised nominees can be contacted.
 - A member of management or another Early Years staff member may be called in to allow staff to go home.
 - Police may be used to assist in locating parents.

7.11 Refunds:
Upon ceasing of care, if fees have been paid in advance, fees may be refunded if accounts are paid in full

8. FUNDED KINDERGARTEN, FUNDED EARLY START KINDERGARTEN and 3 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN

8.1 Fees:

Funded 4 yo Kindergarten
Ouyen, Underbool, Murrayville, Sea Lake and Manangatang:

- Term fee.

Funded 3 yo Kindergarten
Sea Lake – term fee.

Funded Early Start Kindergarten
Ouyen, Underbool, Murrayville, Sea Lake and Manangatang:

- No Fee.

Unfunded 3 Year Old Kindergarten
Ouyen Kindergarten (Fourth Term) and Manangatang Kindergarten:

- Term Fee.

8.2 Fee Subsidies:
Funded Kindergarten programs where a family is eligible for a fee subsidy - the subsidy aims to allow the children attend Kindergarten program free of charge.

- A valid concession card or visa document should be made available for staff to sight and copy at enrolment.

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- Fee subsidy's may be available to concession card holders, certain protection/ humanitarian/ asylum visa holders, triplets or quadruplets or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children.

Details on fee subsidy are available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/how-much-kindergarten-cost.aspx>

Funded Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low cost kindergarten to eligible three year old children where programs are offered by a qualified teacher.

Applications for Early Start Kindergarten funding are made by the service on your behalf and the grant is paid directly to the service.

Your child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten if they are:

- Aged three by 30 April in the year they will be attending a kindergarten program and;
- Your child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; or
- Your family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred by them to Child FIRST).

Details on fee subsidy are available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/how-much-kindergarten-cost.aspx>

3 Year Old Kindergarten provides children who have turned 3 access to a kindergarten program for various reasons. The program is partly subsidised by the kindergarten committee they are attending. A Term fee is also required to be paid by the families to cover the remaining cost.

Fee subsidies are paid by DET to the service through the annual census data collection through Kindergarten Information Management (KIM) system by the 30th April each year.

8.3 **Non Funded Kindergarten Attendance:**

Families are only able to claim the Kindergarten subsidy from one Kindergarten at a time.

- If children are accessing Sea Lake, Ouyen or Manangatang Kindergarten as an additional Kindergarten, term fees will apply.
- If children are accessing Underbool or Murrayville Kindergartens as an additional Kindergarten, Child Care Fees will apply.
- Families will be required to complete a Complying Written Arrangement (see Definitions) if claiming the subsidy, or a Relevant Arrangement (see Definitions) if not claiming the subsidy.
- All families must confirm booking arrangements prior to enrolling into care.

8.4 **Statements:**

- A statement will be issued including child's name and Term fees due.
- Fees for Murrayville, Underbool, Ouyen, Manangatang and Sea Lake Kindergarten are payable at the start of each term on a statement from MTHCS.
- An invoice can be sent to families upon request.

8.5 **Cancelling:**

- If the child will be un-enrolling from the service Early Years manager office and Kindergarten educator must be advised as soon as possible. This change must be updated in the KIM system.

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- 8.6 Refunds:**
- Kindergarten fees are non-refundable for families who withdraw their child/ren mid-term.
 - A refund for Kindergarten fees that have been paid in advance (for up to all four terms) will only be considered for the period after the completed term from when the child/ren was withdrawn from the service.

9. PAYMENT OPTIONS

- 9.1 Preferred Option:**
- **Debitsuccess** with Direct Debit transfer or Credit card. A form providing bank details and giving permission will be required to be completed. Families are able to arrange payments weekly, fortnightly or monthly through this service.
 - **Centrepay - MTHCS is registered with Centrelink as a Centrepay Organisation, CRN 555072242B.**
 - **Family signs the Centrepay deductions consent form**
 - **Consent form is sent over to MTHCS admin staff who log into Centrelink business portal and request a figure be deducted from the customer's Centrelink payment and deposited into our account.**
 - **The amount remains the same amount every fortnight until the fees change and we get consent again to change it or the date on the consent expires.**

- 9.2 Other Options:**
- Payment to MTHCS through your own Direct Debit set up.
 - Eftpos or credit card facility at Ouyen or Sea Lake MTHCS main Administration office.
- Early Years staff are unable to handle cash or cheque payments.**
- Cash to be paid at Ouyen or Sea Lake MTHCS main Administration office. In special circumstances cash arrangements can be made. This arrangement is developed following approval by the Director of Community Services.
 - Cheque payments should be made out to Mallee Track Health and Community Service and can be paid at the Ouyen or Sea Lake MTHCS main Administration office or can be sent to PO Box 130, Ouyen, Vic 3490.

- 10. OVERDUE FEES / HIGH DEBT**
- Any family who is 2 weeks late with their fees or has a high debt (see Definitions), whichever occurs first, will receive a phone call, email or text to be notified of their
 - Overdue fees / high debt and payment options: Full payment, part payment or payment plan agreement.
 - Families opting for a part payment or payment plan agreement will be required to contact Mallee Minors Ouyen office on 5091 0292 to discuss this further with the EYPL or EYM.
 - Payments will be monitored.
 - If after 2 weeks of being notified of your high debt, full payment, part payment or a payment plan agreement has not been made, management will suspend your child/ren's bookings.

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- If there are difficulties associated with the payment of fees, we welcome the opportunity to discuss this in preference to suspending or cancelling your booking. All discussions will be treated in confidence and with sensitivity.
- Our goal is to ensure your child/s participation in the program whilst working pro-actively to respond to any financial barriers which may prevent participation.
- Families who no longer attend an early year's service, but has a remaining debt will be handed over to MTHCS administration team for debt collection process to be followed.

11. PAYMENT PLAN

- Families who are having genuine difficulty paying their fees will be encouraged to commence a payment plan with the EYPL /EYM.
- The payment plan will be designed to clear debts while maintaining regular payments, and it will be sustainable for both parties. The recommended payment each fortnight is 25% - 50% (% may change depending on families ability to pay) of the family's regular fees in addition to any new fees accruing.
- The EYPL/EYM will write the payment plan and any terms of agreement, and the family and EYPL/EYM will sign a copy for each to keep.

12. EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider, Licensee will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to affordability, flexibility of payment options and procedures for the collection of fees.
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- Monitor the number of families/children excluded from the service because of their inability to pay fees.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice.
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days (EC Regulation 172(2)) or 28 days (CS Regulation 41) of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.

Forms & Records:

- [Centrepay Deduction Authority Consent Form](#)
- [Complying Written Arrangement MMCCC Murrayville](#)
- [Complying Written Arrangement MMCCC Ouyen](#)
- [Complying Written Arrangement MMCCC Sea Lake](#)
- [Complying Written Arrangement MMCCC Underbool](#)
- Current Year Fees are located at F:\Mallee Minors\Admin Items\Fees over the years
- [Enrolment Form Change of Details](#)
- [Payment Plan Agreement](#)

Related MTHCS Policy / Procedure:

- [Complaints and Grievances Policy](#)
- [Delivery and Collection of Children Policy](#)
- [Enrolment and Orientation Policy](#)

Mallee Track Health and Community Service

Title: Fees Policy

	<p>Excursions and Service Events Policy</p> <p>Inclusion and Equity Policy</p> <p>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Early Years</p>
References:	<p>Child Care Provider Handbook current version at: https://www.dese.gov.au/resources-child-care-providers/child-care-provider-handbook</p> <p>Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework Early Years Learning Development Framework Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017, as amended at: https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021C00823</p> <p>Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx</p> <p>The Constitution of Preschool</p>
Legislation:	<p>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Children's Services Regulations 2020 Children's Services Act 1996 Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</p> <p>Family Assistance Law is a broad term that encompasses the following legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 • A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999 • Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017 (Minister's Rules) • Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017 (Secretary's Rules) • Any other instruments (including regulations) made under the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 and the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999 • Schedules 5 and 6 to the A New Tax System (Family Assistance and Related Measures) Act 2000
Standards:	<p>National Quality Standard – QA 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 ISO 9001:2015 – 8.5, 7.5.3</p>