

# Payment of Fees Policy



<b>Policy Relevant to:</b>	All educators, Team members and families
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	June 2023
<b>Next Review:</b>	June 2025
<b>Parent Policy:</b>	Revenue Recognition Policy
<b>NQF:</b>	12, 168, 172
<b>NQS:</b>	6.1.1, 6.3, 6.3.3
<b>National Law:</b>	S172

## Purpose

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the Service fee structure, payment requirements and Child Care Subsidy benefits prior to enrolment. This policy explains process of fee payment and the necessity of ensuring that fees are paid on time and consequences for failure to pay fees on time.

## Implementation

Adventure Patch aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for education and care to be provided for their child. We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all Child Care Subsidy legislative requirements. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure childcare funding is administered appropriately. Adventure Patch ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to our services about the enrolled child and family.

## Authorisation of Fee Schedule

The schedule of fees is authorised by the Board of Directors as part of the budgeting process. These fees are reviewed at least annually and communicated to families when they are updated.

## General Fees

- Fees are charged for each session of care and vary depending on the age of the child in care.
- CCS (Child Care Subsidy) is paid directly to the Adventure Patch and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family's statement).
- Families are required to pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount- the 'gap' amount.
- 'Gap Fees' must be paid via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) (effective 02 July 2023).
- Families can access their account at any time, from the XPLORE website <https://web.myxplor.com>
- Fees are to be paid weekly using electronic funds transfer. Families may choose to also make direct payments or change the frequency of these payments.
- Fees are payable for every session that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes pupil free days, sick days, and family holidays but excludes periods when Adventure

Patch is closed. Our services may be directed to close due to periods of local emergency such as bushfire or flood or a pandemic

- If a session of care falls on a public holiday, families are not required to pay normal fees.
- Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day)
- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session.
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the Service's license.
- The current fee schedule is available via the Adventure Patch website <https://adventurepatch.org.au/fees/>

## Child Care Subsidy

- Parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their myGov account linked to Centrelink and provide documentation to support the CCS payment.
- Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy. The child must:
  - be a 'Family Tax Benefit child' or 'regular care child' and
  - be 13 or under and not attending secondary school and
  - meet immunisation requirements.
- The person claiming the Child Care Subsidy, or their partner must:
  - meet residency requirements and
  - be liable to pay for care provided under a Complying Written Arrangement (their written agreement) with their childcare provider.
- Childcare must be provided by an approved provider.
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
  - combined family income
  - activity test of parents
  - type of early learning and childcare Service
- Child Care Subsidy will be provided directly to the Service and this amount deducted from the parent/family account.
- Families must regularly check their details are correct and report a change in circumstance to Centrelink (family income, activity levels, relationship changes or any other changes to their circumstances)
- Any disputes with CCS payments are the responsibility of the family. The family will be referred to contact Centrelink directly for any enquiries regarding CCS payments.
- Discounts will only be offered as outlined in the CCS Handbook.

## Payment of Fees

- Families are required to pay fees using the Service's direct debit system. The family is required to provide banking details to facilitate set up of the direct debit account.
- 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;
  - This fee is managed by the Direct Debit provider. Adventure Patch does not receive this fee, and as a result is unable to refund this fee.

- Families will be issued with a Statement of Entitlement on a fortnightly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements.
- The Statement of Entitlement will include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts.
- The Statement of Entitlement is generated using our CCS Software which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

## Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact their Adventure Patch service if their child is unable to attend a particular session.
- Families must still pay the 'gap' fee to Adventure Patch if their child is unable to attend.
- Under the Child Care Subsidy families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances. (See Child Care Subsidy Handbook)
- If you have a planned absence for your child, you are entitled to a reduced fee of 75% of the normal daily fee if two weeks' notice is provided in writing to [enrolment@adventurepatch.org.au](mailto:enrolment@adventurepatch.org.au) and the absence has been applied for in the Xplor App and approved by the service.
- Additional absences can be claimed for the specified reasons as defined by the Family Assistance Law.
- Records and evidence will be kept by the Service for each additional absence, where required.
- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via myGov.
- In a period of local emergency, such as bushfire or pandemic, and our Service is temporarily shut down on public health advice, families may be provided with additional absence days as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

## Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the Adventure Patch.
- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink for additional fee assistance if they are experiencing temporary financial hardship.
- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
  - **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (child wellbeing)—to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect. The approved provider is involved in determining children who may require additional support who are at risk of harm
  - **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (grandparent)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
  - **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment

- **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (transition to work)—to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment

## Debt Recovery Procedure

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder will be issued after one week and then again, after two weeks if the fees are still outstanding.
- At any time of the debt recovery process the family will be encouraged to enter a debt agreement with the service to repay outstanding fees. A written agreement will be made outlining the repayment plan details. The repayment plan will provide information as to the duration and amount of the repayments as well as steps that will be taken if the repayment plan is not adhered to.
- A child's position may be terminated if payment has not been made after **four weeks**, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position.
- The Service reserves its right to initiate its debt collection process any time after this, following privacy and conditional requirements.

## Late Fees

- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the Service. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time.
- The current late fees are included as part of the fee schedule.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families consistently incur late fees.

## Change of Fees

- 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 our CCS Software.

## Termination of Enrolment

- Parents are to provide two weeks written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from an Adventure Patch service.
- If termination from an Adventure Patch service is required without notification, families may lose their Child Care Subsidy, resulting in the payment of requirement for full fees to be charged.
- In some circumstances CCS may not be paid for sessions if the child has not physically started care.
- Additionally, CCS may not be paid for absences submitted after a child's last physical day of care, unless conditions have been met as specified by Family Assistance Law.

## **Responsibility of Management**

The Adventure Patch and Nominated Supervisor are responsible for:

- ensuring all families are aware of our Payment of Fees Policy
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information.
- providing families with regular statement of fees payable.
- notifying families of any overdue fees.
- providing families with reminder letters as required.
- terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid.
- discussing fee payment with families if required.
- providing at least 14 days written notice to families of any fee increases or changes to the way fees are collected (Regulation 172)

## **Responsibility of Families**

- provide Adventure Patch with the correct enrolment details to facilitate the CCS claim, if required, including:
  - Centrelink Reference Numbers for child and CCS claimant
  - Date of Birth for child and CCS claimant
- ensure payment of fees as per policy.
- notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement.
- confirm their child's enrolment through the parents myGov account.

## **Third Party Payments**

Parents are generally liable to pay the co-contribution for childcare fees. Only state and territory governments (and their agencies) can contribute to the cost, in part or full, of childcare fees for families.

Where an agreement has been made between an employer or charity to assist in the contribution of fees the fees must be reduced accordingly before CCS has been applied.

Our Adventure Patch will record all documentation regarding any third party payments.

## **Staff Discounts**

Our Service offers a staff discount for children that attend our service. Refer to Staff Discount Policy for further information.

## **Complaints Relating to the Administration of Child Care Subsidy**

Families who wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy should speak with the Adventure Patch management in the first instance. Adventure Patch will follow the steps as outlined in this policy, including advising the of all grievances.

Families can raise concerns regarding management of the Child Care Subsidy to the dedicated Child Care Tip-Off Line either via phone or email:

- Phone: 1800 664 231
- Email: [tipoffline@education.gov.au](mailto:tipoffline@education.gov.au)

## Additional Points for Families with Financial Difficulties

### Hardship

As a community organisation, Adventure Patch will endeavour to support families experiencing hardship providing that those families make genuine efforts to communicate with Adventure Patch regarding their circumstances and to adhere to any payment arrangements offered by Adventure Patch. It is expected that families experiencing hardship make every effort to access government payments available, such as applying for Additional Child Care Subsidy via the Family Assistance office.

The Adventure Patch Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may, at the discretion of the CEO, be made available to families to assist them in managing financial hardship.

### Waiving of fees on compassionate grounds

The Adventure Patch Executive Leadership team will have the discretion to waive fees to the extent provided for in the annual budget. Debts more than that amount will be referred to the Board of Management with a recommendation from the Chief Finance Officer and/or the leadership team where:

- The circumstances for the person owing the debt are exceptional.
- There is significant health, financial or emotional issues.
- Attempts to collect the debt are likely to cause significant hardship to the family owing the debt, and that may lead to negative outcomes for the children of that family.

Waiving of additional charges on an individual account such as overdue fees, may be at the discretion of the Chief Finance Officer and/or Leadership Team (in line with the delegation manual).

### Related Policies

Staff Discount Policy  
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy  
Revenue Recognition Policy

### Related Resources

[Child Care Subsidy](#)

[Centrelink Customer Reference Number](#)

[Absences from childcare- Australian Government](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines.

Payment of Service Fees and Provision of a Statement of Fees Charged by the Service.

Australian Government Department of Education Child care discount for early childhood workforce

Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook>

Australian Government Department of Education Early Childhood and Care

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood>

Australian Government Department of Education Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2023).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

## Review History

Policy Reviewed By:	Malcolm Guy	CFO	June 2023
POLICY REVIEWED	June 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	June 2025
Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy has been renamed and includes more detailed information.</li> <li>Added related Policy list.</li> <li>Added resources list.</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>		

## Signed

CEO:	
Manager:	