

FEE POLICY SUMMARY

Why fees are necessary?

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per capita funding as a contribution toward the costs of providing the four-year-old and three-year-old kindergarten programs. In addition, the kindergarten fee subsidy enables eligible families (Concession Cardholders) to attend kindergarten programs for a minimal cost. The preschool meets the balance of costs through fees and fundraising.

Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander three-year-old children and children known to Child Protection are also funded to attend an Early Start Kindergarten program where required.

Preschool fees are not optional, and the preschool relies on the prompt payment of fees to meet operational costs. All families must pay fees and the Committee has the discretion to withdraw service for non-payment of fees. Auburn South Preschool provides a range of support options for parents/guardians experiencing difficulty with paying fees.

Who is eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy?

A parent/guardian or child who holds a current Health Care Card/Pensioner Concession Card/Visas 200–217, 447/451/786/785, Bridging Visas A–F, Department Veterans Affairs Gold Card, Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451,785 or 786, Asylum-seeker Bridging Visas A–F or a Refugee or Special Humanitarian Visas 200–217 is eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy. A copy of the supporting documentation must be provided to the Enrolment Officer or Treasurer before the start of Term 1 and updated on expiry of the current concession.

In addition, triplets or quadruplets attending a funded kindergarten program in the same year will be eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy. In this case, the original or certified birth certificates need to be sighted by the Enrolment Officer or Treasurer.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children whose families are in receipt of a concession card have the opportunity to access up to fifteen hours a week of a funded early childhood program planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. A preschool is eligible to receive the funding for each child participating in a kindergarten program if the program and the child meet the criteria.

Fee Structure

- Refer to the 'Fee Schedule' for the 2023 fees.
- Fees are not refundable. However, the Committee of Management may consider a partial refund in *exceptional* limited circumstances.
- A \$200 administration fee may be applied to any refunds granted to families who are not subject to a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (concession).
- There will be no refund of fees due to a child's short-term illness; public holidays; family holiday during operational times; closure of the preschool for one or more days when a qualified staff member is absent and a qualified reliever is not available; closure of the preschool for staff training days or student-free days; or closure of the preschool due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.
- In addition, there will be no refund or reduction in fees where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

Maintenance Levy

- **An annual \$100 levy** – applied to the Term 1 invoice or the first fee invoice for children who start at the preschool after the commencement of Term 1.
- The Levy will be refunded in Term 4 after the family has attended one scheduled working bee.
- The Levy may be refunded against Term 4 fees if a working bee had been undertaken earlier in the year, or as a direct internet deposit if the working bee was undertaken in Term 4.
- Where the child is enrolled in the following year and the scheduled working bee is held in Term 4, the refund may be credited against the child's Term 2 invoice for the following year.
- Families with more than one child attending the preschool need only attend one scheduled working bee for the maintenance levy to be refunded in respect of each child's fees.
- In the event that a child is withdrawn from the preschool, the Levy would not be refunded unless the family had attended one scheduled working bee.
- Should families be unable to attend any of the designated working bees then they would need to advise the Committee of Management, who would then determine an appropriate alternative maintenance related task to be undertaken in order for the Levy to be refunded.
- The Maintenance Levy is not applied to families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, but these families are still expected to participate in working bees.

Payment of Accounts

- Fees will be invoiced to parents/guardians directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions. Please note that the term fees must be received by the preschool before the child can commence at the preschool.
- The 'Fee Schedule' and the 'Fee Payment Agreement' contract outline the due dates for fee payments. An early payment discount may apply, as determined by the Committee.
- If you are experiencing financial hardship, please contact the Treasurer (treasurer@auburnsouth.org.au) to discuss alternative payment options. Implementation of a payment plan or requesting assistance from the Family Hardship Fund will need to be approved by the preschool's Committee of Management. Any requests for a plan will be treated confidentially.

Late Collection Fee

Auburn South Preschool is not an extended care facility and is not resourced to adequately provide for intentional late collection of children. Accordingly, a late collection fee is charged to families when a child is collected late after the conclusion of the session.

The fee may be applied at the sole discretion of the Committee of Management to all programs, including 3 and 4 year-old programs, when the parent/guardian is:

- Between 1 and 15 minutes late to collect their child/children. The fee will be based on \$2 for every minute, or part thereof, from the conclusion of the session.
- Over 15 minutes late to collect their child/children. The fee will be based on \$2 for every minute, or part thereof, for the first 15 minutes from the conclusion of the session, and then \$5 for every minute or part thereof, after that.

Families will be notified by the Treasurer if a late fee is to be applied, the date and time of the late collection and the amount of the fee. Parents/guardians will be invoiced directly for the late collection fee and it must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice.

The preschool appreciates that at times there may be circumstances beyond families control however, should a parent /guardian be assessed by the Committee of Management as taking consistent advantage of the late collection policy, it may at its discretion cancel the child/children's place at the service.

Unpaid Fees

Fees not paid by the due date will be followed up with an initial reminder notice and will notify that a late payment charge of \$25 will be applied if not paid by the revised due date and giving the option to contact the Treasurer to work out a suitable payment plan if required.

If the fees still remain unpaid, a final notice will be issued with the \$25 late payment charge applied.

The final notice will notify parents/guardians that unless payment is made by the revised payment date their child/children's place at the service may be cancelled.

If a decision is made to cancel the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing. After this time the child/children will no longer be able to access the service.

The Committee reserves the right to take action to recover debts, and should a debt collector be required the family will be responsible for the cost of this recovery service.

Child Absence

Fees are still required to maintain a preschool place if the child is absent for any reason, including holidays and illness.

'Holding a Place' – Late Start / Extended Absence

All children that have accepted a place at Auburn South Preschool must be attending from the commencement of Term 1 in the relevant year to remain eligible for ongoing enrolment at the preschool.

An exception is made for children that have accepted a place at Auburn South Preschool who are not yet 3 years of age at the commencement of Term 1. These children cannot attend until the date of their third birthday. Once the child has turned 3 they must be attending the preschool (and by no later than April 30th in the relevant year).

If a child is not attending at the commencement of Term 1 in the relevant year (with the exception of children who are not yet 3 years of age) or, having commenced the program, is or will be absent for an extended period of time, a place will only be held at Auburn South Preschool if a written request is made to the preschool's Committee of Management. It should outline the reason/s for the absence and an expected commencement/return date. The Committee of Management will notify the applicant of the outcome of their request in writing as soon as practicable. If a request to hold a place is successful, the prescribed term fees must be paid in full and in advance.

Late Enrolments

For children enrolled after the commencement of Term 1, an invoice will be issued pro rata and the child is able to commence the program immediately. The fee invoice will need to be paid within fourteen (14) days of commencement.

Fundraising

Fundraising is important; it pays for additional/expensive items, at the same time as bringing together families and the wider community. Whilst participating in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family evens the load.