

# *Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.*

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## **Fees Policy**

### **1. Authorisation**

This policy was adopted by the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. Committee of Management, at the committee meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

### **2. Review Date**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or varied earlier if necessary, and the Committee will within 28 days of making any change, notify the parents/guardians of the children attending, of that change.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to staff, Committee and to parents/guardians whose child/children are attending, or who wish to enrol a child/children at the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.

### **4. Background and Relevant Legislation**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides per capita funding as a contribution towards the cost of operating the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.

The Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. itself is responsible for all operational costs.

*Fees are necessary because there is a shortfall between the level of government funding and the costs of operating a viable Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.*

There is no funding for other programs such as three year old Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. or playgroups etc. Some exemptions apply for children who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or clients of the Child Protection Program.

Parents/guardians need to be aware that Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. is not a free service and rely on prompt payment of fees to meet costs. All parents/guardians must pay fees as per following guidelines. Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. has the discretion to withdraw service for non-payment of fees.

DHS requires that a fee policy be developed by each service that is receiving funding to provide a Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. program. Reference to this requirement may be found in the DHS Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. funding criteria.

#### **Relevant Legislation**

- Children's Services Regulations 1998
- Children's Services Act 1996

## 5. Definitions

*Deposit:* A payment to Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. that secures a place in either the 3 or 4 year old program that has been offered in either program at the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. This payment becomes part payment of your Term 1 fees.

*Enrolment Application Fee:* A payment, to accompany the MIKA enrolment application of a child for a place in the 3 and 4 year old program at the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.

*Fees:* A payment for a place within a program at the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.

*Late Collection Fee:* A fee that may be imposed by the Committee when a parent/guardian is more than 15 minutes late to collect their child/children from the program. (See the Collection and Delivery of Children Policy for further details.)

*Visa 866/785:* Commonwealth concession cards held by specific groups or refugees.

## 6. Policy Statement

### Values

This Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. is committed to:

- Providing responsible financial management of the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc., which includes setting fees that will result in a financially viable service and keeping user fees at the lowest possible level.
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with the failure to pay fees, and/or inability to pay outstanding debts.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians.
- Advising users of the service about how Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. is funded and that they are reliant on parent fees to operate the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.
- Complying with all legislative requirements.

### Purpose

To provide a clear set of guidelines for the setting, payment and collection of fees, which ensure the viability of the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. and the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided.

## 7. Procedures

### Setting fees

The Committee will set fees for the following year's program in May of the preceding year, taking into consideration:

- The operational costs of the programs.
- The fees charged by similar services in the area.

The Committee may review and change the fees during the year if the financial viability of the individual programs or the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. is at risk.

Parents/guardians will be advised of the fees for the program.

Late Collection Fees will apply as set out in the Delivery and Collection of Children Policy.

Details of the current fees are set out in the Fee Schedule (Appendix 1).

## **Fee Subsidy for low income families**

The full subsidy will be deducted from the fee.

A parent/guardian or child who holds a current Commonwealth Health Card/Pensioner Concession Card/Visa 866/785 is eligible for their fees to be waived in line with the grant paid by Department of Human Services, if the child is attending a four year old funded Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. program.

To obtain the full discount, the Health Care Card/Pensioner Concession Card/Visa 866/785 must be sighted by the Treasurer, or a designated representative/s of the Committee, prior to the start of each term. The fee subsidy for low income families is allocated quarterly by Department of Human Services. The fees will only be waived if the terms for which a current Health Care Card/Pensioner Concession Card/Visa 866/785 is sighted prior to the commencement of the term.

## **Payment of accounts**

Fees will be invoiced to families directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions. *Please note that the Committee must receive the fees for a term before the child can attend in that term at Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.*

If parents/guardians are experiencing financial hardship, they should contact the Treasurer to discuss payment options.

## **Method of payment**

Details of payment will be specified on the invoice.

Payment will be made by Cash, Cheque, Money Order or Direct Deposit.

Payment plans, where fees are paid in instalments, are available and must be negotiated directly with the Treasurer/Committee of Management.

## **Late payment of fees procedure**

If fees are not paid by the due date, the Treasurer, or nominated person will:

Step 1. Follow up the invoice with a telephone call within two working days of the due date of the invoice, if payment has not been received by the specified date. If the family is having difficulty paying, a meeting can be arranged to discuss alternate payment options and to develop an agreed payment plan.

Step 2. If payment has not been received, or an agreed payment plan has not been drawn up, the Committee will issue a final demand for full payment within ten working days. They will notify the family, that if this payment is not made there will no longer be a place available at the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. for the child.

If the payment plan drawn up and signed by both parties is not adhered to, full amount outstanding will be due before the child can return to CCK. If this payment is not received within 5 working days, the child's place at CCK will be forfeited.

If a student is not enrolled in the kinder until after the start date, payment needs to be made on the date which that student starts.

## **Debt recovery**

The Committee reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. Any additional costs involved in retrieving funds owed will be the families responsibility.

Where a family owes a substantial amount of money to the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc., no further placements in programs will be provided to any child in the family, until all outstanding monies are paid or a payment plan is agreed to by both parties.

### **Refund of fees**

Fees are not refundable, except for families who have paid for the full year, and leave during the year and notify the Committee prior to the commencement of one or more of the terms. A pro rata reimbursement of fees will be paid for these terms. The Committee may consider a partial refund in other limited circumstances. Applications for a refund must be in writing and set out clearly the reasons why the child ceased to attend the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.

There will be no refund of fees if the program is unable to operate when the qualified staff member is absent and the Committee cannot obtain a qualified reliever.

There will be no refund on a deposit if the student is withdrawing due to receiving another placement at another kinder.

### **Confidentiality**

The Committee will treat as confidential information it receives relating to the parents/guardians financial situation and the payment/non-payment of fees.

## **8. Key Responsibilities and Authorities**

The Committee is responsible for:

- Developing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with the parents/guardians and staff.
- Providing a copy of the Fee Policy Summary (Appendix 3) with the Fee Schedule to all parents/guardians and making the Fees Policy available at the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.
- Authorising any changes to the policy.
- Ensuring the policy is implemented.
- Collecting and receipting all fees and levies.
- Respecting the confidentiality of the information gained from families as part of this policy.

The parent/guardians are responsible for:

- The payment of fees in line with this policy.

## **9. Resources and Support**

### **Related documents**

- DHS Preschool funding criteria.
- The Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.'s Enrolments Policy, Complaints Policy and Delivery and Collection of Children Policy.
- The Constitution of the Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc.

## 10. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes set out under 6. Policy Statement, the Committee will:

- Assess the effectiveness of the process for the collection of fees.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parent/guardian survey.
- Take into account feedback from staff regarding the policy.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the policy.
- Review the number of occasions families/children have been excluded from Croydon Central Kindergarten Inc. because of non-payment of fees.