

FEES & COLLECTION POLICY – CENTRES

RATIONALE:

It is imperative that the level of fees charged for the attendance of a child at a Trust's childcare centre and the requirement to pay these fees are clearly set out for parents/caregivers and whanau who choose to access this service.

OBJECTIVE:

To ensure that employees responsible for the collection of fees have a clear guideline to work on and are therefore confident in carrying out this task.

POLICY:

1. Fees shall be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive Officer and will become effective as from the date approved by the Board of Trustees.
2. The fees structure shall be based on the number of hours enrolled.
3. Absences shall be charged at the full rate. Credits shall be given for the days that the centre is closed.
4. An additional charge may be applied for any child who is picked up late.
5. A contract for the payment of fees shall be agreed and signed by both parties prior to a child commencing attendance at the childcare centre.
6. A discount of 8% shall be offered to parents/caregivers who have two or more children attending over the same week. The discount shall only apply to the second and subsequent siblings.

A employee discount is also available to staff employed by the CNI Early Education Services Trust or the Central North Island Kindergarten Trust.

On production of a medical certificate for absences of five (5) or more consecutive days, a full discount shall apply.

For centres located on a school site, teachers whose children attend the centre shall be entitled to a discount of 20%.

Two year old children may receive 20 hours free provided they attend for 20 hours or more and the centre is the main provider of early childhood education for that child.

Only one discount shall apply at any given time.

Any discount offered shall apply to the amount charged to the parent/caregiver after taking into account any payments from other agencies for example Work and Income, CYFS or 20 fee hours.

7. Parents/caregivers shall be invoiced weekly.
8. Payment may be made by cash, cheque, automatic payment, internet banking or eftpos and shall be paid on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Payments may be made in advance.

9. If a child is absent without notification for more than 21 calendar days her/his enrolment contract shall be terminated and the child may be placed on the centre's waiting list. Notified absences of more than 21 calendar days must pay a retainer of 20% to ensure that the child's placement is held. This retainer applies after the 21 calendar days.
10. Two weeks notice shall be given of a child ceasing to attend the centre. Failure to do so will result in a full charge for those two weeks.
11. Fees shall be paid up to date on the child's last day at the centre.
12. Parents/caregivers and whanau shall be made aware that the Centre is registered with Work and Income so that eligible families can receive a childcare subsidy to assist in the payment of fees. In addition parents/caregivers shall also be made aware that children aged 3 to 5 years are able to access the "20 Hours ECE"
13. Any changes to agreed attendance times, including extra days, must be confirmed with the centre manager. Permanent changes shall be recorded on the enrolment form and must be signed by both the parent/caregiver and the centre manager.
14. Any outstanding fees shall be paid in full by the end of each calendar month. These dates will be clearly brought to the attention of parents/caregivers.
15. Should any invoiced fees remain outstanding for more than one month then the child's place at the centre will be suspended pending a satisfactory arrangement being made to pay such outstanding fees.
16. Should such fees remain outstanding and arrangements to pay are not honoured the child's placement shall be cancelled and the account will be referred to a debt collection agency. A \$50.00 debt collection fee shall be charged.
17. The parent/caregiver shall be advised in writing of the consequences outlined in clauses 15 and 16 including:
 - The date such suspension commences.
 - That an arrangement to pay outstanding fees is required immediately.
 - The date at which, if a satisfactory arrangement to pay is not in place; the debt will be referred to a debt collection agency.
18. A child cannot attend a centre until such time as any previously outstanding fees owed by the parent/caregiver to the CNI Early Education Services Trust is paid or a satisfactory arrangement is made to pay such outstanding fees.