

FEES – AFTER KINDER CARE

QUALITY AREA 7



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines for:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability of After kinder care at Alexandra & District Kindergarten, by setting appropriate fees and charges
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by Alexandra & District Kindergarten.



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Alexandra & District Kindergarten 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
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians
- advising users of the service if government support becomes available

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge and parents/guardians attending Alexandra & District Kindergarten.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements	R	✓			

Developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability	R	√			
Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the nominated supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's The Kindergarten Funding Guide (<i>refer to Sources</i>)	R	√			
Reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered	R	√			
Considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families	R	√			
Clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way, and in the family's first language where possible	R	√			
Ensuring that the After kinder care <i>Fees Policy</i> is readily accessible at the service	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with fee information (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring fees are invoiced, collected and receipted	R	√			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees	R	√			
Notifying parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected and ideally providing one term's notice.	R	√			
Addressing any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service in a timely manner	R	√			
Reading the Alexandra & District Kindergarten Fee information for families (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>), the Fee Payment Agreement (<i>refer to Attachment 3</i>) and the Statement of Fees and Charges (<i>refer to Attachments 2</i>)				√	
Signing and complying with the Fee Payment Agreement on the enrolment form				√	
Notifying the approved provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees				√	
BOLD tick √ indicates legislation requirement					



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Alexandra and District kindergarten Committee of management discussed and agreed to offer After kinder care for 2024. This decision came based on the needs of the local community and the demand to offer additional daycare places to reduce pressure on already overwhelmed local care services.

This program is run on-site at the Kindergarten premises and is overseen by the AKC Co-Ordinator, Hayley Troake.

The aim of the After Kinder Care (AKC) Program is to provide a high- quality education and care program which meets the recreational, social and developmental needs of children within the kindergarten's community.

THE PROGRAM IS OFFERED TO Pre kinder & YBS CHILDREN and aims to provide children with the opportunity to interact and co-operate in a safe environment with their peers and to provide a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere in which children can participate in activities relevant to their needs/interests.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, including Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torre Strait Islander,

having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability

Kindergarten Registration fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service, if applicable.

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

Kindergarten fee deposit: (when implemented) A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. This is deducted from term fees. This deposit should not act as a barrier for enrolment of vulnerable families

Late collection charge: A charge that may be imposed by the approved provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (*refer to Attachment 1*)

After kinder care: care that is provided by a kindergarten service to kindergarten children outside of the 15 hours per week program.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



SOURCES

- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training): www.education.vic.gov.au
- The constitution of Alexandra & District Kindergarten

RELATED POLICIES

- Compliments and Complaints
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

EVALUATION



In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider 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
- investigating what measures can be taken to reduce any barriers to access the program, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- monitor the number of families/children excluded from the program 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 all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk

ATTACHMENTS



- Attachment 1: Fee information for families
 - Attachment 2: Statement of Fees and Charges – AKC kindergarten program
 - Attachment 3: Fee Agreement – AKC kindergarten program
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AUTHORISATION



This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Alexandra & District Kindergarten on

REVIEW DATE:

ATTACHMENT 1. FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Alexandra & District Kindergarten 2024

1. General information

Alexandra & District Kindergarten After kinder care is a separate program that receives no funding. Fees are collected to cover running costs. Alexandra Kindergarten can provide a range of support options to parents/guardians experiencing difficulty with payment of fees (see below).

Operation hours	Monday to Friday 2pm to 5pm
Term 1	Pre kinder – 2:00pm to 5:00pm YBS- 2.45pm to 5.00pm
Term 2	Pre kinder – 2:00pm to 5:00pm YBS- 2.45pm to 5.00pm
Term 3	Pre kinder – 2:00pm to 5:00pm YBS- 2.45pm to 5.00pm
Term 4	Pre kinder – 2:00pm to 5:00pm YBS- 2.45pm to 5.00pm
Planned Closures	Public Holidays-March 11 th (Labour day), April 25 th - Anzac Day, May 9 th - Murrindindi Early Childhood Conference, June 10 th - Kings Birthday, November 4 th Professional development Day, November 5 th - Melbourne Cup day
Additional Hours account for closure	

2. How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, the Committee of Management sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar services in the area
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards

Once fees are set for the year, they will only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if enrolments drop and the service is at risk of not being able to meet its expenses.

3. Other charges

Other charges levied by Alexandra & District Kindergarten are included on the Statement of Fees and Charges. These include:

- **Late collection charge:** The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Committee of Management

4. Statement of fees and charges

A statement of fees and charges for After kinder care will be provided to families on enrolment (*refer to Attachment 2*).

5. Fundraising

As After kinder care is ran by the Alexandra Kindergarten and supported only by kinder families, fundraising is undertaken to pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

6. Payment of fees

The Committee of Management will regularly review payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations.

Fees will be invoiced to parents/guardians at the beginning of each term and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the kinder office to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

8. Unpaid fees

If full fees or regular payments are not paid by the due date or received on a regular basis, the following steps will be taken:

- An initial reminder letter will be sent to parents/guardians with a specified payment date (within 7 days), and will include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Where payment is still not received by the due date, families will be informed that the child's place in the after kinder care program will be withdrawn unless payment is made in full.
- The Committee of Management reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector.
- If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided notice in writing.
- No further enrolments of children from the parents/guardians will be accepted until all outstanding fees have been paid.

9. Refund of fees

Fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the Committee of Management). There will be no refund of fees in the following circumstances:

- a child's short-term illness
- family holiday during operational times (permanent bookings)

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to after kinder care for the maximum number of hours

10. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from the kindergarten service provider or alternatively families may contact the local council.

11 Notification of fee changes during the year

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified one term in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

ATTACHMENT 2. STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES

Alexandra & District Kindergarten

Fee schedule [2024]

After kinder care

	Fees (\$)
Permanent booking- Per Afternoon Session	40
Casual Bookings- Per Afternoon session	60
Permanent booking- Per Full day Session (currently not available for 2024)	110
Casual booking- Per Full day Session (currently not available for 2024)	165

Bookings

Permanent bookings- Children are expected to book in for each Term and will be invoiced per term. There will be no charge for public holidays when our centre will be closed.

Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued at the start of each term for the full term booking and must be paid within 28 days.

Payment plans can be arranged for families to make regular payments during the term.

The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child (*refer to Fee information for families*).

ATTACHMENT 3. FEE AGREEMENT FOR AFTER KINDER CARE PROGRAM

- Online form created in Cognito and emailed to all AKC families.

2024

Please complete this form and return to Alexandra & District Kindergarten by [Date]

Fee payment contract

Child's full name: _____

Parent's/guardian's full name: _____

- I/we acknowledge that the After kinder care program is not funded
- I/we agree to pay fees by the due date on the invoice.
- I/we acknowledge that if fees are not paid by the due date, the Alexandra Kindergarten Committee of Management will implement the late payment of fees procedures, as outlined in the Fees Information for Families which could result in the withdrawal of my/our child's place in the after kinder care program
- I/we agree that if my/our financial circumstances change and I/we am/are unable to pay as agreed, I/we will immediately notify the Alexandra Kindergarten to discuss alternative payment options.
- I/we acknowledge that I/we have received and read the service's Fee information for families, which outlines the procedures for payment of fees.

Signature (parent/guardian): _____ Date: _____

Note: invoices, receipts and collection of fees will be in accordance with the Alexandra & District Kindergarten *Fees Policy*.