

FEES POLICY

Rationale

Careful management of the fees paid by whānau (families) will contribute towards the Centre's financial viability.

Purpose

- To ensure that the Centre has equitable and specific procedural guidelines for whānau regarding the payment of fees.
- To ensure that all whānau have a clear understanding of their responsibility in terms of payment of fees to the Centre.
- To ensure that effective fees management systems are in place.

Fees

- Fees will be reviewed annually and any increase in fees will be updated on the Ara website page for the Early Learning Centre.
- An increase in fees will require a minimum of one month notice to whānau. Whānau will be informed via the Centre whiteboard and the Centre Newsletter.
- Invoices will be issued fortnightly in arrears (two weeks fees), showing the amount owing from the previous week, payments made and the total account balance. The two-week period for which the invoice relates is on the top right-hand side of the invoice.
- Any payments received after the two-week period will be deducted from the next invoice.
- Full payment of fees must be made within **ten** working days of the invoice date (on the top right-hand side of the invoice).

Student Fixed Rate

Ara students who require their tamaiti (child) to be booked slightly beyond 12:30pm due to their course timetable, may be given an exception to a full day charge by being offered a fixed rate fee for their booking. i.e. \$27.00 sessional charge plus an additional \$5.00 per hour or part thereof.

Non-Payment of Fees

Where there are concerns regarding the nonpayment of fees, the Centre Manager will discuss with the whānau with the intention of reaching an agreement to pay the outstanding fees.

If the fees remain unpaid the Manager may begin the process of cancelling the tamaiti enrolment at the Centre. This procedure is as follows:

- A letter or email will be sent by the Centre Manager notifying the whānau that they have ten working days to pay their fee and (that-delete) if the outstanding fee is not paid, (that-delete) their tamaiti enrolment may be cancelled. A copy of the letter will also be put into their tamaiti pigeonhole.

Outstanding Fees on Exit

The Centre will issue a final statement of fees owed as at the tamaiti last day of attendance. Any amount owing must be paid in full within ten working days.

If payment is not made within ten working days, the Centre will send a letter or email detailing:

- the total outstanding fee
- a request for full payment within five working days
- further action according to our Fees Policy

If full payment is not made or instigated through a repayment programme, or the repayment programme is not adhered to the debt will be passed on to the Institute's Finance Division who will forward the account directly on to a debt collection agency. All costs associated with the debt collection process will form part of the debt outstanding that the debtor is liable to pay.

Once an account is forwarded on to debt collection, this may also result in the blocking of a student graduating and /or block any future course enrolments.

Student Users Leave Entitlement/Holding Fee (entitlement for students to reduce the cost of care during the Christmas break).

For students of Ara, the Centre will hold their tamaiti place through the summer break provided payment of the holding fee is made. This means that the tamaiti is still able to attend their full booking as usual during the Student Holding Fee period but at a lower cost to student whānau.

The holding fee applies for approximately three weeks before the Centre closes for the Christmas break and approximately three weeks after the Centre re-opens. Full fees will apply at all other times that the Centre is operating. This fee will be reviewed annually, and the dates and fees will be advertised in advance in the Centre Newsletter.

Staff and Community Leave Entitlement

The Centre will charge full fees from the opening date in January each year to the Centre's closing date in December of each year.

The Centre will offer a leave entitlement of 30 days charged at 50% of the usual fee for whānau whose tamaiti attends the Centre full-time. This entitlement will be offered to whānau of tamariki (children) who attend the Centre part-time on a pro-rata basis.

The Centre must receive one week's written notification of intended leave (in order-delete) for the entitlement to be used.

Absence due to Illness

The Centre will charge full fees for absences due to illness.

In special circumstances, e.g. for a hospital stay, whānau may be given a 50% reduction in fee at the discretion of the Centre Manager.

3 Weeks Continuous Absence

If a tamaiti is absent for 3 consecutive weeks, all funding (including 20 Hours ECE and any childcare subsidy) will stop and full fees will automatically be charged until the tamaiti returns to the Centre.

A tamaiti with special needs or health problems may be able to continue to receive funding if they provide a medical certificate and complete the appropriate form. (Maximum of 6 continuous weeks for the childcare subsidy and a maximum of 12 continuous weeks for MOE Funding)

Emergency Closure

Whānau would not be charged fees during the time of closure due to unforeseen circumstances.

Year to Year Re-enrolment

The Centre will not accept the re-enrolment of a tamaiti from one year to the next if there are outstanding fees on an account for that whānau. Provisional enrolment may be accepted on the proviso that the outstanding account is paid in full prior to the tamaiti starting date the consecutive year.

The Centre Manager and Administrator will ensure that whānau are reminded of this via the Centre newsletter in October/November of each year.

Late Fee

If a tamaiti is collected later than their booking time, the Centre Manager (or delegate) will be required to have a conversation with whānau to advise that if this were to happen again, a late fee of \$10.00 for the first 15 minutes or part thereof and \$10.00 for every subsequent 15-minute period thereafter will be charged. This conversation will be recorded by the Manager (or delegate) in the late fee book and will serve as warning.

Administration Fee

For whānau whose timetables frequently change and exceed 2 changes per month, an administration fee of \$10.00 per change thereafter will be charged. This does not include casual bookings unless extra administration is required (in order- delete) to notify Work and Income of extra hours.

Wet Bag Fee

Upon Enrolment, whānau will be given the option to either provide their own wet bag from home or have \$5.00 charged to their account for a wet bag which will be provided by the Centre. It is required for each tamaiti to always keep a wet bag in their bag to transport wet and/or soiled clothing. If a tamaiti does not have a wet bag and a Centre bag is used and not returned, this will also result in \$5.00 being charged to the whānau account for a replacement bag.

Date Adopted: March 2022

Date for Review: November 2023