



4.3 Enrolment and Fees Policy

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Aims

The **Cootamundra Preschool** aims to ensure that:

1. The enrolment process for families is a fair and systematic one
2. All parents will have an interview with an Educator prior to their child commencing at the centre and will thus be fully informed about the centre's functioning, the educational program, the nature of parental involvement at the centre, road safety issues when arriving or leaving with children, or in relation to farm children who will be using a local bus. They will inform the Educator of any special circumstances or conditions affecting their child
3. There is a systematic, objective process for collecting fees, and fee support will be given to those families in financial need

Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010

Who Is Affected By This Policy?

Children
Families
Staff
Community
Visitors
Management

Relevant Early Childhood Professional Standards

Early Childhood Code of Ethics:	I-1, II-3 II-9, II-10, VI-1,
Early Years Learning Framework:	Principles – 1, 2, 4
Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations:	91, 103,107, 108, 122-123, 177, 130-134, 232-236, 168
National Quality Framework:	Quality areas – 4.3.2, 6.1.1, 6.3.3, 7.3.3, 7.6

Sources/References

Early Years Learning Framework, Belonging, Being and Becoming, Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments, 2009.

National Quality Framework, Australians Children's Education and Care Quality Authority 2017

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010

Early Childhood Australia: School Readiness & Related Links:

Date reviewed by staff: June 2018
Date reviewed by committee: June 2018
Next review date: June 2021

http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/learning_about_children_3+9_years/preschoolers_school_readingess.html

(Retrieved January 2012)

Melhuish, E. (2001). Preschool Matters. *Science*, 333. p299-300.

NSW Dept Education & Training: Welcome to Preschool: A Family Guide

<http://www.schoolsnsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/gotoschool/yr2010/familyguide.pdf>

(Retrieved January 2010)

Walker, K. (n.d.) Effective transition between preschool and school. Kidsafe Australia:

<http://www.kidsafe.com.au/Page.aspx?ID=1195>

(Retrieved January 2012)

Procedures

1. Enrolment/Waiting List Procedure:

- To be eligible to apply for placement on the **Waiting List**, the child must be turning 3 or older before the beginning of term 3 in the year of application for Waiting List.
- A **Waiting List** application form can be collected from the preschool during office hours or is available on the Cootamundra Preschool website.

Note: For multiple births use separate forms for each child and state whether you want them to be in the same class.

- As vacancies arise during the year the director will refer to the waiting list and make offers of placement over the telephone or by mail where necessary.

Waitlist priority:

1. Children who are classified as being high risk and under the care of Family and Community Services (FACS) or Mission Australia.
2. Circumstances related to ethnic background and additional needs as per our "Funding Agreement" with the Department of Education and Communities.
3. Children with additional needs or disability.
4. Children who are already enrolled, doing less than 15hrs per week and on waiting list for extra days.
5. New enrolled children who are on the waiting list.

Orientation and Enrolment

The enrolment procedure is as follows:

1. Parent/child details are placed on the waitlist as from age three to five years (as per waiting list procedure)
2. The priority of placement is those continuing from the previous year first, then those who are on the waitlist by order of when parents apply.

Date reviewed by staff: June 2018

Date reviewed by committee: June 2018

Next review date: June 2021

3. Cootamundra Preschool will start the enrolment process Term 2 – Term 3 the year before the child's first year. We will then hold a welcome to preschool evening for all new families.
4. We will check that each child has returned the relevant paper work (enrolment form, birth certificate, and immunisation History Statement) in Term 4 the year before the child's first year.
5. We will offer interview times for any new families/children (these will be sent out by mail), these will take place the first week back of the commencing year.
6. The final step will be to send out a letter to all families confirming their child's day, which room they will be in, their teachers name and the start date of the commencing year.

We provide parents with the following upon offer of placement at the centre:

- 'Family Handbook': including centre Philosophy and daily requirements.
- Preschool policies and procedures; Emergency procedure is explained in detail.
- A tour of the facilities at the preschool and introduction to the staff at an interview

2. Enrolment process & initial interview

2.1 Enrolments at the centre are taken in line with the Education & Care Services National Regulations, Reg: 107, 108 (re the required amount of indoor and outdoor space), Reg: 123 (re educator to child ratios), Reg: 126, (re educational qualifications for educators), Reg: 130-134 and the additional NSW Schedule within the ECSNR regarding educator to child ratios (regulations 271, 272) (re numbers of children attending and centre size) that ensure the centre meets the required minimum standards

2.2 Children who have a disability will not be discriminated against and will be afforded access to the centre provided (1) a place exists, (2) they meet the required priority of access guidelines and (3) the centre's resources can adequately care for the child's needs

2.3 In line with the centre's stated philosophy and 'Anti Bias & Equity Policy', the enrolment procedure will be objective and fair for all. Thus children will be listed in the order that parents apply to the centre. The same order will be used for enrollment confirmation and commencement at the centre

2.4 The Teacher will have an initial enrolment interview with parents, as an opportunity to inform the parent/s of how the centre functions, the session times their child will be attending, the nature of the educational program (inviting parental involvement) plus all other aspects of centre life that will affect themselves and their child, e.g. lunch and snack foods, rest/sleep components in an all day program, WH&S issues such as sun safety, medical/health matters including the administering of medication, immunisation, the need for children to be casually dressed for active play, etc.

2.5 The parent will use this interview as an opportunity to discuss any differing or special needs their child may have with the Teacher, and will be asked by the Teacher for any information of this nature. It is at this meeting that the Teacher and parent/s will agree to a medical emergency plan should the child concerned be at risk of anaphylaxis reactions, asthma attacks etc. As soon after this interview as is practicable the Teacher will have this communication/action plan drawn up for signing and dating by both parties

2.6 All the required family and child documentation must be completed, signed if necessary and held by the Director before a new child can commence at this preschool. This ensures that information pertaining to the best possible conditions for the health and safety of each child (including any special needs) is in place before the child commences

3. Breastfeeding

1. Cootamundra Preschool have children enrolled aged 3-5 years, these children may no longer be breast fed but the service is in full support of breastfeeding. Breastfeeding Welcome signs are located on the parent information boards located in each room.
2. Parent's who come into the service are informed on enrolment that Cootamundra Preschool is a Breastfeeding friendly service, Parent's are informed of the location of area they can use at any time (library/ meeting room) which is a clean and supportive environment providing privacy and quietness for the mother/child.
3. The Cootamundra Preschool recognises that families have the right to breastfeed their infant when on the premises the service, each family's decision will be accepted and respected.
4. The Library/meeting room displays accessible brochures, pamphlets and other resources to mothers including information on breastfeeding their infant.
5. The staff and families at Cootamundra Preschool are educated that it is a breastfeeding friendly service and that a mother may breastfeed her infant wherever they have a legal right to.

4. Procedures for the notification and collection of fees

- 1) The Management Committee will set the fee rates and this will be reviewed annually.
- 2) The Management Committee will give parents/guardians 14 term days' notice of any change in fees.
- 3) Preschool is closed on Public Holidays & School Holidays and fees are not charged for these days.
- 4) Fees paid by cash or cheque are to be placed in the locked fee box in the Blue room and should be marked with the child's name, room, day attended, date and amount paid. Direct deposits can be made into Preschool's bank account as shown on each Fee invoice.
- 5) Accounts for Term 1 Fees will be issued during Week 3 of the new school year and will be payable by Week 6 of that Term.
- 6) Accounts for Terms 2, 3 and 4 Fees will be issued in advance during the last two weeks of the previous Term and payment will be due by the end of the first week of each Term.
- 7) Accounts for children starting at the beginning of a Term, or mid-Term, will be due 2 weeks from their start date.
- 8) All Fee monies received will be receipted.
- 9) New Invoices and/or Statements will be placed in each child's pocket for collection.

Fee Subsidy:

- 1) A child from a family holding a valid Low Income Health Care Card can receive a fee subsidy. The original, current Health Care Card must be sighted by a member of staff and photocopied. The photocopy is to be signed and dated by the staff member with the date it is presented to Preschool. The photocopy is then kept in the child's file. It is the family's responsibility to ensure Preschool has an up to date HCC. Failure to do so will result in an adjustment to full fees.

A health care card for individual children with medical or special needs will not be accepted.
A Pensioner Card is treated the same way as a Health Care Card.

- 2) A child of ATSI heritage will receive a fee subsidy when the family acknowledges on the Enrolment Form that they are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Heritage. An automatic fee subsidy will be granted, at the lowest rate, without further documentation required.

A revised Fee Account will be issued from the date the completed documentation is received by Preschool (i.e. Accounts will not be backdated).

All income/personal details provided to the Preschool will be kept confidential and secure by the Director/Authorised Supervisor at the Preschool.

Calculating Fee Rates & Charges:

The Preschool's fees are comprised of the following categories:

- Weekly Fees - This amount is determined by the Subsidy or non-Subsidy levels charged per child, multiplied by the total number of Preschool days per term. Absence due to illness or holidays is not taken into account and all Preschool days available for attendance must be paid for. Term Holidays and Public Holidays are not charged.
- An Annual Membership Fee of \$10.00 for each family is charged on the first Fee Invoice issued. This membership fee is a requirement by law and allows parents voting rights at Committee Meetings.
- An Annual Insurance Fee of \$5.00 per child is also charged on the first Fee Invoice issued. This Insurance Fee is to reimburse Preschool for the yearly compulsory payment of Children's Personal Accident Insurance.
- Casual Days - Where there is a temporary vacancy at the Preschool a child who is currently attending may fill the position on an irregular basis. Fees will be charged at the full fee rate regardless of any subsidy the child may receive on their normal term fee.

Payment:

1) Full fees are due for payment by the end of Week 1 of Terms 2, 3 and 4. Term 1 Fees are due by Week 6 of that Term.

2) It is preferred that full fees are paid by the required date. However, regular weekly/fortnightly payments can be made. However, in Term 4 all fees must be paid by the end of **Week 8**.

3) All fee monies received will be receipted in one of the following ways-

- If paying the Clerk in person at the preschool, or if using the locked fee box, receipts will be issued and placed in the child's pocket for collection
- If paying by Direct Deposit into the Preschool's bank account, a receipt will be issued once the bank statement has been received and placed in the child's pocket.

4) Families experiencing genuine financial difficulties are encouraged to write to the Management Committee as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements for fee payment can be finalised to ensure timely payment of fees.

5) For children who leave Preschool before the end of a Term, the following procedure will apply -

- Two weeks written notice must be received from parents/guardians.
- Fees will be charged up to and including the two weeks' notice.
- If no notice is given and the child is absent, fees will still be charged until the Preschool has been notified. Preschool Room Leaders will make enquiries if a child has been absent for a number of weeks, as this could lead to the possibility of filling a vacant position.
- Any fees outstanding on departure will either be passed to the Preschool Solicitor, or a Debt Collection Agency, with instructions to commence recovery procedures.

6) Children (or siblings of children) who have left the Preschool with outstanding fees, and then wish to re-enroll at later date, can do so if there is a vacant position and if they clear all outstanding debts before re-entry.

Date reviewed by staff: June 2018

Date reviewed by committee: June 2018

Next review date: June 2021

7) All days must be paid for whether a child is in attendance or not (e.g. absent due to illness, holidays or if reserving a place).

OUTSTANDING FEES:

Procedures for collection of fees are as follows –

- In Week 1 of Terms 2, 3 & 4, a reminder for parents that full fees are due that week is placed in the Sign In/Out Book.
- In Week 3 of Terms 2, 3 & 4, **coloured** Statements and/or Invoices to families with **any** outstanding fees are to be placed in the child’s pocket. For those families who have **not made any payments**, the reminder is to be issued on a **different colour** to the one issued to families who have already made sufficient payment. Those families who have not made any payments (or only minimal amounts) are to be asked for urgent payment and for contact to be made with the Office if unable to pay.
- If at the end of Week 5 of Terms 2, 3 & 4 (or Week 7 in Term 1) fees are still outstanding, the parents will be notified in writing (by **Preschool letter** signed by the Executive Committee) that the child’s position at Preschool will become vacant within two weeks – stipulating a cut-off date – unless the account is paid in full or other acceptable arrangements are made and adhered to; and that after this date any unpaid fees will be forwarded to the Preschool Solicitor or a Debt Collection Agency. This written advice will be both posted and placed in the child’s pocket.
- When the next Term’s Fee Invoices are issued in Week 8, if there are **any** fees still outstanding for the current Term, a white Statement of Account will also be put in the children’s pockets with the new Invoice.
- At the end of each Term, either the Preschool **Solicitor**, or a Debt Collection **Agency**, will be given details of any outstanding fees and instructions to commence recovery procedures.

Debt Recovery Procedural Steps - Checklist:

1. Original Invoice in pocket on date
2. Coloured Invoice/Statement of unpaid fees in pocket on
3. Letter from Executive Committee with debt collection warning and cut-off date, in pocket on
posted in mail on
4. Solicitor/Debt Collection Agency authorised to act on

The Director will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.

