

# Fee Payment POLICY

Reviewed July 2024

## INTRODUCTION

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require Approved Providers to ensure the preschool has policies and procedures in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service. Alstonville Community Preschool aims to provide a quality preschool service at an affordable price to families with best utilisation of the Start Strong for Community Preschools funding program and are committed to providing all families the opportunity to enrol their children at our service, with a clear, transparent, fair and inclusive fee structure.

## GOALS

Alstonville Community Preschool's financial strength will be maximised by:

- following the appropriate Priority of Access requirements under the Start Strong for Community Preschools program (see below)
- following all legal requirements required by our access to government funding, and effective application of the Start Strong for Community Preschools funding program;
- ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment;
- ensuring statements of fees are issued each term and follow up of outstanding fees occurs on a regular basis;
- keeping fee increases to a minimum.

## Priority of Access

Alstonville Community Preschool will give equal priority of access to:

- children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school
- children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year and are:
  - children from low income families
  - children with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
  - children with disability or additional needs.
- children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year with English language needs
- children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective).

Priority must be given to the groups outlined above before any other groups, including 3-year-olds not eligible for equity loading

## Fee structure

The NSW Government provides fee relief to families through the Start Strong for Community Preschools funding program. Families with children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in any year, and who are enrolled in a community or mobile preschool service may access this funding.

Funding for each child's fee relief will be provided to the preschool and will be passed on to families as a reduction to fees across the calendar year.

If child/ren will be attending another service that offers fee relief (another community preschool or a long day care service), families will need to choose which service they would like to receive fee relief from and pay a fee at the second service.

2025 Fees at Alstonville Community Preschool (ACP) will be as follows:

| AGE   | FULL FEE, <u>without</u> declaration form for this preschool (see below) | REDUCED FEE ( <u>with</u> declaration form for this preschool) and application of fee relief funding |
|---|--|--|
| 4 yr olds   | \$49 per day   | FREE   |
| 3 and 4 yr olds whose family has a Health Care Card, are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and/or Children with High Learning Support Needs | \$29 per day   | FREE   |
| All other 3 yr olds   | \$65 per day   | \$12.25 per day  |

## STRATEGIES

- Alstonville Community Preschool will operate a two day attendance model to best fit with the application of the Start Strong for Community Preschools funding program. Therefore five, two day groups will operate across each week.
- A third day may be made available for children in their year before school from third term each year, subject to available vacancies at this time.  
Additional days may be offered earlier than Term 3, on a case by case basis for children who are at risk, from vulnerable families, or who have high inclusion support needs, where vacancies exist and at the Directors discretion;
- Preschool fees are determined annually by the Management Committee after taking into consideration available Government funding and annual operational costs. Preschool fees are GST free.
- The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that:
  - all families are made aware of preschool fees and available fee reductions on enrolment and
  - fees are invoiced to all families no less than each school term at correct fee level
- Fees, if payable, will be invoiced on a term by term basis and emailed to the email address given on the child's enrolment form prior to the commencement of each term. It is the family's responsibility to update this email address if necessary.  
Fees can be paid in one lump sum, no later than week 2 of each term, or by 4 equal instalments payable in week 1, 3, 5 and 7. (These payment weeks may differ slightly in Term 1 each year).  
Fees can be paid by direct deposit to:
 

**Alstonville Community Preschool**  
**BSB: 062657**  
**Acc. No. 10142402**  
*Please include your child's name in the reference field as payment is made.*

**OR**  
by EFTPOS or cash at reception
- Fee reduction for families is available if the family has a child with a diagnosed disability, or is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, or holds a current Healthcare or Pension Card. A photocopy of this card must be attached to the preschool enrolment form to ensure reduction of fees.
- Fees are charged for Public Holidays that occur during term time and regardless of illness, absences or holiday leave.  
On acceptance of a place, a non-refundable annual Administration fee is payable.
- If a child is withdrawn during the year, a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice is required. Notice of withdrawal of a child's enrolment will be required in writing by email to [info@alstonvillepreschool.com.au](mailto:info@alstonvillepreschool.com.au)

## **LATE FEES**

The preschool is licenced by the NSW Department of Education to be open daily between 8.30-4.00pm from Monday to Friday during NSW school terms and as such is unable to care for children outside of these hours

A late fee of \$25 per 15 minutes will apply when parents are consistently late in picking up their child/ren (ie after 4pm) After three late fees are charged the child's ongoing position at the preschool may be reviewed.

9. Details of an individual's account and all completed forms kept by the preschool will be kept confidentially and stored appropriately as per the Privacy Collection Statement. Individual families may access their own account records at anytime. Particulars of fee payments will be available in writing to parents upon request.
10. If families are experiencing financial hardship or extenuating circumstances, please contact the Director.

## **Overdue fees**

It is expected that fees will be paid **in advance** at all times.

Any family who is two weeks or more in arrears and has not reached an agreement with the Director to make good such arrears, must make an appointment to discuss the situation immediately or the child's place at the preschool may be placed in jeopardy.

At this meeting a fee payment schedule will be agreed upon and signed by both parties which will initiate fortnightly payments in line with regular family income instalments.

If the family is in receipt of a payment from Centrelink such as Parenting Payment (partnered or single), Family Tax Benefit Part A or Part B, Rent Assistance, etc. the family will have the option to use Centre Pay as a method of fee payment, to ensure fees are paid in a timely manner.

Legal action may be taken as a last resort.

The Approved Provider must notify families at least 14 days before any changes are made to the policies or procedures if the changes will affect the way in which fees are charged or collected (regulation 172).

## **EVALUATION**

There will be an efficient and effective process for fee payment, that is well communicated to families.

### **Relevant Links to the National Quality Standard (NQS):**

| <b>NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD</b> |                            |   |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|                                  | <b>Concept</b>             | <b>Descriptor</b>   |
| <b>QA7</b>                       |                            | <b>Governance and Leadership</b>  |
| 7.1                              | Governance                 | Governance supports the operation of a quality service.   |
| 7.1.2                            | Management systems         | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.                         |
| 7.1.3                            | Roles and responsibilities | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service. |

### **Education and Care Services National Regulations:**

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 168 | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |
|-----|--|

#### **Statutory Legislation & Considerations**

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

#### **Links to other policies**

- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Enrolment and Orientation