



## 7.8 Payment of Fees and Priority of Access Policy

### QUALITY AREA 7: Leadership and Service Management

#### Policy Statement

We believe that all children have the right to Early Education and are committed to providing all families the opportunity to enroll their child/ren at our school. We will achieve this by ensuring that a transparent, considerate, and inclusive fee and Priority of Access Structure is in place.

Bellinghen Community Preschool aims to provide ongoing high quality early education and care for children whilst ensuring we are financially viable now and into the future. We know that our school is invaluable providing further generations with a service where children, families and educators can learn and grow together as a resilient community.

We are committed to ensuring that our fees are as affordable as possible, and access is equitable whilst considering government funding allocations for our school. Subsidies are applied where relevant, lowering fees for Low Income and Aboriginal families.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service.

#### Practices

##### **Access to our school and our service's financial viability will be achieved by:**

- Following Priority of Access Guidelines
- Aligning fees to our funding and keeping fee increases to a minimum where possible. *Our Fees will increase at a rate of \$1 to \$5 per day, per annum to align with general cost increases. This will be determined by our funding amount at the time.*
- Ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment. Fee guidelines are documented clearly in the Family Information Guide.
- Managing fee collection to avoid bad debts. This is achieved through regular invoicing of fees and confidential communication with families.
- Families are notified of changes to fee structure and policy as soon as possible with no less than 14 days notification of changes to fees or the ways fees will be collected.
- Ensuring we issue fees in the first week of each term
- Ensure families are aware that fees are not payable on Public Holidays

## **Non-Payment of Fees**

- The Office Administrator will issue a written reminder to late payers of Fees promptly following the payment due date. Non-payment of fees mean that the child will not be able to attend preschool until fees are paid in full or an installment payment plan put in place.
- If fees remain unpaid families will be asked to withdraw their child/ren from preschool until fees are paid or an installment plan in place. Following payment failure, children may then be re-enrolled upon payment of a \$30.00 enrolment fee.
- A new account will be issued for the weeks of attendance. If families do not pay this new account within one week, a debt collector will be employed by the committee to recoup lost fees.

Bellingen Community Preschool acknowledges that families can experience financial hardship from time to time. Families are encouraged to share this with the Director and/or Office Administrator so that the preschool can put payment plans and strategies into place before fee accounts get out of hand. We make every effort to support families experiencing hardship to continue the participation of their child at our school, whilst also considering the financial viability of our service. Individual cases can be taken to the Management Committee for review and solutions offered on a case-by-case basis

## **Withdrawal from preschool**

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing your child from enrolment at Bellingen Community Preschool. Families are required to pay for these two weeks regardless of their child's attendance.

A final statement of account will be prepared to ensure all outstanding accounts are paid. Please ensure all fees are up to date upon leaving our preschool.

## **NSW Start Strong and Start Strong Fee Free Preschool Funding 2021-2022**

Start Strong Free Preschool is designed to support families with cost-of-living pressures through the delivery of free preschool for 600 hours in the two years before school.

Funding will be provided to community and mobile preschools for eligible children aged 3 years and above. In turn, services are required to provide at least 600 hours of fee-free preschool per year for families. This is approximately 15 hours or 2 days per week in most preschool settings.

For community and mobile preschools, funding under this program will be paid on top of their annual Start Strong funding or mobile preschools funding allocation.

Bellingen Community Preschool offers a 2- or 3-day enrolment package and are open 8.30am to 4.00pm Monday – Friday therefore fulfilling the 600-hour criteria for maximising our funding. Families are encouraged to bring their children before 9.30am or advise of their child's attendance.

## Regulatory Requirements

111	Administrative space
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

## National Quality Standards

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership		
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.

## Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility for
Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review fees and access annually, keeping in mind level and conditions of funding and budgetary constraints.</li> <li>Ensure the service remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due.</li> <li>Ensure all families are made aware of service fees and available subsidies on enrolment.</li> <li>Ensure fees are issued in the first week of each term.</li> <li>Ensure families are aware of fee payment options: Direct Deposit – details given on invoice and Cash.</li> <li>Ensure families are made aware of Flood Policy and Public Holidays regarding fees</li> <li>Ensure receipts are issued on final term payments</li> <li>Implement an overdue fee process with any families whose fees are not paid within 4 weeks of invoice and do not have an installment plan in place.</li> <li>Provide all families with a statement of outstanding fees on receipt of notification of withdrawal of a child from the service.</li> </ul>

Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure fees are paid within the first 4 weeks of each term</li> <li>• Provide copy of Centrelink Healthcare Card if claiming a subsidy</li> <li>• Talk to Director and/or bookkeeper <b>before</b> the 4<sup>th</sup> week of term if fees cannot be paid within this time.</li> <li>• Discuss setting up a direct debit and/or payment plan with Director or Administrator.</li> <li>• Consider a voluntary donation to the preschool.</li> </ul>
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## Bellingen Community Preschool Schedule of Fees 2022

### Non- Refundable Enrolment Fees

<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Full Fee</u>
On Enrolment	Enrolment Fee	\$30.00
On Enrolment	Preschool Hat	\$15.00
On Enrolment	Wet Bag	\$9.00

### Educational Fees 2022

<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Full Fee</u>	<u>Subsidy Fee</u>	<u>ASTI Fee</u>
4th Wk. of each Term	Education	\$27.00 per day	\$19.00	\$16.00
4th Wk. of each Term	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Day	\$30.00 per day	NA	NA

### Review

<b>POLICY REVIEWED</b>	AUGUST 2021	<b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b>	AUGUST 2024 or previous
<b>MODIFICATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additions of Start Strong Fee Free Preschool considerations</li> <li>• Alterations of Fee amounts as per yearly review and funding outlined in this policy.</li> <li>• Merging of Fees and Priority of Access Policies (See Archive).</li> </ul>		