



# FEES – OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

QUALITY AREA 7 | Version 1.0

## PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines for:

- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability of Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care, by setting appropriate fees and charges
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Values

Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care 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
- ensuring there are no financial barriers for families wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/children
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians
- advising users of the service about program funding, including government support and fees to be paid by parents/guardians

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 Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care.

<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<b>Approved provider and persons with management or control</b>	<b>Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge</b>	<b>Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff</b>	<b>Parents/ guardians</b>	<b>Contractors, volunteers and students</b>
Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements	<b>R</b>	√			
Developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability	<b>R</b>	√			
Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the nominated supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of the Commonwealth Governments Child Care Package ( <i>refer to Sources</i> )	<b>R</b>	√			
Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care. and removing those barriers wherever possible	<b>R</b>	√			

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 <i>Fees Policy</i> is readily accessible at the service ( <i>Regulation 171</i> )	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with fee information ( <i>refer to Attachment 1</i> )	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges ( <i>refer to samples in Attachments 2 and 3</i> ) upon enrolment of their child	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement ( <i>refer to samples in Attachments 4 and 5</i> )	R	√			
Ensuring fees are collected and receipted	R	√			
Collecting all relevant information	R	√		√	

and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> )					
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	<b>R</b>	√			
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 ( <i>Regulation 172(2)</i> ), and ideally providing one term's notice.	<b>R</b>	√			
Addressing any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service in a timely manner	<b>R</b>	√			
Reading the Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care. Fee information for families ( <i>refer to Attachment 1</i> ), the Fee Payment Agreement ( <i>refer to Attachments 4 and 5</i> ) and the Statement of Fees				√	

and Charges ( <i>refer to Attachments 2 and 3</i> )					
Signing and complying with the Fee Payment Agreement ( <i>refer to Attachments 4 and 5</i> )				√	
Notifying the approved provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees				√	
BOLD tick √ indicates legislation requirement					

## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### Background

[Regulation 168\(2\) \(n\) of Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#) requires that Early Childhood Education and Care services have a comprehensive written fees policy, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. The policy must include a written statement about the fees to be charged and the payment process. All families must be informed of applicable fees at the time of enrolment.

Childcare services providing approved child care (*refer to Definitions*) must abide by the [Family Assistance Legislation Amendment \(Jobs for Families Child Care Package\) Act 2017](#) (*refer to Legislation and standards*). The Commonwealth Government supports working parents/guardians in making early childhood education and care more affordable and accessible through the Child Care Package (The Package). The Package includes the Child Care Subsidy (*refer to Definitions*) and Child Care Safety Net (*refer to Definitions*). Together, they enable parents/guardians to participate in the workforce by making early childhood education and care affordable and accessible.

The Child Care Subsidy helps by assisting families with their child care fees and provides greater assistance to low and middle-income families

The Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged, or located in a regional or remote community. The Child Care Safety Net includes:

- **The Additional Child Care Subsidy:** which provides extra payment on top of the Child Care Subsidy for families who need more help. There are four different payments:
  - For families who need help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
  - For grandparents who care for their grandchildren
  - For families experiencing significant financial stress
  - For parents transitioning from welfare to work
- **The Community Child Care Fund:** which helps services stay open and available to children in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities.

- **The Inclusion Support Program:** which provides support to Early Childhood Education and Care services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services
  - **Subsidised Care for Low Income Families:** who earn \$69,390 or less a year can access 24 hours of subsidised care per child per fortnight without having to meet the activity test.

#### 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](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)

Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://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.

**Centrelink:** The agency that delivers payments and services to parents/guardians on behalf of the Australian Government

**Child Care Safety Net:** Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged, or located in a regional or remote community. Supporting children to access quality early childhood education and care services

**Child Care Subsidy (CCS):** A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers. Further information can be found at: [www.dese.gov.au/child-care-subsidy](http://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-subsidy)

**Excursion/service event charge:** An additional charge required to meet the cost of special events or excursions that occur in response to emerging children's program needs. Events that are planned ahead and are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget do not incur this additional charge (*refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy*).

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

**Late collection fee:** 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*)

#### SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

##### Sources

- Child Care Package: Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)

#### Related Policies

- Compliments and Complaints
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions and Service Events
- 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 service 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 ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#))

#### ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Fee information for families
- Attachment 2: Fee Agreement

#### AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care on 13/11/2023

**REVIEW DATE:** November 2024

## ATTACHMENT 1. FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care. 2023-2024

The below information is a guide and must be adapted to suit each individual service's requirements.

### 1. General information

Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care abides by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017* (refer to Legislation and standards). The Child Care Subsidy helps by assisting families with their child care fees and provides greater assistance to low and middle-income families. The Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged or located in a regional or remote community.

Hours of operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Before School Care: 6:30am – 8:45am</li> <li>● After School Care: 3:30pm – 6:30pm</li> <li>● Vacation Care/Student Free Days: 7:00am – 6:00pm</li> <li>● End of Term Care: 1:30pm - 6:30pm (start times may vary in line with school finishing times)</li> <li>● Parent Teacher Interview Care: 1:30pm – 6:30pm (start times may vary in line with school finishing times)</li> </ul>
Planned Closures	20/12/2024 – 05/01/2025 (Christmas/New Year break)
Fees (before CCS or AAC are applied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Before School Care – \$25.00</li> <li>● After School Care - \$28.00</li> <li>● Vacation Care – \$70.00</li> <li>● Vacation Incursion Day - extra TBC</li> <li>● Vacation Care Excursion Day - extra TBC</li> <li>● Student Free Day- \$70.00</li> <li>● End of Term Day- \$50.00</li> <li>● Parent Teacher Interview Day- \$50.00</li> </ul> <p>*Other days may be added as the need arises.</p>

### 2. How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service
- the level of government funding provided
- 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
- requirements of Child Care Package: [www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package](http://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package)

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 Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care include:

- **Excursion/service event charge:** At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (*refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy*).
- **Late collection fee:** Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service. This charge has been set at a level determined by the Outside of School Hours Care subcommittee of the School Council. This fee is \$15 when collection is 10 minutes late and then \$1 per minute thereafter.

### 4. Statement of fees and charges

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

### 5. Payment of fees

Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care 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 on a weekly basis. Invoices will show any childcare subsidy payments made by the Commonwealth Government and the remaining gap fee is to be paid by parents/carers at the end of each care week, covering the fees for any care that has been booked during that week.

**Families are required to pay the gap fee shown on the invoice each Friday and not allow fees to fall more than two weeks into arrears.**

Fees will be invoiced to parents/guardians directly via a parent statement. Payments can be made in three ways

1. Direct Debit using Debit Success (preferred method)
2. 'Pay Now' function on the parent/carers Xplor app
3. Direct deposit made to the Lucas Primary School Account

Receipt of payment will show on the family/carers Xplor app and on their next statement.

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

### 6. Refund of fees

Fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the Lucas Primary School sub-committee).

There will be no refund of fees in the following circumstances:

- Notification of complete cancellation of a permanent booking within two weeks of scheduled bookings (parent/guardian or third party must notify the service of this in writing).
- Children must be signed in and out on their last day of care for CCS to be applied. If the child does not attend the service on their last day of care (unless this is due to illness and a medical certificate if provided) care will be charged at full fee from the last day the child attended care to their last booked day of care.
- Non-attendance of bookings due to a planned absence eg: family holiday / specialist appointment/ extracurricular activities without giving 48 hours' notice.

- Where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.
- Closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances, in this situation it will be determined on a case by case basis and communicated to parents
- For ongoing bookings unless a medical certificate is provided to the service within 7 days of the missed care.

### **7. Cancellation of a prior booked day of care**

- Families will need to provide 48 hours' notice of the cancellation of any occasional booked day of care (48 hours before the start of the booked care day 6:30am). Removal of these bookings is at the discretion of the service and may be removed once adequate notice has been received via the Xplor parent application or Lucas LEAP email. Fees will continue to be applied if a booking is not cancelled with 48 hours' notice (48 hours before the start of the booked care day 6:30am). Bookings can be cancelled by marking your child absent via the Xplor app and emailing the Lucas LEAP email directly ([lucasleap@lucasps.vic.edu.au](mailto:lucasleap@lucasps.vic.edu.au)). Phone messages or emails to other addresses will not be accepted.
- Vacation Care bookings must be cancelled by 9am on the Wednesday prior to the commencement of the school holiday for the booked session not to be charged. All Vacation Care booked is charged for unless a medical certificate is provided for the absence from care with a 7-day timeframe.

### **8. Unpaid fees**

If fees are not paid by the due date, the following steps will be taken:

- An initial reminder email will be sent to parents/guardians with a specified payment date and will include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Where payment is still not received, families will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan.
- Failure to attend the meeting and continued non-payment may result in a second and final letter notifying parents/guardians that the child's place at the service may be withdrawn unless payment is made or a payment plan is entered into within a specified period of time. This letter will also include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Lucas Primary School Outside Of School Hours Care will continue to offer support and will 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 with 14 days' notice in writing.
- No further enrolments of children from the parents/guardians will be accepted until all outstanding fees have been paid.

### **9. Support services**

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from the Nominated Supervisor/ Lucas LEAP Coordinator or alternatively families may contact the local council or other support agencies directly.

### **10. 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. FEE PAYMENT AGREEMENT

Please complete this form and return to Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care

### Fee payment contract

Child/ren full name:

Parent's/guardian's full name:

- I/we acknowledge that the childcare service is funded by fees paid by parents/guardians. The service cannot operate without the fees paid by parents/guardians.
- I/we acknowledge having received and read the attached summary of Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care fees policy, which sets out the procedure for fee payment.
- I/we understand that fees are non-refundable.
- I/we agree that if our activity and financial circumstances change, we will immediately notify Centrelink to ensure our Child Care Subsidy entitlements are up to date
- I/we acknowledge that if fees are not paid by the due date, Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care will implement the late payment of fees procedures, as outlined in the Fee Information for Families, which could result in the withdrawal of my/our child's place at the service and no further enrolments until the outstanding fees are paid.
- 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 Nominates Supervisor/ Lucas LEAP Coordinator 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 procedure for payment of fees.
- I/we Agree to pay fees while the child is absent form care on any booked day, unless appropriate notice has been provided as per outline in the Fee Policy.
- I/we agree to collect my child/ren from Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care prior to closing time.
- I/we agree to give one weeks written notice of when my child/children will be leaving Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care.

Signature (parent/guardian):

Date:

**Note:** invoices, receipts and collection of fees will be in accordance with the Lucas Primary School Outside of School Hours Care *Fees Policy*