

Fees Policy

Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities

Policy Statement

Ambrose has a commitment to ensuring our fees are as affordable as possible and that all Parent/Guardian have access to any eligible subsidies or funding to reduce these fees. The setting and payment of fees take into account all requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, Australian and NSW Government grants and funded program guidelines, Australian Tax Office, and the Family Assistance Law.

Goals / What are we going to do?

Ambrose services need to be financially viable to ensure children are provide with high quality education and care. Ambrose services will ensure Parent/Guardian are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements during enrolment.

All records held at the service will be maintained in accordance with the Ambrose Privacy & Confidentiality Policy. Parents/Guardians will be provided with accurate fee statements and clear information regarding fee payments and collection processes.

Strategies- How will it be done?

Fees Payable/Accounts

CDPSL Executive Team will set the necessary fee level to deliver quality service, be affordable, provide above minimum conditions of employment and business needs with the approval of the CDPSL Board of Directors.

The fees policy will be provided to Parents/Guardians during the enrolment process. Fees payable will be based on either daily or weekly amounts.

Fees may be subject to change at the time of enrolment for the commencement of the new year as an outcome of the annual budget review and approval process conducted by 30th November each year for the subsequent year.

If the Board determines fee changes are required during the calendar year, Parents/Guardians will be notified in advance of this.

Child Care Subsidy System (Early Learning Extended Hours and School Age Care/Activities Services)

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment offered by the Australian Government for which parent/guardians may be eligible to assist with the cost of fees. Parent/Guardian who receive CCS will then pay the “gap fee”. The gap fee is the difference between the Ambrose advertised full fee per session and the government CCS payment.

Ambrose services will comply with the Australian Government requirements to be approved education and care services for the purposes of CCS, reporting requirements, and any other requirements for administering CCS.

In order for the service to receive eligible CCS payments the parent/guardian must:

- provide the service with the relevant and correct Customer Reference Number (CRN) and personal details together with;
- signing the Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) in Xplor.
- the enrolment must also be confirmed by the parent/guardian in their MyGov account within 7 days of their child commencing at the service.

Parents/Guardians are responsible to monitor their CCS eligibility and to comply with and meet continuing requirements with Services Australia to receive and remain eligible to receive CCS. If CCS is not paid to the service by Services Australia on behalf of a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian is required to pay full fees. For Parent/Guardian experiencing financial hardship, Services Australia may assist to re-evaluate or provide additional childcare subsidy if eligible.

Start Strong Fee Relief (Early Learning Services)

Start Strong fee relief is a payment offered by the NSW Government for eligible children to assist Parent/Guardian with the cost of early learning education and care. This is in addition to the Australian Government CCS payments at approved CCS services. The fee relief will be paid by the NSW Government directly to the service.

The parent/guardian will be required to complete the appropriate declaration form and elect the nominated service to receive the fee relief upon enrolment. A flat rate weekly reduction to the parent gap fee (after eligible CCS has been applied if attending an approved CCS service) will be allocated to the fee statement across the number of operating weeks the service is open during the calendar year.

Parent/Guardian cannot receive fee relief for the same child at more than one early childhood education service.

Fee Waiving (Fourth and Subsequent Sibling) – School Age Care/Activities only

From 1st October 2024, Ambrose will introduce waiving of the daily/session fees for fourth and subsequent siblings, within the one family, attending Ambrose School Age Care/Activities services.

The youngest fourth and subsequent siblings will not incur daily/session fees for bookings whilst the first, second and third sibling will incur daily/session fees.

Parent/Guardians can email the Ambrose Family Support team at familysupport@ambrose.org.au to determine if they are eligible for the fourth and subsequent sibling fee waiver.

Payment of Fees

Early Learning Extended Hours and School Age Care/Activities Services

Direct debit is the method of payment of fees. Fees are payable from the commencement date of enrolment. Fee statements will be emailed fortnightly to the primary carer as registered in Xplor. Parent/Guardians are required to pay a minimum of two weeks fees in advance at all times, this includes when the child is not at the service for an extended

period due to personal holidays or illness. The fortnightly direct debit payment system is designed to make payments easy. Fees are direct debited fortnightly from the parent/guardian's nominated bank account or credit/debit card. A direct debit calendar is available from the service and on the Ambrose website to help Parent/Guardian keep track of when direct debits are processed.

Cancellation of bookings may occur for having continued occurrences of overdue fees and/or continued occurrences of dishonoured direct debit payments.

Enrolments will not be confirmed, and bookings will not be accepted without valid direct debit payment details set up in Xplor at each Ambrose service the child is enrolled.

Early Learning Traditional Hours Services

Direct debit is the method of payment of fees. Fees are payable from the commencement date of enrolment. Fee statements will be emailed at the start of each Term to the primary carer as registered in Xplor, with a direct debit processed on Thursday of Week 4 of each term, for the full term's fees payable.

Fees are payable when the child is not at the service for an extended period due to personal holidays or illness. A direct debit calendar is available from the service to help Parent/Guardian keep track of when direct debits are processed.

Cancellation of bookings may occur for having continued occurrences of overdue fees and/or continued occurrences of dishonoured direct debit payments.

Enrolments will not be confirmed, and bookings will not be accepted without valid direct debit payment details set up in Xplor at each Ambrose service the child is enrolled.

Dishonoured Direct Debits

As a condition of enrolment, Ambrose fees are to be paid via electronic means with direct debit the method of payment. Alternative electronic payment methods can be discussed on a case-by-case basis by exception.

Fees not paid by the due date and/or continued direct debit dishonours are deemed fees in arrears (debt) and a process is followed to recover this debt.

On a fortnightly basis direct debit dishonours are reviewed by the Ambrose Family Support team and the below process is followed:

- 1st occurrence: written email reminder and expect next direct debit to process successfully which will include any overdue fees. Ambrose does not apply a late payment fee.
- 2nd consecutive occurrence: written email reminder, manual PayNow payment via the Xplor Home App required within 2 business days. If no manual payment is received by the due date, bookings will be suspended.
- 3rd consecutive occurrence: bookings will be suspended. Bookings will not be reinstated until the account is brought up to date.

If your account is not brought up to date in good time, we will write to you about maintaining your child's enrolment.

Overdue Fees

Payment of fees received after the due date and/or continued direct debit dishonours will be deemed late payments or fees in arrears.

Ambrose is always prepared to discuss payment options if you are encountering genuine financial hardship. Please email the Ambrose Family Support team at familysupport@ambrose.org.au to discuss available options for payment of fees. Based on the individual circumstances one or more of the below strategies will be offered:

- temporary financial hardship subsidy from Services Australia;
- mutually agreed fortnightly direct debit payment plan arrangements which sets an amount each fortnight to cover fortnightly fees together with an additional amount to pay fees in arrears, by instalments;
- direct debit limits which assist Parent/Guardian with their budget to ensure a direct debit is not processed above that limit, whilst still enough to cover the regular fortnightly out of pocket gap fees; or
- temporary pause on bookings to assist Parent/Guardian in not accruing further debt which may result in unachievable arrears to be paid.

Ongoing unpaid fees may result in bookings being withdrawn at all Ambrose services. Any outstanding fees are to be paid in full by the end of the calendar year in order for the enrolment to continue in the new year.

Parent/Guardian that leave Ambrose with an outstanding debt will be added to the bad debt list and will not be permitted enrolment/re-enrolment at any Ambrose service until the outstanding debt has been paid in full.

Further information is available in the Community Ventures Debt Management & Financial Hardship policy.

Fee Types

Enrolment (Early Learning Extended Hours Services)

Once your position has been confirmed and accepted by the service, an Enrolment Fee per child will be payable prior to commencing at the service. This is a one-off payment that is not refundable. This covers the administrative costs associated with enrolling a child.

Security Bond (Early Learning Extended Hours Services)

A security bond, equivalent to \$100 per enrolled day, capped at \$500 per child, is payable in advance for each child's enrolment at an Early Learning Extended Hours Service. This means a child enrolled for 2 days a week = \$200 bond, 3 days a week = \$300 bond, 5 days a week = \$500 bond. The security bond is payable within two weeks of the offer of enrolment, but before the child commences at the Early Learning Service. The bond will be held for the duration of the child's enrolment. A bond payment is required for each enrolment. For example, if a child is enrolled at a service under two different enrolment agreements.

Existing Ambrose Early Learning families who have already paid a bond exceeding the above bond rates will receive an automatic credit of overpaid bonds to their fee

account. The overpaid bond credit will be used to cover daily fees with direct debits not processing until credit is used. Direct debits will resume once bond credit has been used.

In the event that fees are not paid when due, the security bond may be retained by the Early Learning Service and placed towards unpaid fees. Any remaining unpaid amount at the time of termination of the child's enrolment or withdrawal of the child from the Early Learning Service will be a debt due and payable immediately to the service. Subject to all other fees being paid up-to-date and the correct written advance notice of cancellation of booking is provided, the security bond will be refunded when the child's enrolment terminates.

Security Bond (Early Learning Traditional Services)

A small security bond may be payable in advance for each child's enrolment at an Early Learning Traditional Service. The bond amount will be notified to the parent during the enrolment offer process. The security bond is payable within two weeks of the offer of enrolment, but before the child commences at the Early Learning Service. The bond will be held for the duration of the child's enrolment. A bond payment may be required for each enrolment. For example, if a child is enrolled at a service under two different enrolment agreements.

In the event that fees are not paid when due, the security bond may be retained by the Early Learning Service and placed towards unpaid fees. Any remaining unpaid amount at the time of termination of the child's enrolment or withdrawal of the child from the Early Learning Service will be a debt due and payable immediately to the service. Subject to all other fees being paid up-to-date and the correct written advance notice of cancellation of booking is provided, the security bond will be refunded when the child's enrolment terminates.

Daily/Session

Fees are determined and approved by the CDPSL Board of Directors. Fee setting criteria considers socio-economic factors, subsidies, and grant funding (as applicable).

Early Learning services fees also adhere to the NSW Department of Education Start Strong program guidelines.

Late Collection

Ambrose services reserve the right to implement a late collection charge, per child, when parents/guardians have not collected their child/ren from the service before closing time. This is to enforce the licensed hours of each Ambrose Service and to safeguard children, Parent/Guardian and team members. Under the licensing obligations as determined by the NSW Department of Education, it is illegal to care for a child outside of the approved hours of operation except under extenuating circumstances.

	From closing time up to 15 minutes	For each additional minute after the first 15 minutes
First Instance*	\$15^	\$1 per minute^
Second Instance*	\$15^	\$1 per minute^
Third Instance*	Review of bookings	Review of bookings

*Calendar year

^Per child, per occurrence

If a child is not collected by service closure and authorised nominees are unable to be contacted within a period of 30 minutes from closing time, police will be contacted.

Non-notification fee (After School Care)

In the interest of safety for all children attending Ambrose services, a non-notification fee per child per occurrence is applicable. Failure to notify the service that your child/ren is not attending after school care directly affects educators’ supervision following up with parent/guardians who have not informed the service, to ensure a child is not missing between the transition from school to after school care. The non-notification fee is \$20 per child per occurrence which will be added to your fee statement. Notification must be received by the service a minimum of one hour prior to the school afternoon bell.

Dishonour

Parents/Guardians are responsible for any charges from financial institutions or payment vendors for dishonoured direct debit transactions. The fee from the payment vendor is added to the next successful direct debit transaction. To avoid dishonour charges, ensure there are sufficient funds available via the nominated direct debit payment method 1 day prior to the scheduled direct debit.

Transaction processing fee

Parent/Guardian using a credit/debit card for payment of fees will incur a processing fee charged by the payment vendor for each transaction. Further information is provided in the terms and conditions that form part of the agreement parent/guardians sign when setting up direct debit.

Miscellaneous

Each service may raise for approval by CDPSL miscellaneous charges, for example, workshops, excursions, pre-school clothing, and security tags/fobs. Management of miscellaneous fees is to be in accordance with the provisions of this Policy.

Vacation Care (School Age Care/Activities services)

Vacation care bookings will not be accepted if fees are in arrears for previous vacation care bookings and/or before and after school care at any Ambrose service. Parents/Guardians experiencing genuine financial hardship may apply in writing to request a direct debit payment plan arrangement.

Casual Bookings

Casual booking requests in writing or via the Xplor Home App (where license capacity and/or ratio allows) can only be accommodated with a minimum of 24 hours' notice in a work week (Monday – Friday).

Casual bookings require a current active enrolment as detailed in the Ambrose Enrolment and Orientation Policy.

Cancellation of casual bookings must be in writing a minimum of 24 hours prior to the start of the casual booking session. Failure to notify within this period will result in a marked absence and fees payable.

Casual bookings in Early Learning Traditional services will be payable at full fees when allocated Start Strong funding has been exhausted.

Change of Care or Cancelling Care

Early Learning Traditional Hours Services

A request for changes to permanent bookings must be submitted in writing to the service email at least four (4) weeks prior to:

- The requested implementation date (first day of change) for the reduction of days that the child attends; or
- The effective date to cancel the child's place at the service.

Failure to request and obtain approval for change arrangements will result in the payment of fees for the relevant notice period.

Early Learning Extended Hours Services

Between 1st February and 31st October a request for changes to permanent bookings must be submitted in writing to the service email at least four (4) weeks prior to:

- The requested implementation date (first day of change) for the reduction of days that the child attends; or
- The effective date to cancel the child's place at the service.

Between 1st November and 31st January a request for changes to permanent bookings must be submitted in writing to the service email at least six (6) weeks prior to:

- The requested implementation date (first day of change) for the reduction of days that the child attends; or
- The effective date to cancel the child's place at the service.

Failure to request and obtain approval for change arrangements will result in the payment of fees for the relevant notice period. Failure to adhere to the CCS rules in relation to absences and last day of care of a CCS enrolment will result in full fees payable when deemed not eligible to receive CCS by Services Australia.

School Age Care/Activities Services

- A request for changes to bookings must be submitted [via the Notice of Change to Care Arrangement Form](#) at least two (2) weeks prior to the requested date of the change.

- A request to cancel the child’s place at the service must be submitted via the [Cancellation of Care Form](#) at least two (2) weeks prior to the effective date to cancel the child’s place at the service.

Failure to request and obtain approval for change arrangements or cancellation of care will result in the payment of fees for the relevant notice period. Failure to adhere to the CCS rules in relation to absences and last day of care of a CCS enrolment will result in full fees payable when deemed not eligible to receive CCS by Services Australia.

Absences and Non-Chargeable Days

Fees are payable for all absences including illness and family holidays. Fees are not payable for gazetted NSW public holidays.

For pupil-free days (School Age Care/Activities only), if your child normally attends before &/or after school care on a scheduled pupil-free day and does not attend School Age Care/Activities on the pupil-free day, they will be removed from the roll and no fees charged for that day only. If your child attends School Age Care/Activities on a pupil-free day, you will be charged a pupil free day rate.

For Early Learning Traditional Services, fees are not payable for NSW school holidays as these services only operate during school terms

School Aged Care/Vacation Care/Activities (Only)

As per the Ambrose Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy, should unacceptable behaviour be displayed by a child/group of children at a service the child or children will be unable to return to the service, at a minimum of 24 hours or next session should the incident occur prior to a non-operational day (eg. weekend, public holiday or vacation care period).

Where a respite period takes place, bookings on respite days will be removed and not incur a session fee payable by parents/guardians

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority / Responsibility For
Approved Provider/ Delegates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011. • Notifying parents/guardians with a minimum of 14 days notice of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected. • For CCS services ensure the planned arrangement is recorded and kept either on paper or electronically and meets the requirements as per the Family Assistance Law. • Ensure any changes to a planned arrangement are recorded and kept either on paper or electronically. • Review and approve fees in line with the annual budget review and approval process by 30 November each year for the subsequent year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the same fee will be charged to all Parents/Guardians for equivalent care arrangements. • Fee payments will be recorded according to Australian Government Family Assistance Law and NSW Department of Education Guidelines. • All documentation pertaining to CCS will be kept for the specified period of time and made available to Australian Government Officers on request.
<p>Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide parents/guardians with a regular statement of fees and charges. • Collect all relevant information and maintain relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable. • For CCS services, enter into an agreement with the parent/guardian on the planned arrangements of care for their child. The arrangement must be recorded electronically in Xplor and must be kept by the provider. • Ensure the Ambrose Fees Policy is readily accessible.
<p>Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer parents/guardians questions in relation to this policy to the Nominated Supervisors or Family Support.
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read this policy and refer any questions, queries, or concerns to the Nominated Supervisor or Family Support. • Record the arrival and departure times of their child/ren attending care and/or use the electronic sign-in/out system to sign children in/out of the service. • Provide 2 weeks' notice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ requesting to reduce permanent bookings; or ○ withdrawal from service. • Notify the Nominated Supervisor or Family Support if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees. • Complete direct debit details in Xplor upon enrolment and ensure direct debit details are always valid. • Ensure all fees are paid in accordance with the Ambrose Fee Policy. • Contact the service to advise of their child's inability to attend as soon as this is known. <p>For CCS services it is the enrolling parent/guardian's responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for CCS through their myGov account, provide their projected annual income, activity levels, and the name the Ambrose service to Services Australia. • Provide the relevant and correct Customer Reference Numbers (CRN) and date of birth for the parent/guardian and each child attending the service at the commencement of enrolment. • Approve a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) and confirm the enrolment in their MyGov account in order to receive CCS. Full fees will be payable if the parent/guardian has not actioned all required steps. • Keep their details including financial circumstances on MyGov current and contact Services Australia if they wish to dispute assessments or discuss further.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes or cancellation of CCS is the parent/guardians responsibility to discuss with Services Australia. • Provide approved documentation for allowable additional absence days as required. • View their childcare usage and total fees charged and the fee reductions calculated by Services Australia in their MyGov account. • Comply with the Australian Government / Services Australia requirements when claiming a Child Care Subsidy. Further information can be found on their website https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy
Students and Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer parents/guardians questions in relation to this policy to the Nominated Supervisors or Family Support.
Support Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to this policy • Support parents/guardians to understand the policy. • Support Nominated Supervisors or Administration team members in provision of this policy.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy as per the policy schedule and/or as required.



Families and Early Years Education & Care employees are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

To provide Feedback scan the QR code or click [here](#)

RELATED LEGISLATION

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), as amended 2011
- Family Assistance Law
- Start Strong Funding

RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1

SOURCES/ USEFUL RESOURCES

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- CCS Information – <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy>
- Child Care Provider Handbook <https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/child-care-provider-handbook>

Definitions

<p>Planned arrangements</p>	<p>There are four types of planned arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complying Written Arrangement • Relevant Arrangement • Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) • Third party (arrangement with an organisation) <p>The agreement through which Parent/Guardian can receive eligible Child Care Subsidy</p>
<p>Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)</p>	<p>The agreement between Ambrose and the parent/guardian which includes details about care sessions and fees.</p>
<p>Early Learning Traditional services</p>	<p>Early Learning preschool services that operate during school terms only and 7.5 hours per day. They are not approved for child care subsidy.</p>
<p>Early Learning Extended Hours services</p>	<p>Early Learning services that operate extended hours (eg. 6:30 am-6pm) and are approved for child care subsidy.</p>
<p>Early Learning Services</p>	<p>Both Early Learning Traditional Services and Early Learning Extended Hours services</p>
<p>School Aged Care/Activities services</p>	<p>Services that operate during before and after school and throughout school holidays.</p>

