

# Greenvue Kindergarten

## Fees Policy

This policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- The setting, payment and collection of fees;
- Ensuring the viability of Greenvue Kindergarten by setting appropriate fees and charges;
- The equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by Greenvue Kindergarten.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Greenvue Kindergarten Pty. Ltd. 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 an affordable level
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts
- Ensuring there are no major financial barriers for families wishing to access an early childhood program
- 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.

*Greenvue Kindergarten Management shall review the fee schedule and processes periodically to ensure it remains current, relevant and effective.*

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators and parents/guardians with an enrolled child, or who wish to enrol a child at Greenvue Kindergarten.

### **BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION**

#### **Background**

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per capita funding as a contribution towards the costs of the pre-kinder and kinder program. Income from other sources, primarily fees, is required to meet all the additional costs incurred by the service in the delivery of the children's program.

DET also funds eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs as outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*).

DET requires that funded services have a comprehensive written fees policy in place, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. The policy includes a written

statement about the fees to be charged, as required under Regulation 168(2)(n), and the payment process. All families must be informed of applicable term and annual fees at the time of enrolment. Services must also be responsive to the local community and the viability of the service. *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*) outlines the criteria to be covered in the policy.

### 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*, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management
  - Standard 7.3: Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service.

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

### DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

**Approved Care:** Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Subsidy payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers.

**Childcare Subsidy (CCS):** A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. All eligible families can receive some Childcare Subsidy.

**Early Start Kindergarten:** A funding program that enables three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours.

**Enrolment Fee:** A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

**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 Charge:** 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 – Fee information for families).

## **SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES**

### **Sources**

- The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training is available under early childhood/service providers on the DET website: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au))
- The philosophy of Greenvue Kindergarten

### **Related Policies**

- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursions and Service Events Policy
- Free Kindergarten Fees Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

## PROCEDURE

### **The Approved Provider is responsible for:**

- Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements
- Developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability
- Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*)
- Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Greenvue Kindergarten and removing those barriers wherever possible
- Reviewing the number of families experiencing financial hardship and the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered
- Considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families
- Clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way, and in the family's first language where possible
- Providing all parents/guardians with a copy of the document containing fee information for families (refer to Attachment 1)
- Providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges upon enrolment of their child, and ensure that the *Fees Policy* is readily accessible at the service (Regulation 171)
- Providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement (refer to samples in Attachment 2)
- Collecting and receipting all fees
- Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable
- Complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees
- Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected (Regulation 172(2))

### **The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:**

- Assisting the Approved Provider in developing this policy, and ensuring that this policy is based on the principles of the *Fees Policy* (refer to *Definitions*)
- Implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the Approved Provider and staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*)
- Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Greenvue Kindergarten and removing those barriers wherever possible
- Considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families

- Communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way and in the family's first language where possible
- Providing parents/guardians with a copy of the document containing fee information for families (refer to Attachment 1)
- Providing parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges upon enrolment of their child, and ensure that the *Fees Policy* is readily accessible at the service
- Providing parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement (refer to samples in Attachment 2)
- Complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees
- Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected

**Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:**

- Informing the Approved Provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service
- Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Reading the Greenvue Kindergarten Fee information for families (refer to Attachment 1), the Fee Payment Agreement (refer to Attachment 2) and the Statement of Fees and Charges.
- Signing and complying with the Fee Payment Agreement (refer to Attachment 2)
- Notifying the Approved Provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees
- Providing the required documentation to enable the service to claim the Childcare Subsidy (refer to Attachment 1 – Fee information for families).

**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
- 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
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)).

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Fee Information For Families
- Attachment 2: Fee Payment Agreement

## **RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

Outcomes or any matters relating to individual fees, records must be maintained by the Kinder Management Office.

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Greenvue Kindergarten Pty. Ltd. on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.

**REVIEW DATE: March 2026**

## ATTACHMENT 1

### Fee Information For Families

#### Greenvue Kindergarten

##### 1. Why Fees Are Necessary

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per capita funding as a contribution toward the costs of providing a four-year-old kindergarten program. Services meet the balance of costs through charging fees.

Services Australia provides a Childcare Subsidy (see below) that enables children from eligible families to attend an early childhood educational program at a minimal cost.

DET also provides funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs.

Greenvue Kindergarten provides a range of support options to parents/guardians experiencing difficulty with payment of fees (see below).

##### 2. How Fees Are Set

As part of the budget development process, the Management 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 for the program;
- 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; and
- Reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards;

Fees set for the year are only reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

##### 3. Other Charges

Other charges levied by Greenvue Kindergarten are included on the Statement of Fees and Charges. These include:

- **Enrolment Fee:** This payment secures a child's place at the service and is payable on acceptance of enrolment. Families experiencing hardship should also discuss any difficulties with the service.
- **Incursion / Excursion Levy:** This additional charge is required to cover the cost of excursions or special events that occur throughout the year in response to emerging children's program needs and interests. Affordability and relevance to the children's interests and the service program will be taken into consideration before a decision is made that will require families to pay this additional charge (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*). Events that are planned ahead are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget and do not incur this additional charge.

- **Late collection charge:** Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Management.
- **Missed payment charge:** The service holds the right to recover the costs associated to any missed payments processed through the direct debit agreement schedule.

#### **4. Statement Of Fees And Charges**

A statement of fees and charges for the Pre-Kinder & Kinder programs will be provided to families upon enrolment.

#### **5. Donations**

All service costs are covered by DET per capita funding and the fees charged. Donations of equipment are welcomed by the service from families and local community. While participation in donations are voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged.

#### **6. Subsidies**

##### **6.1 Childcare Subsidy**

Childcare Subsidy (CCS) is an Australian Government payment that can assist eligible families with the costs of attending an early childhood education program at an approved or registered care provider.

Approved care is childcare that meets certain standards and requirements, and is approved by the Australian Government. Approved care providers must hold a licence to operate, have qualified and trained staff, be open certain hours and meet health, safety and other quality standards. Most long day care; family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers.

Further details are available at: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/families](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/families) or telephone 136 150.

##### **6.2 Early Start Kindergarten Subsidy**

Three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children known to Child Protection are eligible to attend a funded early childhood program that is planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher free of charge. The service receives funding for children who meet the eligibility criteria. Contact the service for further information.

## **7. DET Double Funding**

Parents of children who attend more than one kinder service need to be aware that they cannot access a funded place at more than one service. Parents who choose access their funded place at another service, other than Greenvue Kindergarten, will be required to pay an additional amount to cover the DET contribution amount equivalent to the Per Capital Kinder Funding set for that year.

Priority will be given to those with funded positions, in line with the Priority of Access guidelines as outlined in the Kindergarten Guide.

## **8. Payment of Fees**

The Management 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 to parents/guardians directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the fee payment schedule (FPS). Each FPS will be accompanied by payment instructions via the direct debit agreement. The first fortnightly payment must be received in full prior to the child commencing at the service. Receipt statements will be provided for all fee payments on a fortnightly basis.

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

## **9. Unpaid Fees**

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

- An initial reminder letter 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.
- The Management 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.

## **10. Children Turning Three During The Year Of Enrolment**

Children can only be enrolled in the three-year old pre-kinder program if they turn three years old by 30 April in that year, however they can attend the program from the program start date, and shall pay the same fee as other children enrolled in the pre-kinder program.

## **11. Notification of Fee Changes During The Year**

Fees are reviewed and set for the financial year starting on the first Monday of July each year. Fees would otherwise only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified four weeks in advance of any required fee increase other than the annual increase in July each year and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

## **12. Fee Payment Through Childcare Subsidy and Out of Pocket Fees**

Families can pay their fees through their Childcare Subsidy (CCS) entitlements. It shall be the responsibility of the families to ensure that their CCS entitlements are active at the time of the program start date and provide the service with the required information needed for the service to claim their Childcare Subsidy entitlements from Services Australia. Any out of pocket fees would be processed through Greenvue Kindergarten CCMS portal electronically. Cash payments are not accepted.

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**Fee Payment Agreement**

[Year]

**Pre-Kinder & Kinder program**

Please complete this form and return to Greenvue Kindergarten by [Date]

**Fee payment contract**

Child's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/guardian's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

- I/we acknowledge that the kindergarten program is partly funded by the state government, with the balance of funds coming from fees paid by parents/guardians.
- I/we understand that I/we am/are entitled to the Per Capital Kindergarten Funding. If my/our child starts attending the funded kindergarten program at any other service during the year, the balance of Per Capital Kindergarten Funding set for that year is required to be paid directly to the service.
- I/we agree to pay fees by the due dates on the Fee Payment Schedule.
- I/we understand that fees are non-refundable.
- I/we acknowledge that if fees are not paid by the due date, the Management will implement the late payment of fees procedures, as outlined in the *Fees Policy*, which could result in the withdrawal of my/our child's place at the service.
- 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 Management 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (parent/guardian 1)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (parent/guardian 2)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Note: Invoices, receipts and collection of fees will be in accordance with the Greenvue Kindergarten *Fees Policy & Free Kindergarten Fees Policy*.