

FEE SUMMARY

Authorised by:	This policy was adopted by the Ripponlea Kindergarten Executive Committee of Management
Approved date:	15 June 2020
Review date:	June 2021

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 and fundraising activities.

DET provides a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (see below) that enables children from eligible families to attend a Four-Year-Old kindergarten program free of charge, or 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.

Ripponlea 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 Committee of Management sets fees each year for the programs of the service, considering:

- the financial viability of the service
- the level of government funding provided for the program, including the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- 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 the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy – Fees Policy

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

- **Non-refundable holding fee:** This payment of \$250.00 (fee pro rata rate: Term 1 - \$250.00, Term 2 - \$225.00, Term 3 - \$150, Term 4 - \$75.00) secures your child's place at Ripponlea Kindergarten and is payable on acceptance of enrolment. This fee is **Non Refundable** for any withdrawals from the Kindergarten Program for any reason.

- Families who participate in Working Bees and other Voluntary Tasks as requested by the Kinder will be eligible to receive a \$50 discount off the Term fees per Working Bee, capped at \$150 for the year. It is deducted from fourth term fees where the child has attended for a full year. Families who volunteer to be on the Committee of Management, and who effectively participate for the full year, will automatically receive the total \$150 discount off their term 4 fees.

- **Late collection fee:** The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection fee when parents/guardians are **frequently late** in collecting a child from the service. This fee is based on \$10 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, from the end of the session. This is monitored and invoiced by a late book near the sign in sheet. The teachers also have commitments to attend to outside of the kinder hours and are not paid for an extended period after the session ends.

4. Fundraising

Not all service costs are covered by DET per capita funding and the fees charged. The Committee fundraises to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Ripponlea Kindergarten issues a standardised \$200 (or pro rata) Fundraising fee that is **voluntary in payment**. Fundraising Fees are sent as a separate invoice to the term fees and will be issued to families alongside their first term fees. (Fee pro rata rate: Term 1 - \$200, Term 2 - \$150, Term 3 - \$100, Term 4 - \$50). **Fundraising Fees are Non Refundable** for any reason, including withdrawal from the Kindergarten.

5. Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (Four-Year-Old programs only)

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy is provided by DET and enables eligible children to attend kindergarten free of charge or at minimal cost. Eligibility conditions change from time-to-time – contact the service for further information. Families who may be eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (Four-Year-Old programs only) include those who are:

- Health Care Card holders
- Pensioner Concession Card holders
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card holders
- Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 or 786
- Asylum seekers on Bridging Visas A–F
- Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visa 200–217
- Resolution of Status (RoS) visa, Class CD, subclass 851
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children
- Triplets or Quadruplets attending a funded kindergarten program in the same year.

Supporting documentation must be sighted by the service before the start of each term. A record of this will be documented on the child's file. Eligible families' fees will be discounted each term by the amount determined by DET.

Note: Families are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy for the full term in which their concession is valid.

6. Triplets and quadruplets fee subsidy

A discount of 5 per cent per child, per term, has been set for families with triplets/quadruplets attending a funded kindergarten program in the same year. To obtain this, the original or certified birth certificates need to be provided.

There is also a discount for families with triplets and quadruplets attending the three year old program. This is set at 5 per cent per child, per year.

7. Early Start Kindergarten fee 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.

8. Payment of fees

Fees will be invoiced to parents/guardians directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions. The first term's fees must be received in full prior to the child commencing at the service. For children enrolled after the commencement of a term, a pro rata invoice will be issued and must be paid in full within 14 days of the child's commencement at the service. Invoices for terms 2-4 will be issued 3 weeks before the end of the preceding term. Fees are due by the first day of the new term.

Payments should be made by electronic funds transfer only (the invoice contains the account details). No cash is accepted. Receipts will be provided for all fee payments upon request.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the Treasurer/Bookkeeper 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

Families not paying within 14 days incur a \$50 fine in addition to fees.

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

1. An initial reminder letter will be sent to parents/guardians within 5 days with a specified payment date. The letter will include information on a range of support options available for the family.
2. Where payment is still not received, the Bookkeeper will email families to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan.
3. 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.
4. If payment or a payment plan has NOT been established by the 1st Day of Term, your child may not start the program and the enrolment will become void. Any families wishing to still have their child enrolled at the Kindergarten will need to go back onto the wait list before being offered another enrolment placement. You are not guaranteed that a placement will be available should this happen, depending on how many families are on the wait list.
5. The Committee of Management will continue to offer support and will reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector. All costs associated with collecting the fees will be passed on to the family.

10. Refund of fees

If a family becomes eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy during a term, a full refund of the applicable term fees (and fee deposit, where appropriate) will be provided.

Refunds are also provided on a pro-rata basis for the following cases:

- Families who have paid for the full term and provide **four weeks** written notice to the Committee of their departure and before the commencement of one or more terms. If the departure is during the final term, no refund will be available.

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

- a child's short-term illness
- public holidays
- family holiday during operational times
- closure of the service for one or more days when a qualified educator is absent and a qualified reliever is not available

- closure of the service for staff training days
- closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

11. Children turning 3 during the year of enrolment

Full payment from the first day of Term 1 is required if a place is to be reserved for a child in the Three-Year-Old kindergarten program. Children can only commence the program when they have turned 3.

12. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services is available from the kindergarten service provider and a list can be supplied to those families who require it.

13. 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.

14. Enrolment : Fee Payment Agreement Form

All families must complete and submit the online Enrolment Form agreeing to the conditions as stipulated in this Fee Policy before the child commences at the Kindergarten.

15. Fee schedule for 2021

Group	Fees per Term
3 Year Old	\$450
4 Year Old	\$760

Fees are used to pay for fixed costs such as wages, rent and maintenance and educational resources used for the children's program.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE \$250 HOLDING FEE IS A NON-REFUNDABLE KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT FEE

This payment secures your child's place at Ripponlea Kindergarten and is payable on acceptance of enrolment. Families who participate in Working Bees and other Voluntary Tasks as requested by the Kinder will be eligible to receive a \$50 discount off the Term fees per Working Bee, capped at \$150 for the year. The fee amount is deducted from fourth term fees where the child has attended for a full year.

Families who volunteer to be on the Committee of Management, and who effectively participate for the full year, will automatically receive the total \$150 discount off their term 4 fees.