



Fees Policy

Children's Services

Policy Statement:

Northern Rivers Community Gateway (Community Gateway) sets fees for Rainbow Region Kids in its annual budget to derive income needed to develop and maintain a quality service for children and families of local communities.

It strives to ensure its childcare services are affordable and accessible to families in its community and that families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce these fees.

The Board, as the Approved Provider, ratifies the budget annually, and as necessary, monitors it throughout the year. Families will be provided with accurate fee statements and clear information regarding fee payment processes.

Account payment:

- Families are issued with an initial statement of account on enrolment and all fees must be paid before your child's first booked day.
- A statement of account is issued weekly.
- Fees must be kept two weeks in advance and paid by the due date to maintain booked days.
- A dated receipt is provided for each payment.

Fee payment:

- Direct debit from your nominated credit card or bank account. Please note dishonour fees may apply and are charged by the direct debit provider. Please see the terms and conditions when setting up your direct debit.
- Electronic transfer to Rainbow Region Kids, National Australia Bank, BSB: 082-707, Account: 826915370, with child's name as reference.
- OWNA one off payment function through the OWNA childcare app.

Important information:

- Our fee schedule can be viewed on our website under your service location
- A statement of account is issued to you weekly
- Accounts must remain two weeks in advance and paid by the account statement due date
- Two weeks' written notice is essential to cancel your child's placement
- If your child does not physically attend their first booked day and their last booked day, unless for an approved reason, the government childcare subsidy (CCS) will not be available and full fees will apply

Child Care Subsidy:

- Most Australian families are eligible to receive federal government childcare assistance until their child turns 13, through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) system.
- Families eligible for CCS pay only the gap between our full fees and the benefit the government provides.
- All fees are charged at the service's full rate. We then receive and apply each family's eligible subsidy to their statement of account.
- Families must register for CCS with Centrelink on myGov. This can take at least two to six weeks to be approved.
- If subsidy details are not confirmed by a child's first booked day, families are charged full fees until confirmed.
- If you are disputing your subsidy entitlement with Centrelink, full fees are charged until resolved.
- Any changes to a family's financial circumstances may impact their CCS. It is a family's responsibility to keep their details current on myGov.
- See www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy for more information on how to claim and manage your CCS entitlement.
- Extra fee help may be available if you are an eligible grandparent, transitioning to work, experiencing financial hardship, or caring for a child who is vulnerable or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect. See more details and eligibility at www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy

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Fee schedule:

Fees reduced by your CSS entitlement

Before and after school care per session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See our website for fee information for each service location • Fees include nutritional breakfast and afternoon tea
Vacation care per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See our website for fee information for each service location • Additional costs may apply

Fees not covered by your CSS entitlement

Failure to notify After school care non-attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5 in addition to the session fee
Late collection, after hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25 per child each 15 minutes
Late payment, 10 days after due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25 • 10 days after due date
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$7.50 per child per trip • Transport is be offered to select schools where there is an agreement in place with the Department of Education. These agreements expire July 2025.

Overdue fees:

- A family experiencing financial difficulty should contact the Rainbow Region Kids Children's Services program Support Officer to discuss payment plan options.
- Agreed payment plans are signed by the account holder and the Outside of School Hours Coordinator and approved by the Senior Manager - Business Support and Children's Services.
- If payment plans are not followed, enrolment will be immediately suspended.

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- Where enrolment is suspended, care cannot resume at any Rainbow Region Kids service until the account is brought two weeks in advance.
- If we employ a debt collector the family will be responsible for all associated fees.
- The Coordinator and the Children's Services Program Support Officer will monitor for overdue fees.

Absences and cancellation:

- Two weeks' written notice is required to withdraw permanently from the service adjust permanent/routine booked days for before and after school care. Where this is not provided in the required timeframe, you will be charged for the bookings.
- Two weeks' notice also applies to cancelling casual bookings via the OWINA app. Where this is not provided in the required timeframe, you will be charged for the booking and you may choose to attend or mark your child absent in the OWINA app.
- Changes to booked vacation care days must be confirmed in writing via the OWINA app 2 weeks before the booking. Where this is not provided in the required timeframe, fees will still apply and you may choose to attend or mark your child absent in the OWINA app.
- Families should advise of all planned or unexpected non-attendance at a booked session. Absences can be notified through the OWINA app.
- An admin fee applies for failure to notify after school care non-attendance.
- Families are required to pay fees when a child is absent from a permanent/routine booked day due to illness or a family holiday.
- Families are required to pay fees when a child is absent from a casual booked day due to illness or a family holiday (unless 2 weeks' notice is provided).
- Families are required to pay fees on public holidays if the holiday falls on their regular booked day.
 - No fees apply when Rainbow Region Kids is closed during the Christmas/New Year period.
- If a child does not physically attend their first booked day and their last booked day, unless for an approved reason, CCS will not be available, and full fees will apply. Generally, CCS won't be paid before your child physically attends or after the last day your child physically attends care
- Families are usually entitled to up to 42 allowable absent days per child each financial year before their CCS is impacted. Supporting documents may be required for additional allowable absences. Full fees apply for any absences after the allowable absences limit is reached as your child will not be eligible for CCS subsidy.

Bookings:

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- Initial bookings can only be confirmed once a completed enrolment form and required documentation is provided. Please refer to the separate *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*.
- Bookings are required in advance.
- Any bookings made within a two-week period will incur a casual booking fee. any bookings outside of routine incur casual fee.
- Additional days can be requested at any time and taken immediately if available. Note that casual fees may apply. These bookings can be made via the OWNA app.
- Bookings for vacation care must be made 2 weeks in advance, without this notice, casual vacation care fees will apply.
- Where services are over-subscribed families may join a wait list at no charge.

Communication with parents:

- We highly value two-way communication with our families and will:
 - fully explain fees during enrolment
 - provide a copy of this policy as part of enrolment and at any time on request
 - include latest fees and charges on our website
 - provide a minimum 14 days-notice before making any change that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected
- Remind families of the fee structure and notice period at key times during the year through the OWNA OWNAapp, service signage and email updates.
- Where possible assist families in high-need situations to navigate supports available.
- In accordance with the Community Gateway *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* all information regarding fees is strictly confidential and staff will not discuss individual names and details openly.
- Staff will use the service's dedicated administrative space (Regulation 111) to support confidentiality and privacy.
- Families acknowledge acceptance of terms and conditions in this policy when submitting the Rainbow Region Kids enrolment form.

Acknowledgement of Fees:

- Families acknowledge acceptance of terms and conditions off the fee policy when submitting the Rainbow Region Kids enrolment form.



Monitoring, evaluation and review:

- The Coordinator will review all fees and charges annually and provide recommendations to the CEO, who sets fees for the year.
- This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and reviewed according to the policy and procedure register.

Roles and responsibilities

Board (Approved Provider)

- Maintain a fee policy

Chief Executive Officer

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- Operate a fee system that balances family's capacity to pay with providing a high-quality program and service viability.
- Ensure mechanisms to enter into a Complying Written Agreement with families to provide education and care services in exchange for fees.
- Ensure reasonable steps are taken for staff and volunteers to follow this policy and procedure.

Senior Manager – Business Support and Children's Services

- Ensure families are provided with a regular statement of fees and charges.
- Approve agreed payment plans.

Coordinator (Nominated Supervisor)



- Ensure family orientation includes discussion of fee process.
- Notify families within at least 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Provide reminders to families of fees process.
- Ensure the fees policy is readily accessible.
- Review fees and charges for the CEO's consideration each year including analysis of competitor fees and charges.
- Monitor overdue accounts and sign approved payment plans.

Children's Services Program Support Officer

- Collect and maintain all relevant information regarding family bookings, fees and charges.
- Providing families with a weekly statement of account.
- Advise the Senior Manager - Business Support and Children's Services and Coordinator of overdue accounts.
- Ensure all current fees and service opening hours appear on the organisation's website.
- Follow fees policy and enrolment and orientation policy regarding family enquiries and enrolments.

Families

- Read this policy on enrolment and refer any questions to the Children's Services Program Support Officer.
- Register for the childcare subsidy on myGov.
- Obtain a Customer Reference Number from Centrelink as soon as practical before enrolment.
- Update Centrelink if circumstances change.
- Record arrival and departure times of their child attending care and collect their child on time.
- Keep fees two weeks in advance.
- Provide two weeks' notice to cancel bookings or withdraw from care.
- Contact the Children's Services Program Support Officer if they are experiencing payment difficulties.
- Advise of any planned or unexpected absences.
- Where possible, use the OWNA system to manage payments.

Related legislation and policy:

- **Regulated policy:** This policy addresses "*Payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the service*" (Regulation 168 (2)(n), Standard 7.1)



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- **Related legislation:** Education and Care Services National Regulations 111, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, National Quality Standard 7.1, Family Law Act 1975, CCS legislative obligations
- **Related policy and forms:** Arrival and Departure Policy, Enrolment and Orientation Policy, Governance of Children's Services Policy, Medical Management Policy, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, Safe Transportation of Children Policy, Enrolment Form, Annual Update.

Contact details:

If you'd like to talk about anything included in this document please contact:

Children's Services Program Support Officer

Telephone 02 6621 7397 **or Mobile** 0429 640 075

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