

2.14 Bookings and Cancellations Policy

The service management seeks to implement processes to ensure that the SAC service operates efficiently and effectively and that future planning considerations for the service are met through maintaining appropriate records and procedures for children's bookings and cancellations. This will ensure future needs of the service can be assessed through the maintenance of appropriate waiting lists and availability of places.



Relevant Laws and other Provisions

The laws and other provisions affecting this policy include:

- *Australian Government Department of Education and Training – Child Care Provider Handbook*
- *National Quality Standard 7.1 Governance supports the operation of a quality service*
- *Policies: 2.3 - Educator Ratios, 2.4 - Arrivals and Departures of Children, 3.5 - Excursions, 9.2 - Enrolment, 9.3 - Communication with Families, 10.4 - Fees.*



Procedures

Before and After School Care

When bookings are made by authorised parties for children to attend the service, it shall be required that:

- A completed enrolment form meeting the requirements of a complying written agreement (CWA) is received for that child prior to their attendance at the service; and
- Parents/guardians are made aware of the service policies and procedures and have been provided with appropriate information in respect of the booking processes.

All staff shall be trained in the taking and management of bookings.

Routine bookings shall be entitled to a reduced fee as per the fees policy. A routine booking shall be defined by a regular pattern of attendance throughout each term on one or more occasion per week or fortnight.

All fees associated with routine bookings, should the child not attend care due to illness or for any other reason, shall be required to be paid in full. CCS will apply in accordance with allowable and approved absence provisions.

Casual bookings shall attract a higher fee due to the nature of the booking and irregular pattern of attendance.

Casual bookings shall only be available to families where the service has vacancies.

The service shall comply with reporting of bookings requirements as prescribed by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training through the Child Care Provider Handbook.

Bookings are required by all families who seek to use the service on a routine or casual basis.

At the end of each calendar (school) year (in term 3), the service will manage routine bookings for before and after school care using one of the following options:

- A. Families will be given an opportunity to confirm and rebook their routine days from the previous year. Should confirmation not be received by the advertised date, these days will become vacancies and a new booking will be required, OR
- B. All routine bookings for before and after school care will roll over and continue into the new school year unless otherwise informed by the parent/carer excepting children leaving the school to attend secondary school.

All families should be requested to update their enrolment information at the beginning of a new school year. Any vacancies that arise become subject to the service's own priority of access policy in determining who may fill that vacancy.

Changes to bookings and/or cancellations will only be taken:

- From a parent/carer/authorised persons; and
- In writing using email or parent communication book.

If a message is received via the child, the parent/carer will be contacted to confirm the change of arrangements.

Cancellation of casual bookings for before and/or after school care must be made 24 hours prior to the session starting or a fee, equal to the fee for that session will be charged.

Cancellation of permanent bookings for before and/or after school care must be made 14 days prior to the session starting or a fee, equal to the fee for that session will be charged.

Permanent bookings that fall on public holidays during term time will be charged a fee, equal to the fee for that session will be charged

If the child's booking has not been cancelled and the service makes attempts to locate the child, a \$10 non-cancellation fee may be charged in addition to the prescribed fee for that session.

Vacation Care

In relation to Vacation Care and Pupil Free Days, bookings shall:

- Be completed on an appropriate booking form distributed with the program; and
- (If appropriate) Attract a fee discount for all bookings paid in advance prior to the start of the Vacation period (see Policy 10.4 – Fees).

Cancellation of bookings for vacation care must be made with 7 working days' notice of the commencement of Vacation Care or a fee, equal to the fee for that session will be charged.

Bookings for vacation care excursions will not be taken without the designated deposit or fee.

Cancellations for vacation care excursions must be made with 7 working days' notice of the commencement of Vacation Care or a fee, equal to the fee for that session will be charged and any money paid may be forfeited.

Cancellations on the day of the excursion will be charged the full fee for the session and the full excursion cost.

Absences from Child Care

Cancellations that attract the prescribed fee for that session will be counted towards the family's initial 42 absence days for the current financial year, as per the Child Care Provider Handbook.

Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy are payable for up to 42 absence days for a child in a financial year, in relation to sessions of care where an individual still incurs a genuine fee liability to pay for the care. A reason does not need to be provided for a child's initial 42 days of absence.

Additional Absences

Once 42 absence days have occurred in a financial year, Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy can only be paid for any additional absences where they are taken for a reason defined in the Family Assistance Law. These reasons can include any of the following:

- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner, or another person with whom the child lives is ill
- the child is attending preschool
- alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day
- the child has not been immunised against a particular infectious disease, the absence occurs during an immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner has certified that exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child
- the absence is because the child is spending time with a person other than the individual who is their usual carer as required by a court order or a parenting plan
- the service is closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency
- the child cannot attend because of a local emergency (for example, because they are unable to travel to the service), during the period of the emergency or up to 28 days afterwards
- the individual who cares for the child has decided the child should not attend the service for up to seven days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency.

In shared care arrangements (where separated parents claim Child Care Subsidy for the child's care), the allocation of 42 absences relates to the child, not to each individual claimant.

Permanent Cancellation of Care

Families are required to give a minimum of two weeks' notice, in writing, to advise the service of the permanent cancellation of their booking.

Outstanding balances of the family account will be managed in accordance with the Fees Policy of the service.

Priority of Access

There are no mandatory requirements for filling vacancies, and providers can set their own policies for prioritising who receives a place.

However, as vacancies in a service arise, providers are asked to consider prioritising children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment

The service's Priority of Access for filling a vacancy is as follows:

- the booking is routine
- the child attends the hosting school
- the child is a sibling of a child/ren currently routinely attending the service
- the child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- the child is higher on the waiting list whose sole parent, or parents both satisfy the activity test through paid employment

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