



**Early Childhood
Centre Fees and
Enrolment Policy**

From July 2018



Welcome to Northside.

At Northside Community Service, we believe that all children have the right to quality early childhood education. We advocate for each child's right to be heard, to belong to a safe learning community and to become active participants in their community and world.

This Fee and Enrolment Policy provides a guide to how we charge fees, and how we meet the requirements of the Federal Government's Child Care Package.

If you have any questions, please contact us at 02 6171 8000 or earlychildhood@northside.asn.au.

Purpose

To provide information and a clear outline of requirements for the processing and payment of Early Childhood Centre Fees.

The Early Childhood Centre Fees and Enrolment Policy is current as at 1 July 2018 and is subject to change. All families will be provided with a new copy of the Policy should it be updated, with a notice period of 30 days before changes take effect.

Fees Payable

Fees are payable for all permanent and occasional enrolments.

Permanent Enrolments - All Centres

The amount of fees payable is included on the fortnightly statement provided to the parent or guardian.

Fees are payable for all:

- Sick days
- Personal holidays
- Public holidays
- Other non-attendance with the exception of centre closure

Northside Community Service cannot swap days of enrolment, cannot arrange make up days, nor offer reduced rates for extended holiday periods.

Northside Early Childhood Centres are closed from close of business on the last business day before 25 December and reopen the first business day in the New Year (January). Fees will not be charged during this close down period.

Full-time enrolments

For a child enrolled 5 days per week a standard enrolment session of 10 hours per day will be charged at the same daily rate.

This 10-hour session is only available to full-time enrolments, and is provided to ensure that families do not exceed the maximum 100 CCS hours provided by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Occasional enrolments

Occasional enrolments are available at the following centres:

- Majura Early Childhood Centre: 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday
- Civic Early Childhood Centre: 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday

Occasional enrolments are not guaranteed and can only be booked if positions are available on any given day.

Occasional enrolments may only be booked a maximum of 2 weeks in advance of the date required.

Occasional enrolments are offered in sessional blocks of:

- 3 hours or less
- 3-5 hours
- 5-7 hours

Any enrolment over 7 hours in length will be charged the full 10 hours (Majura Early Childhood Centre) or 10.5 hours (Civic Early Childhood Centre) occasional care daily fee.

Occasional enrolment fees will be charged for the session booked and agreed extensions (e.g. if an enrolment was made for 3-5 hours from 9:00am to 2:00pm and collection was at 1:00pm, the fee would remain unchanged. For the same booking, if collection was at 2:30pm, the 5-7 hour sessional fee would be applied.

A minimum of 1 hour's notice is required for requests to extend your enrolment for the day. This is only possible if there is space available.

Cancellations of occasional enrolments must be made on a business day 24 hours prior to your enrolled day. If cancelling over a weekend or public holiday a voice message can be left on the answering machine. Cancellations after this time will incur the full fee for the session previously booked.

Late departure fees will apply to occasional enrolments.

A Fee Schedule will be provided to you separately along with this Policy and other important enrolment information.

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment provided by the Federal Government to lower the fees paid by families for their child's enrolment in early education and care.

The CCS is managed by DHS and not by Northside Community Service. For more information visit education.gov.au/childcare.

The CCS is an estimate only and is shown in bold and underlined on your statement. This information is calculated and received from DHS.

The CCS may not be credited to your account until your child actually commences their enrolment and their Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) enrolment is formalised.

As per the CCSS regulations, Northside submits attendances to DHS on a weekly basis. DHS confirms and, if required, amends the CCS, and any differences will be rectified on your next statement.

If you have a query about the CCS on your statement, please contact Centrelink to confirm your details including date of birth and Customer Reference Number (CRN).

Families are also advised to confirm with Northside that the CRNs and dates of birth for the account holder and the child(ren) provided to Northside are correct.

If any changes to your enrolment are made at any time (such as additional days), these changes must be confirmed in myGov at my.gov.au.

As per CCSS regulations, families are required to formally agree to the enrolment details for their child(ren) before their child commences their enrolment by signing a Complying Written Agreement. This process is completed in our online portal, and must be undertaken prior to the first enrolment day. Please speak to our Enrolments Officer if you are unsure of this requirement.

Payment Arrangement

Permanent Enrolment Fee Payments

Permanent Enrolment fee payments are to be made by direct debit from your nominated bank account or by credit card (Visa or MasterCard).

Please refer to the Terms and Conditions of our direct debit provider for information on fees and charges on credit card payments. A copy will be provided to you along with this document.

Permanent enrolment fees are invoiced fortnightly in advance and a statement is emailed and/or posted for your information purposes. A direct debit schedule will be emailed to you upon confirming your child's enrolment. Direct debits will begin on the next scheduled direct debit day after your child's enrolment begins.

Occasional Enrolment Payments

Occasional enrolment fee payments must be paid prior to, or on the day of, the occasional care provided - no later than the time the child arrives at the centre.

Defaults and Dishonoured Payments

Each dishonoured payment will incur a dishonoured payment fee from our direct debit provider and from Northside of \$25.00. Once a payment is dishonoured Northside Community Service will start debt recovery.

If your account remains outstanding for 15 days from the initial dishonoured payment your child(ren)'s enrolment will be ceased and your account will be forwarded to a debt recovery agency unless approved alternative arrangements have been made with Northside (accountsreceivable@northside.asn.au).

3 consecutive direct debit dishonours may also result in your enrolment being ceased.

In the event of the account remaining unpaid and being referred to a debt collection agency and/or law firm, all collection and legal demand costs will be added to the outstanding amount.

Bond Payments

A bond must be paid to reserve your child(ren)'s enrolment and is payable by the due date on your letter of offer. The bond will be equivalent to 2 weeks full fees for each child and will be at the current fee rate and pattern of attendance prior to CCS being applied.

Where an increase in attendance occurs, the increased bond payment must be paid prior to commencement of such changes.

Where a bond refund is necessary due to a reduction of days, families may request a refund using the appropriate form, or your family may elect to have the bond held until the position ceases in full.

The bond will be refunded after your child (ren)'s enrolment ends subject to settlement of all fees and charges and after all attendances have been submitted and retrieved from the CCSS.

Northside will retain the bond payment upon change of mind prior to enrolment commencing, but after accepting enrolment.

Bonds cannot be used to pay outstanding fees while your child (ren) is attending the Centre.

If Northside does not receive the bond payment by the due date, we reserve the right to offer the position to the next family on our waitlist.

Exceptional circumstances

For families who are experiencing exceptional circumstances and are unable to meet any of the bond payment requirements above, Northside has a range of support available to ensure that your child(ren)'s enrolment can still commence. Please let our Enrolments Team know if you need support as soon as possible.

Late Pick Up Fee

It is important to remember that the educators working at your child(ren)'s Early Childhood Centre finish their shifts at 6:00PM. We ask that families ensure they have arrived before 6:00PM to pick up their child(ren).

A late fee will apply when families depart with their child(ren) after centre close at 6:00pm. A flat fee of \$50.00 for each 10 minutes or part thereof will be charged and added to your next statement.

Cessation of Booking

2 weeks written notice (email is accepted) is required to reduce or cease your permanent enrolment. Your child(ren) must attend their last day of enrolment in order to be eligible for CCS on all days up to and including their last day of attendance. The Christmas/ New Year closure period cannot be used as the notice period.

If your child(ren) does not attend the centre on their first or last scheduled day, CCS can only be paid from the first day of physical attendance up to, and including, their last day of physical attendance.

If fees are charged in lieu of notice, no CCS will be attributable to those bookings as they are classed as absent days and your child will not have attended their final day.

Please note this is a requirement of the Federal Government, not Northside Community Service, and we do not have any capacity to make exceptions to this requirement. Please refer all questions to DHS.

Absences without Notice

Families are requested to inform the Centre in advance, or by 9:00am on the day, if their child(ren) are going to be absent. A phone call or email is acceptable.

After an unadvised absence of 1 week with no contact from the family, an email will be sent by a Northside representative to the family requesting the Centre be notified if the enrolment is to continue.

If no contact has been made in the second week of absence, a second email will be sent to inform the family that all outstanding fees are required to be paid immediately. The child(ren)'s enrolment will be forfeited if they fail to contact the Centre by the end of the second week.

The family will be responsible for paying for the full fees that may result from the child(ren)'s absence/s on the last day of enrolment.

Extended Absences

CCS cannot be applied for absences greater than 6 continuous weeks or once a child has accrued 42 single absences within a financial year. The centre will charge a holding fee equivalent to the current daily fee to hold the position for families who wish to maintain their child's position at the centre after this time.

Other Important Information

If your family has applied for any benefit from the Australian Government (such as CCS), full fees are required to be paid by the family until the benefit is approved and formal documentation, such as a letter from Centrelink, has been provided to Northside.

Once benefits have been approved by DHS, Northside can only update accounts via the CCSS portal within the current financial year. Any claims for benefits prior to the current financial year will need to be resolved with DHS directly and Northside is not able to assist with this process.

If your family has ongoing issues regarding application and/or approval of any benefits, the issue must be resolved between you and DHS and/or external organisation. Northside has no authority with CCS payments, and is limited in the guidance we can provide.

Under no circumstances will accounts be permitted to go into arrears. Any overdue amounts will be followed up using Northside Community Service's normal debt recovery process.

From 1st January 2016 the Australian Government introduced the 'No Jab No Pay' measure. If children's vaccinations are not current and up-to-date, you may not be eligible for the CCS. For further information please contact Centrelink.

Priority of Access

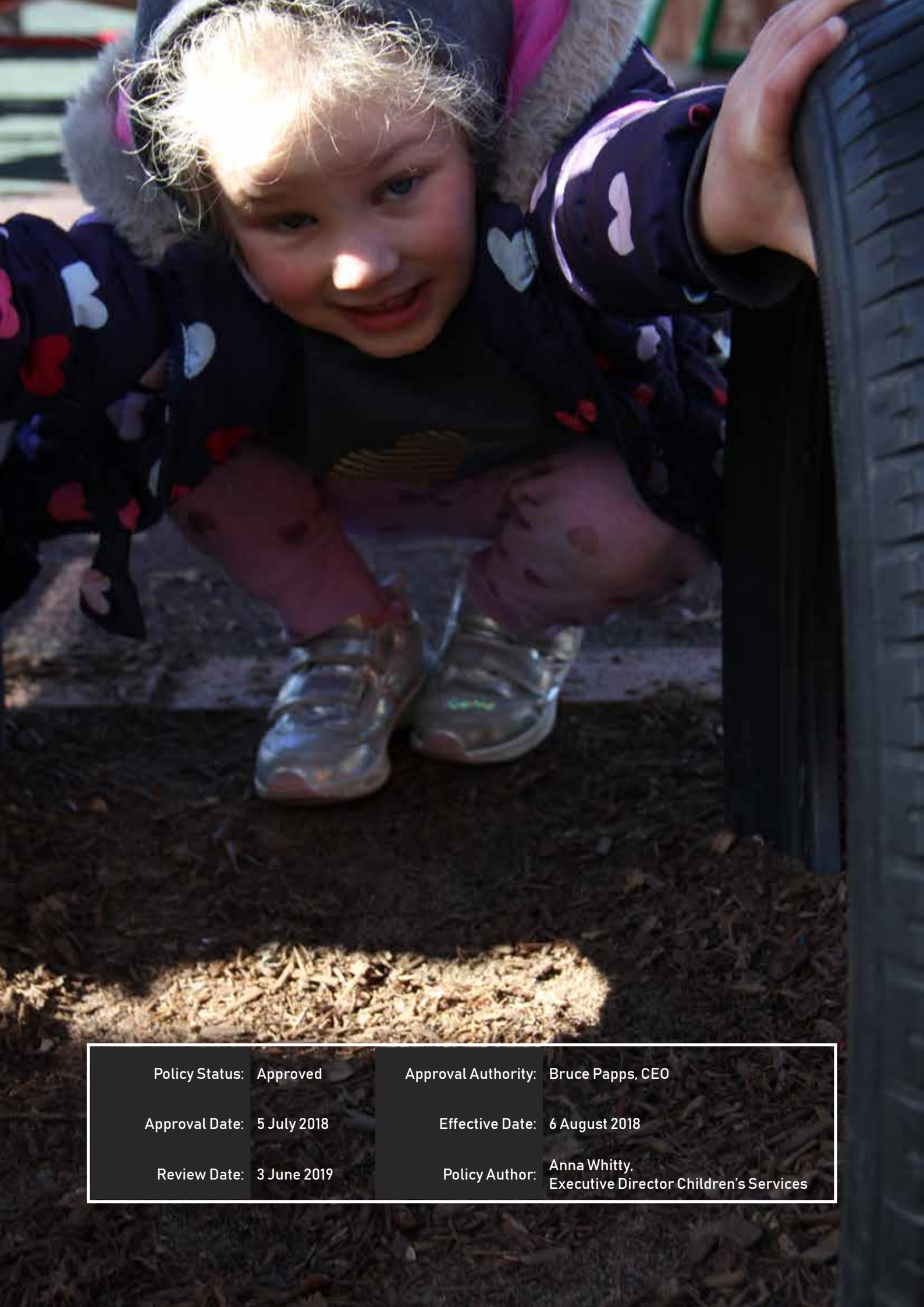
Northside is committed to ensuring that children at risk of vulnerability and disadvantage are given every opportunity to access early education and care.

Northside offers priority of access to children according to the following priorities:

1. a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;
2. a child of a single parent;
3. an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander family;
4. a child of a family which includes a person with a disability;
5. any other child.

Acknowledgement

Child's Name
Parent/Guardian's Name
<input type="checkbox"/> I have read and understand the Northside Community Service Early Childhood Centre Fee and Enrolment Policy and agree to abide by it at all times.
Parent Signature
Date



Policy Status: Approved

Approval Authority: Bruce Papps, CEO

Approval Date: 5 July 2018

Effective Date: 6 August 2018

Review Date: 3 June 2019

Policy Author: Anna Whitty,
Executive Director Children's Services



northside.asn.au

earlychildhood@northside.asn.au

(02) 6171 8000