

Fees Policy

Askea Community Childcare Centre operates as a not-for-profit Childcare Service. We strive to set our fees at a rate which enables us to ensure affordability for parents while maintaining the highest standards of childcare, in a happy and safe environment. We are committed to working closely with parents to achieve our goal.

Principle of Fees Policy

This policy is underpinned by the National Standards for Preschool Services 2010, The Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, The Childcare Act 1991 (Early years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018: Síolta Standard 10: The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018.

Rationale:

Early education and childcare is now much more a part of Ireland's economic and social life and is recognised as making an important contribution to the child, the family, community, society and the economy as a whole.

Promoting play requires that each child has ample time to engage in freely available and accessible, developmentally appropriate and well-resourced opportunities for exploration, creativity and meaning making in the company of other children, with participating and supportive adults.

The National Childcare Scheme and other Government schemes provide financial supports for parents/guardians towards the cost of childcare.

This policy seeks to establish an understanding and agreement between the service and all parents/guardians around the expectations regarding the payment of fees. To ensure the sustainability of the service and its ability to provide high quality childcare, it is essential that parent fees are paid on time.

Policy Statement

Fees are set at the beginning of each year at a rate that takes account of affordability for parents and of the sustainability of the service.

Families will be informed of the fees on enquiry. Our Fees Policy is clearly displayed in the entrance lobby of our Childcare Centre and is also available for viewing on our Website www.askeachildcare.ie

Payment is due for all days on which a child is registered to attend the service whether the child attends or not. This is to enable the correct rostering of staff and the smooth running of the service thus ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Implementation of Fees Policy

To implement the Fees Policy the following procedures are in place:

- Fees are payable weekly for 50 weeks of the year - Christmas and Easter holiday periods are excluded.

- Payment for services is due by the Friday of each week – an Invoice is emailed to parents/guardians on the Wednesday.
- Fees may be paid by cash, card, standing order or direct debit - receipts are issued for all payments by email.
- Parents may also pay monthly in advance.
- **Fees are payable if a child is absent because of, but not limited to, illness, appointment, family holidays etc. If a child is absent long-term due to a medically certified illness parents are advised to speak to the Manager regarding payment.**
- The service charges for Bank Holidays during the period that the service is open.
- In the event of an imposed full-day closure due to adverse weather conditions i.e. Status Red Warning, fees will not be payable.
- A deposit of €20 is required when booking a place in the service. This deposit is refunded when your child starts attending the service.
- A 'late collection fee', of €1.00 per minute after allocated collection time, will be charged where children have not been collected at the agreed time.
Parents/guardians should note that, due to legislative requirements under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Children First - Child Protection, two members of staff are required to remain with the child/ children until collection.
- Fees will include meals for children attending full day-care and for After-school children who attend the full session.
- **Four weeks' notice is required should your child wish to leave the service or Four weeks payment may be made in lieu of notice.**
- **Four weeks' notice is required should you wish to reduce your child's registered hours of attendance.**

Note:

*Children who are eligible for NCS or CCSP funding, **4 weeks' notice of leaving must also be given for these Schemes.***

*Children who are eligible for the free Early Childcare and Education Scheme (ECCE) are entitled to 3 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 38 weeks per year. **4 weeks' notice of leaving must also be given for this Scheme.***

Any rules and procedures set out by the DCYA (Department of Children and Youth Affairs) in relation to their childcare funding programmes must be complied with to continue to avail of these funding types. For further information in relation to the rules on the DCYA funding schemes please go to www.gov.ie. Information is also available at Reception.

Non-payment of Fees Procedure:

1. Parents/guardians will receive a verbal reminder within 2 weeks from date of invoice if fees have not been paid.
2. This verbal reminder will be followed by a written reminder weekly thereafter if fees were not paid following the verbal reminder.
3. Debts will not be allowed accumulate for **more than a 28 day period**. Please appreciate that we must enforce this policy in order to ensure a continuation of our service to you.
4. Should a Parent not have cleared the debt following the 28 day period we, unfortunately, will be forced to withdraw our service to you. On settlement, *if a place is available for your child*, our service will be restored and our Policy strictly applied.

If a Parent/Guardian encounters genuine difficulty in making payment then please request that the Board of Management be informed of your difficulty when, hopefully, a satisfactory arrangement can be reached.

Communication Plan for staff & families

All parents/guardians will be informed of this policy and procedures on registration. Staff members will check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the Parent Information Pack.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/guardians in the Policy Folder located in Reception.

Parents may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents and staff will receive written notification of any updates.

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Partnership with Parents Policy
- Admission Policy
- Record Keeping Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Adverse Weather Policy
- Enrolment Forms

This policy must be observed by:

- Managers, All staff members, Parents/Guardians