



Breeze Street
Bonbeach 3196
Victoria
Pre-School Phone: 9776 3077
Primary School Phone: 9772 3471
Fax: 9776 1517
bonbeach.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

FEES POLICY 2024

Mandatory – Quality Area 7

PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- free kindergarten subsidies for funded sessional kindergarten programs
- the application of surplus funding within Bonbeach Preschool is only used to ensure the quality of program delivery and development of children enrolled in the service
- ensuring the viability of Bonbeach Preschool, by setting appropriate fees and charges for extended hours over and above funding

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Bonbeach Preschool is committed to:

- supporting the Victorian Government's 2021 Free Kindergarten initiative roll out
- increasing access to quality kindergarten programs for all Victorian children
- ensuring there are no financial barriers for families wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/children
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians

2. SCOPE

- This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Person with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day-to-Day Charge, educators and parents/guardians with an enrolled child, or who wish to enrol a child at Bonbeach Pre-School.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

All families with a child enrolled in a funded kindergarten program are eligible for Free Kindergarten, this includes all children attending funded kindergarten programs in the two years before school.

Regulation 168(2) (n) of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* requires that funded services have a comprehensive written fees policy, and the content of this policy must be

communicated to families. Any voluntary parent donations and/or fundraising must comply with the Free Kindergarten initiative guidelines and be responsive to the local community.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per capita funding for all children to access 5 - 15 hours of both three and four-year-old kindergarten programs. Income from other sources, primarily fees, fundraising and donations is required to meet all the additional costs incurred by the service in the delivery of the children's programs. In addition, the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (refer to *Definitions*) enables eligible families to attend funded kindergarten programs at minimal or no cost.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* (Vic)
- *National Quality Standard*, including Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Early start kindergarten: A funding program that enables three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for up to 15 hours per week. Details are available at: www.education.vic.gov.au. Children that are eligible for Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) will continue to be enrolled, this ensures that service providers receive all funding entitlements and that these children have access to 15 funded hours of kindergarten across Victoria. ESK enrolments contribute to School Readiness Funding (SRF) calculations for service providers. It also allows the Department to continue to monitor efforts to engage the most vulnerable children in kindergarten across Victoria and provide additional targeted support where required through SRF or Early Childhood LOOKOUT.

Excursion/service event charge: An additional charge required to meet the cost of special events or excursions that occur in response to emerging children's program needs. Events that are planned ahead and are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget do not incur this additional charge (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*).

Fees: A charge for program hours over and above the 15 funded hours per week (600 per year) and/or wrap around care.

Health care card: A Commonwealth Government entitlement providing concessions for low-income earners and other eligible people. Details are available at: www.humanservices.gov.au

Voluntary parent/guardian payment/donation: A voluntary payment/donation for items not directly related to the provision of the children's program. Explicit and written agreement from a parent is required for any voluntary payments. Attendance at the service is not conditional on this payment.

Late collection charge: A charge that may be imposed by the Approved Provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program (refer to Attachment 1 – Fee information for families).

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Free Kinder 2021 - Information for Service Providers*
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/freekinder2021.aspx>
- *Free Kinder 2021 – Frequently asked questions about Free Kinder 2021*
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/freekinder2021.asp>
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training):*
www.education.vic.gov.au
- The constitution of Bonbeach Pre-School

Service policies

- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
- *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Governance and Management of the Service Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Person with Management and Control are responsible for:

- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's Free Kindergarten initiative (refer to Definitions)
- ensuring families are not charged any compulsory out-of-pocket levies or maintenance fees (voluntary fundraising and payments/donations are permitted)
- ensuring families are only charged for kindergarten programs hours that are over and above the 15 funded hours per week (600 hours per year) and/or "wrap around" care.
- ensuring families that attend both sessional kindergarten and a long day care service nominate which service the child will participate in the funded kindergarten program
- ensuring that any surplus funding is used for directly supporting the quality of the teaching and learning in the kindergarten program and/or attendance at the service, including vulnerable children and families not yet enrolled and/or towards the change management required for preparing for new initiative roll outs
- ensuring any voluntary parent payments/donations are explicitly agreed to in writing and receipted
- charging families only for excursions/special events that occur outside the normal program/curriculum
- ensuring that any child that is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten is still enrolled at the service and recorded on the KIM system
- collecting all relevant information regarding those with entitlement to concessions and recording it on the KIM system
- providing all parents/guardians with a statement of additional hours fees and charges (refer to Attachments) upon enrolment of their child, if applicable
- providing all parents/guardians with an additional payment fee agreement (refer to Attachments), if applicable
- complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of additional hours fees

- notifying parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days of any proposed changes to the additional hours fees charged, 2023 kindergarten fees or the way in which the fees are collected (Regulation 172(2)), and ideally providing one term's notice.

The Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day-to-Day Charge is responsible for:

- assisting the Approved Provider in developing this policy, and ensuring that this policy is based on the DET's Free Kindergarten initiative (refer to Definitions)
- implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the Approved Provider and staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's Free Kindergarten initiative (refer to Sources)
- ensuring families are only charged for kindergarten program hours that are over and above the 15 funded hours per week (600 hours per year) and/or "wrap around" care.
- ensuring families that attend both sessional kindergarten and a long day care service nominate which service the child will participate in the funded kindergarten program
- charging families only for excursion/special event that occur outside the normal program/curriculum
- ensuring that any child that is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten is still enrolled at the service and recorded on the KIM system
- collecting all relevant information regarding those with entitlement to concessions and recording it on the KIM system
- ensuring that the Fee Policy is readily accessible at the service (Regulation 171)
- providing all parents/guardians with information about free kindergarten (refer to Attachments)
- providing all parents/guardians with a statement of additional hours fees and charges (refer to Attachments) upon enrolment of their child, if applicable
- providing all parents/guardians with an additional hours fee payment agreement (refer to Attachments), if applicable
- complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees
- notifying parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days of any proposed changes to the additional hours fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected (Regulation 172(2)), and ideally providing one term's notice.

Educators and all other staff are responsible for:

- informing the Approved Provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service
- referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading the Bonbeach Pre-School 2023 Fees Policy
- signing and complying with the Additional Hours Fee Payment Agreement (refer to Attachments) if applicable
- notifying the Approved Provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of additional hours fees
- providing agreement in writing if any additional payments and/or donations are made to Bonbeach Pre-School

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to affordability, flexibility of payment options and procedures for the collection of fees
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy

- keep the policy up to date with current legislation and government policy, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)) unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: 2023 Free Kindergarten information for families
- Attachment 2: Statement of additional hours and/or wrap around fees for four year old programs inclusive of fee schedule and contract.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Nominated Supervisor of Bonbeach Preschool on 1/07/2023.

REVIEW DATE: 1ST JULY 2024

ATTACHMENT 1

Dear parent/guardian

Important information regarding your child's 2024 free kindergarten program

The Victorian Government provides funding to support children to access a high quality kindergarten program in the two years before they start school. This helps to ensure all Victorian children get the best start in life.

From 2023, the Victorian Government made kindergarten programs free for three and four-year-old children – saving you and your family up to \$2,500 per year for their program. Free Kinder is a critical component of the Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reform.

Funding for your child's free kinder program is provided to our service directly from the Victorian Government, so you will not be required to make any fee payments for three and four-year-old kinder programs in 2024.

In line with the Victorian Government's requirements for Free Kinder, your child can access a 15-hour kindergarten program (or shorter Three-Year-Old Kindergarten where less than 15 hours are offered) for free. The only fees that you may be asked to pay are for one-off excursions costs (e.g. transport and entry costs) or additional hours over and above 15 free hours of kindergarten).

Your child can only be funded for a kindergarten program place at one service at any one time and only for one year in a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program and one year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program (unless your child is assessed as being eligible for a second year of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten by your child's kindergarten teacher).

In 2024, your child is enrolled to attend one of the funded kindergarten programs at Bonbeach Preschool. We can only claim kindergarten funding including Free Kinder payments for your child if this is the only Victorian Government funded kindergarten program they are enrolled in.

Please sign below and return this form to acknowledge that your child is accessing their Three-Year-Old/Four-Year-Old funded kindergarten place at our service in 2024.

If your child will be attending another service that offers a Victorian Government funded kindergarten program, including at a long day care service, you must tell that service that you are receiving a funded kindergarten place at Bonbeach Preschool.

I confirm that my child will be accessing their funded kindergarten place at Bonbeach Preschool in 2024.

Name of service:	
Date:	Child name:
Parent name:	Signature:

Free Kindergarten information for families

1. What free kindergarten means at our service

Bonbeach Preschool has opted in to the Free Kindergarten initiative. Applicable parent fees are outlined below:

- Funded sessional kindergarten for 3-year-old children (10 hours per week) – no parent fee
- Funded sessional kindergarten for 4-year-old children
 - Dolphins: 16.5 hours per week - \$120 per term
 - Seahorses: 16 hours per week - \$100 per term

Bonbeach Preschool will reimburse families in full for any deposit or fee payments that have already been made for 2024 within a reasonable timeframe (excluding any voluntary parent donations and/or payments that you agreed to in writing.)

2. Other charges

Other charges levied by Bonbeach Preschool upon enrolment.

These include:

- **Excursion/service event charge:** At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*).
- **Late collection charge:** Bonbeach Pre-School reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Committee of Management; Bonbeach School Council.
- **Maintenance donation:** The participation of parents/guardians is encouraged by the service and can help to keep costs more affordable. However, not all families are able to assist at the service. A maintenance donation has been introduced by the service and replaces voluntary labour with a paid donation. This donation can and will be refunded to parents/guardians on participation in specified activities which may include working bees, market volunteering and nature play duty.

3. Additional hours and/or wrap around care fees

Bonbeach Preschool offers families 16.5 or 16 hours in the four year old programs which is above the set 15 hours per week (600 hours per year). The additional hours fee has been set to ensure that costs are kept at a minimum for families.

4. Fundraising and voluntary parent payment/donations

While **participation in fundraising/donation is voluntary**, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

5. Payment of fees

The Committee of Management/Board; Bonbeach School Council will regularly review payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations.

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. Receipts will be provided for all fee payments.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact Sharon Keates at Bonbeach Primary School 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.

6. Unpaid fees

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

- An initial reminder letter will be sent to parents/guardians with a specified payment date, and will include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Where payment is still not received, families will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan.
- Failure to attend the meeting and 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.
- The Committee of Management/Board; Bonbeach School Council will continue to offer support and will reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector.
- If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.
- No further enrolments of children from the parents/guardians will be accepted until all outstanding fees have been paid.

7. Refund of fees

Non-refundable enrolment administration fees paid prior to the kindergarten year will be retained.

In any other case, additional hours fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the Committee of Management/Board; Bonbeach School Council). There will be no refund of these 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 teacher and/or 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.

8. 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.



BONBEACH PRE-SCHOOL

FEE SCHEDULE FOR 2024

Four year old pre-school (Seahorse group)

16 hours per week	\$100 per term	\$400 total annual amount if paying for 2024.
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Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued in advance for each term and must be paid by the due date. Families can choose from the following payment options.

Option 1: Lump Sum Payment for the Full Year

Pay the fees in full by the first day of term 1 in 2024.

Full year payment	\$400
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Option 2: Payment by direct deposit instalments set up from your bank account.

Term fees will be invoiced and issued to families for payment by the due dates as follows.

Note: this is not a direct debit system debited by the school, you must set this up manually as a regular payment on your own bank account

Term 1 Fees: \$100 due by 11th January 2024

Term 2 Fees: \$100 due by 24th April 2024

Term 3 Fees: \$100 due by 10th July 2024

Term 4 Fees: \$100 due by 2nd October 2024

Bank Details:

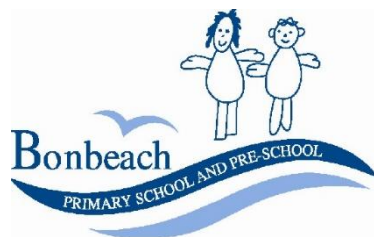
Account Name: Bonbeach Primary School Council Official A/C
Bank: CBA
BSB: 063 118
Account No: 10059192
Reference: Student/Family ID located and highlighted on your invoice

Excursion/service event charges

The kindergarten funded programs have many visitors (service events which are held in the pre-school) and generally one offsite excursion planned ahead each year. **These are not included in the term fees.** These fees are 'pay as you go'. On the occasion there may be an additional service event, costs will be kept to a minimum and families will be notified and payments requested prior to the event occurring.

Late collection charge

The Bonbeach Pre-School and Primary School Council reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child. When the parent/guardian is over 10 minutes late in collecting their child. There will be a one off fee of \$10.00 and then \$1.00 for every minute until the child is collected.



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BONBEACH PRE-SCHOOL FEE SCHEDULE FOR 2024

Four year old pre-school (Dolphin group)

16.5 hours per week	\$120 per term	\$480 total annual amount if paying for 2024.
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Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued in advance for each term and must be paid by the due date. Families can choose from the following payment options.

Option 1: Lump Sum Payment for the Full Year

Pay the fees in full by the first day of term 1 in 2024.

Full year payment	\$480
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Option 2: Payment by direct deposit instalments set up from your bank account.

Term fees will be invoiced and issued to families for payment by the due dates as follows.

Note: this is not a direct debit system debited by the school, you must set this up manually as a regular payment on your own bank account

Term 1 Fees: \$120 due by 11th January 2024

Term 2 Fees: \$120 due by 24th April 2024

Term 3 Fees: \$120 due by 10th July 2024

Term 4 Fees: \$120 due by 2nd October 2024

Bank Details:

Account Name: Bonbeach Primary School Council Official A/C

Bank: CBA

BSB: 063 118

Account No: 10059192

Reference: Student/Family ID located and highlighted on your invoice

Excursion/service event charges

The kindergarten funded programs have many visitors (service events which are held in the pre-school) and generally one offsite excursion planned ahead each year. **These are not included in the term fees.** These fees are 'pay as you go'. On the occasion there may be an additional service event, costs will be kept to a minimum and families will be notified and payments requested prior to the event occurring.

Late collection charge

The Bonbeach Pre-School and Primary School Council reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child. When the parent/guardian is over 10 minutes late in collecting their child. There will be a one off fee of \$10.00 and then \$1.00 for every minute until the child is collected.

PAYMENT OF FEES CONTRACT – FOUR YEAR OLD GROUPS

BONBEACH PRE-SCHOOL – FOUR YEAR OLD/SEAHORSE PROGRAM

Contract to be filled in by parent responsible for paying fees. Please hand contract in when paying term one fees.

1. Preference for Paying Fees

Surname _____ Child's Name _____ Contact No. _____

Please indicate your preferred option of paying fees for 2024 by ticking the appropriate box:

Option 1	Full Payment of year's fees \$ 400 payable by commencement of term 1 2024.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 2	Payment by four Direct Deposit of \$100.00 by 11/1, 24/4, 10/7 & 2/10 (annual total \$400)	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Fee Payment Contract

Childs Name: _____

Parents/Guardian's Name: _____

- ☐ I agree to pay a fee of \$100.00 per term for 16 hours of preschool each week for _____ (name of child) subject to the preschool's policies and state government regulations.
- ☐ I agree to pay fees by the due date as per the preference nominated by myself
- ☐ I acknowledge that if fees are not paid within 14 days of the due date, a reminder letter will be sent. If, after being contacted by the service, payment is not received, a second and final letter will be sent notifying me that unless payment is made within 14 days my child will no longer have a place at the service.

The service will accept a payment plan provided it is acceptable to the Bonbeach Primary School and Pre-School School Council.

- ☐ I agree that if our financial circumstances change and I am unable to pay as agreed, I will immediately notify the Bonbeach Primary School Office on 9772 3471 to request alternative payment arrangements.
- ☐ I acknowledge having received, read and agree to the centre's Fee Schedule for 2024, which sets out the procedure for fee payment.
- ☐ I acknowledge if I take my child out of the service part way through a term a pro rata fee for that term will not be refunded until such time as the vacancy is filled.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Dated: _____

PAYMENT OF FEES CONTRACT – FOUR YEAR OLD GROUPS
BONBEACH PRE-SCHOOL – FOUR YEAR OLD/DOLPHIN PROGRAM

Contract to be filled in by parent responsible for paying fees. Please hand contract in when paying term one fees.

1. Preference for Paying Fees

Surname _____ Child's Name _____ Contact No. _____

Please indicate your preferred option of paying fees for 2024 by ticking the appropriate box:

Option 1	Full Payment of year's fees \$ 480 payable by commencement of term 1 2024.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 2	Payment by four Direct Deposit of \$120.00 by 11/1, 24/4, 10/7 & 2/10 (annual total \$480)	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Fee Payment Contract

Childs Name: _____

Parents/Guardian's Name: _____

- ☐ I agree to pay a fee of \$120.00 per term for 16.5 hours of preschool each week for _____ (name of child) subject to the preschool's policies and state government regulations.
- ☐ I agree to pay fees by the due date as per the preference nominated by myself
- ☐ I acknowledge that if fees are not paid within 14 days of the due date, a reminder letter will be sent. If, after being contacted by the service, payment is not received, a second and final letter will be sent notifying me that unless payment is made within 14 days my child will no longer have a place at the service.

The service will accept a payment plan provided it is acceptable to the Bonbeach Primary School and Pre-School School Council.

- ☐ I agree that if our financial circumstances change and I am unable to pay as agreed, I will immediately notify the Bonbeach Primary School Office on 9772 3471 to request alternative payment arrangements.
- ☐ I acknowledge having received, read and agree to the centre's Fee Schedule for 2024, which sets out the procedure for fee payment.
- ☐ I acknowledge if I take my child out of the service part way through a term a pro rata fee for that term will not be refunded until such time as the vacancy is filled.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Dated: _____