

FEES – PRE-PREP

QUALITY AREA 7



PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- how services comply with the Free Kinder initiative.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Bonbeach Preschool is committed to:

- supporting the Victorian Government's Free Kinder initiative
- 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, parents/guardians attending Bonbeach Preschool.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
	R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted				
	Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the nominated supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DE’s Free Kinder initiative (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)	R	√	√	√
	Ensuring that policies and procedures are in place for the payment of fees (if applicable) and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service (<i>Regulation 168</i>), and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (<i>Regulation 170</i>)	R	√		

Ensuring that families are informed of the operating hours including term dates, planned closures and additional hours to account for closures.	R	√			
Ensuring families are informed of the total annual fee amount, including any applicable fees for e.g. excursions and any additional hours [this is only applicable if the service offers over and above 15 hours of 3 or 4-year-old kindergarten]	R	√			
Reimbursing families in full for enrolment deposits that have already been paid upon acceptance of enrolment	R	√			
Ensuring families are not charged any compulsory out-of-pocket levies or maintenance fees (voluntary fundraising and payments/donations are permitted)	R	√			
Providing communication to families explaining their access to one year of three-year-old and one year of pre-prep program	R	√			
Ensuring families that attend both sessional kindergarten/pre prep and a long day care service nominate and document which service the child will participate in the funded kindergarten/pre prep program	R	√		√	
Ensuring that any surplus funding is used in line with acceptable uses of kindergarten funding, including to promote increased participation and/or enhance program quality	R	√			
Ensuring any voluntary parent payments/donations are explicitly agreed to in writing and receipted	R	√			
Charging families only for an occasional special event/ excursions that occur outside the normal program/curriculum	R	√	√		
Ensuring that any child that is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten is still enrolled at the service and recorded on the Arrival system	R	√	√		
Collecting all relevant information regarding those with entitlement to concessions and recording it on the Arrival system	R	√	√		
Ensuring that the <i>Fees – Pre-Prep Policy</i> is readily accessible at the service (<i>Regulation 171</i>)	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with information about Free Kinder (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with a statement of additional hours fees and charges (<i>refer to Attachments 2</i>) upon enrolment of their child in the 4 – year – old kindergarten/ pre - prep program where the service offers over and above 15 hours NOTE: Parents are advised that enrolling for hours over 15 in a 4-year-old kindergarten is optional and families can choose to only enrol for 15 hours and receive this program at no cost.	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with an additional hour's payment fee agreement (<i>refer to Attachments 3</i>)	R	√			
Informing parents of any action that will be taken if additional hours fees are not paid (<i>refer to Attachments 3</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring any additional hours fees are collected and receipted	R	√			

Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of additional hours fees	R	√	√	√	
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 (<i>Regulation 172(2)</i>), ideally providing one term's notice.	R	√			
Implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the approved provider and staff, and in line with the requirements of DE's Free Kinder initiative (<i>refer to Sources</i>)	R	√	√	√	
Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the approved provider.		√	√		

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

The Best Start, Best Life reform will help all Victorian children dream even bigger through increased access to quality early childhood education and care. A critical part of the reform is Free Kinder, which will support access to two years of high-quality kindergarten programs for all Victorian children. All families with a child enrolled in a funded kindergarten program are eligible for Free Kinder this includes both 3 year old kindergarten and Pre-Prep (4 year old kindergarten).

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:

- providing up to free 30-hours of Pre-Prep to four-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- providing a free 5-to-15-hour program to three-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for three and four-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service

Free kinder supports every Victorian child to get the best start in life no matter where they live. Research shows that play-based learning is a powerful way to support children's learning and development. Two years of early learning is a crucial part of their educational journey, these benefits last into the school years and beyond.

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 Kinder subsidy guidelines and be responsive to the local community.

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

DEFINITIONS

Additional Hours/Wrap around care: care that is provided by a kindergarten service to 4-year-old kindergarten children only outside of the 15 hours per week program. Wrap around care fees are not funded by the Victorian Government but may be covered by CCS (*refer to Definitions*).

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK): A funding program that provides eligible children 15 hours of free or low cost kindergarten program each week for two years before starting school. To be eligible a child must be 3 by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten and be from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or the family has had contact with child protection. Details are available at: www.vic.gov.au/early-start-kindergarten If a child is eligible for ESK, they should be enrolled in ESK, even where Free Kinder and/or 15 hours per week of funded three-year old kindergarten is offered. This ensures eligible children have priority access to 15 hours of funded kindergarten provided by an early childhood teacher and that service providers receive additional funding and support. 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 of 4-year-old kindergarten per week (600 per year) and/or wrap around care.

Free Kinder: A Victorian Government Best Start, Best Life initiative providing Free Kinder programs for four-year-old and three-year-old children in funded services, that have opted into the initiative.

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:

- providing up to free 30-hour program to 4-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- providing a free 5 to 15-hour program to 3-year old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for 3 and 4-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service.

Funded Kindergarten: The Victorian Government provides funding to support children to access a high-quality kindergarten program in the two years before they start school. The funding is a contribution towards meeting the cost of the kindergarten program. Funded kindergartens charge fees to help meet the cost of running kindergarten programs. Fees are set by individual kindergartens and depend on things like how many hours children attend and whether there are extra costs such as excursions.

Pre-Prep: Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to Pre-Prep over the next decade from 2025. Funded kindergarten hours will increase from 15 up to 30 hours a week. Pre-Prep will be delivered through sessional kindergartens and long-day-care centres. By 2036, children across Victoria will have access to 1,800 hours of funded kindergarten before school, comprising 600 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and 1,200 hours of Pre-Prep.

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.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Best Start Best Life: <https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life>
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education): www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide

- Resources for Funded Kindergartens: <https://www.vic.gov.au/resources-funded-kindergartens>

RELATED POLICIES

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

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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Free Kinder information for families
- Attachment 2: Statement of additional hours fees schedule
- Attachment 3: Additional hours fee payment agreement

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Bonbeach Preschool on 3.9.2025.

REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2026

ATTACHMENT 1. FREE KINDER INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Bonbeach Preschool 2026

1. General information

Kindergarten programs for three-year-old children and Pre-Prep for four-year-old children in Victorian Government funded services will be free as part of the Best Start, Best Life reform.

Free Kinder provides families with a 15 hour program at no cost to families at Bonbeach Preschool. With our programs being 16 hours in pre-prep at Bonbeach Preschool, there is no expectation to purchase/attend and therefore pay for the additional hour. If you choose to opt out of the additional hour, you will need to collect your child at 2:45pm during their 'onsite long' sessions twice a week throughout the year.

Operation hours	[Insert session days and times]
Term 1	Wednesday 28 th January – Thursday 2 nd April
Term 2	Monday 20 th April – Friday 26 th June
Term 3	Monday 13 th July – Friday 18 th September
Term 4	Monday 5 th October – Wednesday 16 th December
Planned Closures	Monday 26 th and Tuesday 27 th January: set up days Thursday 17 th and Friday 18 th December clean up days
Planned Curriculum Days	Friday 5th June and Monday 2nd November

2. What Free Kinder means at our service

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

- Funded sessional kindergarten for 3-year-old children (up to 15 hours per week) – no parent fee
- Funded sessional kindergarten for 4-year-old children (16 hours per week) - \$130 per term for the additional hour over the funded 15 hours of free kindergarten.

Bonbeach Preschool will reimburse families in full for any kindergarten/Pre-Prep fee deposit (*refer to Definitions*) payments that have already been made upon acceptance of enrolment, excluding any voluntary parent donations/payments that you agree to in writing.

3. Other charges

Other charges levied by Bonbeach Preschool are included on the Statement of Fees and Charges that will be provided to families upon enrolment.

These include:

- **Excursion/service event charge (outside of the 15 hours of free kindergarten per week program):** 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:** The approved provider/Committee of Management 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 approved provider/Committee of Management.

4. Fundraising and voluntary parent payment/donations

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

5. Payment of fees for additional hours/wrap around care

Fees are payable for hours over and above 15 hours of free kindergarten per week (600 hours per year) and/or wrap around care.

The approved provider/Committee of Management will annually 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 (Bonbeach Primary School and Pre – School Business Manager) 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 for additional hours/wrap around care

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.
- 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

The additional hours are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the Committee of Management. 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 educator is absent, and a qualified reliever is not available
- closure of the service for staff training days/curriculum 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. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from the kindergarten service provider or alternatively families may contact the local council.

ATTACHMENT 2. STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL HOURS FEES SCHEDULE FOR 2026

Bonbeach Preschool

Fee schedule 2026

Funded sessional kindergarten for four – year – olds



Hours: 16 hours per week (Seahorses and Dolphins)

Option 1: Lump sum payment for the full year			
16 hours per week	\$130 per term	\$520 total annual amount to be paid by Tuesday 27th January 2026	Option 1
Option 2: Payment by direct deposit instalments set up from your bank account			
Term 1	\$130	Term 1 fees due by Friday 28 th November 2025	Option 2
Term 2	\$130	Term 2 fees due by Friday 20th March 2026	
Term 3	\$130	Term 3 fees due by Friday 12th June 2026	
Term 4	\$130	Term 4 fees due by Friday 4th September 2026	

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.

Bank Details

Account Name: Bonbeach Primary School Council Official A/C

Bank: CBA

BSB: 063 118

Account No: 1005 9192

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

Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued via email from Bonbeach Primary School and Pre – School Business Manager a month prior and must be paid by the due date.

Late collection charge

The approved provider/Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting their child (*refer to Free Kinder Information for Families*). When a 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.

ATTACHMENT 3. ADDITIONAL HOURS FEE PAYMENT AGREEMENT



Bonbeach Preschool 2026 Additional Fee Payment Agreement

Please complete this form and return to Bonbeach Preschool by 28th November 2025

Child's full name:

Parent's/guardian's full name:

- I/we acknowledge that the four-year-old 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) funded kindergarten program is fully funded by the state government, with the balance of additional hours over and above and/or wrap around care coming from fees paid by parents/guardians.
- I/we are aware that there is no expectation to purchase/attend the full 16 hours offered in the four – year – old program at Bonbeach Preschool and therefore pay for the additional hour. If I/we choose to opt out of the additional hour, I/we will collect my/our child at 2:45pm during their 'onsite long' sessions twice a week throughout the year. I/we will notify the nominated supervisor during the enrolment/orientation process of this decision.
- I/we agree to pay any additional fees for services above the 600 hours by the due date on the invoice.
- I/we understand that fees for additional hours each term are non-refundable.
- I/we acknowledge that if fees for additional hours are not paid by the due date, the approved provider/Committee of Management will implement the late payment of fees procedures, as outlined in the Free Kinder Information for Families, which could result in the withdrawal of my/our child's place at the service and no further enrolments until the outstanding fees are paid.
- I/we agree that if my/our financial circumstances change and I/we am/are unable to pay as agreed, I/we will immediately notify the Business Manager, Sharon Keates, to discuss alternative payment options.
- I/we acknowledge that I/we have received and read the service's Free Kinder Information for Families, which outlines the procedure for payment of fees.

Signature (parent/guardian):

Date:

Note: Invoices, receipts and collection of fees will be in accordance with the Bonbeach Preschool *Free Kinder Fee Policy*.