

CANTERBURY WESTLAND KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION (Inc.)**POLICY: KINDERGARTEN FEES****RATIONALE**

The Board is committed to maintaining the provision of high-quality early childhood education services.

To achieve this, policies will be implemented to provide an appropriate level of income to support the delivery of this service. This includes participating in the government's *20 Hours ECE* for those Tamariki (children) aged three, four or five years, who are eligible.

In addition, the Board has a statutory responsibility to ensure that any income from fees received will be used appropriately and accounted for accurately.

PURPOSE

This policy aims to provide clear and transparent information to parents/caregivers and employees (both Kaiako and administrators) concerning procedures around the setting and collection of fees, and the rules that apply in relation to fees.

This policy relates to all Kidsfirst Kindergartens (hereby referred to as Kidsfirst) and replaces all previous fees policies.

POLICY CHANGES

One calendar months' notice will be given to parents/caregivers of any changes to this policy or the attached schedule.

FEES

1. Tamariki who are three, four and five years of age are eligible for the government's *20 Hours ECE*. For any hours not claimed as the government's *20 Hours ECE* and up to six hours per day, fees per hour will be as per schedule 1, for all kindergartens.

For any hours booked over 6 hours per day, fees per hour, or part thereof, will be as a charge per hour as per schedule 1.

Kidsfirst reserves the right to reduce booked hours per week of a tamaiti (child) to include only those hours being claimed as the government's *20 Hours ECE* if regular weekly /fortnightly payments for chargeable hours are not received.

2. Tamariki aged 0-2 years old will continue to be charged as per the rates in schedule 1 for all enrolled hours.
3. The Board will review the fee structure as outlined in schedule 1 on a regular basis, based on recommendations from the Chief Executive.
4. Parents/caregivers will be asked to sign a fee contract as part of the Enrolment Agreement (Section D).

5. Fees will be invoiced by the Kidsfirst Head Office and forwarded via email or through the kindergarten. Payments are to be made directly into the Kidsfirst nominated bank account or in person at the Head Office premises. (For further information please refer to points 30 and 31 of this policy.)
6. Any queries about a fee, invoice or an account should be directed to Head Office.
Ph: 03 338 1303 or 0800 4 KIDSFIRST (0800 454 373)
E-mail: infocare@kidsfirst.org.nz
7. Fee income will be coded to the individual kindergarten and used to assist with meeting the costs incurred of that kindergarten.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FEES

8. The Enrolment Form and Agreement to Fee Schedule form a legally binding contract between Kidsfirst and the parent/caregiver. Accordingly, the parent/caregiver is personally responsible for the payment of fees.
9. In the event that Kidsfirst need to take steps to recover overdue or unpaid fees, recovery will be sought from the parent/caregiver who signed the enrolment form.
10. If more than one parent/caregiver has signed the Agreement to Fees Schedule, then all who have signed the document will be jointly and severally liable for the payment of any fees.

FEE CHARGING

11. Head Office will be responsible for producing invoices for all tamariki who incur a fee charge, on a fortnightly basis. Invoices will show the fees due (after all rebates or discounts have been applied), record payments made and the total payment due, if applicable.
12. Fees will not be charged when a kindergarten is closed during term breaks, nor for other periods when the kindergarten is closed such as public holidays or emergency closures, where these days are days the parent/caregiver has elected to pay fees (over and above any free hours).
13. Fees will be charged as normal for any tamaiti absences, including (but not limited to) sickness or holidays.
14. Where government funding stops for a tamaiti – due to the Ministry of Education’s ‘Three Week Rule’ or ‘Frequent Absence Rule’ (refer to points 15 and 16 below) - Kidsfirst reserves the right to collect full fees (covering all booked hours) from parents/caregivers, set at the rate of government funding that has been lost to the Association. This is dependent on the type of government funding rate that the child attracts and the age of the child.

The government funding rates will be placed on the Parent’s Noticeboard within the kindergarten and available on our current online platform for whānau. These rates will be updated, as and when, the government changes the funding rates. These rates are also listed in schedule 1.

15. The ‘Three Week Rule’ limits the period of time that the government will fund the continuous absence of a tamaiti to three weeks.

If parents/caregivers are requesting an extended absence over the three weeks, they may choose to pursue either of the following:

- 15.1 To pay full fees (covering all booked hours) in total on or before the due date for the period of absence, thereby securing their enrolled hours upon return.
 - 15.2 Relinquish the place and be placed at the top of the waiting list, on their return or known date of their return, until a place becomes available.
 - 15.3 Should an extended absence be due to an illness that requires exclusion from the kindergarten, then the kindergarten will provide an *'EC13 Medical Certificate to support application for exemption from absence rule for Special and/or Health Needs'* form. This form needs to be completed by the Doctor or other Registered Medical Professional of the tamaiti and returned to the kindergarten.
16. The 'Frequent Absence Rule' requires that the enrolment agreement signed by parents/caregivers, matches the actual attendance pattern of the tamaiti for at least half of each calendar month.

TWO WEEKS NOTICE

17. Parents/caregivers will be asked to give two (2) weeks written notice of a tamaiti leaving the kindergarten, except in the case of a tamaiti who leaves to attend a primary school or another Kidsfirst kindergarten. This allows time for the kindergarten to arrange for another tamaiti to begin attending and take the vacated place.
 - 17.1 Written notice can be given via email or letter to the kindergarten– phone messages or verbal requests are not deemed sufficient to give notice.
 - 17.2 Once two weeks' notice is given, the tamaiti may continue to attend for those two weeks and fees will be charged as per usual, if applicable. If the tamaiti leaves immediately, or no notice is given, then the tamaiti will be removed from the roll immediately and an invoice for the full two (2) weeks fees will be generated, at the Government funding rates (refer to point 14).

OPTIONAL CHARGESⁱ

18. Kidsfirst does not request optional charges from parents/caregivers.
19. Individual kindergartens may ask parents/caregivers to cover the direct cost of special excursions and/or entertainment as each individual situation arises.

SIGNING OF THE ENROLMENT AGREEMENT

20. Once the Enrolment Agreement has been signed and a start date given for a tamaiti, they must attend within one day of that start date or full fees (at the Government funding rate) for any subsequent day(s) will be generated until the tamaiti is removed from the roll.
21. Funding for absences beyond this first day (and only up to one (1) week) may be claimed from government funding and therefore parents/caregivers will not be charged if:
 - 21.1 the absence is due to illness or other reasons beyond the parent/caregiver's control.

and

21.2 there is an enrolment agreement for the tamaiti, stating the planned start date, which was signed and dated by the parent/caregiver prior to the tamaiti starting.

and

21.3 the reason for the absence has been documented with a medical certificate for illness or a letter from the parent/caregiver explaining the absence.

LATE FEE

22. Due to Ministry of Education licensing requirements, tamariki must be collected on time. A **late fee** as per schedule 1 will continue to be charged for every 15 minutes (or part thereof) until the time the tamaiti is collected as per the enrolment agreement of the tamaiti.

DISCOUNTS

23. Parents/caregivers with more than one tamaiti who are using their full government's *20 Hours ECE* or *Kidsfirst 20 Hours ECE* entitlement at the kindergarten for all of their tamariki, will be given a discount of 10% for each additional tamaiti.

Tamariki of Kidsfirst employees who are using their full government's *20 Hours ECE* or *Kidsfirst 20 Hours ECE* entitlement, will be given a 10% discount for each tamaiti.

24. From time to time the Kidsfirst Board may make available special offers for reduced fees at selected kindergartens.

WINZ SUBSIDIES

25. Kidsfirst will encourage parents/caregivers to access WINZ subsidies to assist in the payment of fees.

26. These subsidies cannot be claimed for hours being used for the government's *20 ECE hours* or *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours*.

27. The Kaiako Matua (Head Teacher) will ensure WINZ information is available to parents/caregivers.

28. Parents/caregivers who are eligible and receive a WINZ subsidy are responsible for:

28.1 any shortfall between the subsidy paid and the normal fees due.

28.2 the normal fees due until WINZ subsidies are paid and Kidsfirst receives a letter of confirmation from WINZ.

28.3 for renewing the subsidy, if appropriate.

PAYMENT OF FEES

29. Parents/caregivers will be asked to pay their account within seven (7) calendar days of the date of the invoice. Payments can also be made in advance.

30. Payment of fees can be made:

- 30.1 electronically, via internet banking or automatic payment.
- 30.2 at any branch of ANZ Bank. Parents/caregivers will need to take the Kidsfirst bank account details and the reference number of their tamaiti (both are displayed on the invoice).

TERMS OF PAYMENT

31. Kidsfirst reserves the right to collect all outstanding debt from parents/caregivers at the parents/caregiver's expense and advises parents/caregivers that all steps will be taken to recover the outstanding debt.
- 31.1 If fees are not paid by the due date (one week from invoice), Kidsfirst will contact the parent/caregiver in writing via email or through the kindergarten to make payment arrangements, with notice that failure to meet payments may result in the timetable of the tamaiti being reduced to those hours being claimed as government's *20 ECE hours* or *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours*.
- 31.2 If a debt remains unpaid two (2) weeks after the due date (3 weeks from date of invoice), Kidsfirst will send a 'Final Written Notice' to the parent/caregiver via email or through the kindergarten, stating that if full payment is not made within one (1) week, the timetable of the tamaiti will be reduced to those hours being claimed as the government's *20 ECE hours* or *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours* only. The timetable of the tamaiti will remain reduced to hours being claimed as the government's *20 ECE hours* or *Kidsfirst 20 ECE hours* only, until the debt has been cleared.
- 31.3 The teaching team will work with parents/caregivers regarding unpaid fees where applicable, including when a reduction in booked hours is required.
- 31.4 Parents/caregivers must undertake to repay debt at a minimum of \$10.00 per week over and above any ongoing weekly fees.
- 31.5 Parents/caregivers must retain bank statements and any receipts as proof of payment for any fees.
- 31.6 Should there be a remaining unpaid debt once a tamaiti has left kindergarten, then this amount will be transferred to any currently enrolled sibling's account in the first instance, otherwise it will be referred to a debt collection agency and any collection fees incurred will be passed onto the parent/caregiver.
32. Fees paid/unpaid by individual parents/caregivers are confidential to the kindergarten teaching team and Head Office personnel and the nominated debt collection agency, if applicable.

CREDIT BALANCES

33. When an invoice shows a credit balance, the parent/caregiver can have this credit balance refunded, or they can choose to donate this credit to the kindergarten, only if **all** the below criteria has been met:
- the tamaiti has left the kindergarten.
 - there is no current sibling attending.
 - there is no outstanding debt to WINZ.
 - part or full fees have **NOT** been paid by the government's Equity and/or Targeted Funding.

- 33.1 Kidsfirst will continue to contact the parent/caregiver via fortnightly invoice to advise them of the credit balance using the contact information that has been provided in the Enrolment Agreement.
- 33.2 If a refund is requested the credit balance will be refunded to parent/caregiver's nominated bank account within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of their bank account number by Kidsfirst.
34. If the parent/caregiver have not responded to Kidsfirst attempt(s) to contact them and/or provided details of their nominated bank account within six (6) months from the date that the tamaiti (or tamariki) left the kindergarten, the credit balance will be forfeited and permanently retained by Kidsfirst as a donation.

RECORD KEEPING

35. The kaiako matua will ensure accurate records of all tamariki enrolments, and attendance details are kept, and provide information to government agencies and head office personnel as and when required.
36. The Chief Executive has the responsibility of monitoring the overall fee collection and implementation of this policy.

Reference:

Schedule OM/D/01(i) Schedule 1: Fees

Policy Name:	Policy #:	File locations:
Kindergarten Fees	OM/D/01	Operations Manual
Date reviewed:	Date next review:	Reviewed by:
November 2024	2027	CE

ⁱ Optional charges are a request for a payment that parents may choose whether or not to make. Optional charges must apply for a specific purpose, which can be one-off or ongoing.

Reference: Ministry of Education Funding Handbook, September 2020