

Payment of Fees Policy



Quality education and care provides the foundation for children’s development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. The Farmhouse Montessori is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| 7.1 | Governance | Governance supports the operation of a quality service |
| 7.1.2 | Management Systems | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service |
| 7.1.3 | Roles and Responsibilities | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service |

| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS | |
|--|---|
| 168 | Education and care services must have policies and procedures |
| 172 | Notification of change to policies and procedures |

PURPOSE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the service fee structure, ensuring children’s fees are paid on time.

AIM

To enable our Montessori school to provide high quality early education and care for children we need to ensure we are financially viable at all times. Prompt payment of fees allows us to plan with certainty. We have a commitment to ensuring our fees are as affordable as possible and to pass on the increase in government funding to families of children who are 3 years of age and 4 and 5 years of age in their year before school. The Farmhouse Montessori School Board determines the financial policies including the annual budgets and fees. They are consistent with and seek to reinforce the commitment to the full program that parents make when their child commences at the school.

The school finances are administered by the Board who are elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Manly Warringah Montessori Society in March of each year. The Board is assisted by the School Financial Administrator who deals with the day-to-day responsibilities including banking, invoicing, salaries and correspondence. A Registered Company Auditor audits the school accounts annually.

Goals

Our school’s financial health will be maximized by:

- Increasing the number of 3 and 4 year olds attending 600 hours per year.
- Ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment.
- Keeping fee increases to a minimum
- Ensuring the cost of administering fee collection is minimised
- Following all legal requirements required by our access to government funding
- Managing fee collection to avoid bad debts

- Families are notified as far ahead as possible of any changes to fees or the ways fees will be collected and
- Ensuring fee invoices or statements are issued on a regular basis.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The fee structure of the service includes:

Society Fees

An annual membership of the Manly Warringah Montessori Society is charged per family unit and confers one vote per family at all general meetings of the Society and the right for either parent to stand for election to the Board. It also gives the family free access to the lending library, regularly information on child development and family relationships, access to workshops and information sessions. Membership is required to remain on the wait list and to be enrolled at the school.

Waitlist Application Fee

The application fee is non-refundable. It must be paid before the child can be placed onto the school waitlist.

Enrolment Fee

The enrolment fee is non-refundable. It must be paid before the child can begin at the school.

Term Fees

- School fees are set so that, together with the government subsidy, they cover the day-to-day running costs of the school. Extra funds for specific items and purposes outside these areas may, however, be required. The School Board reviews fees annually.
- Fees are charged according to age. Cycles are 2 year olds (toddler), 3-6 year olds (pre-primary turning 4 before 31st July), 6-12 (primary)
- Payment must be received by that due date. Periodic payments are available; a written request with payment schedule must be made to the Principal or the Financial Administrator.

Payment of fees

- Payment can be made by
 - Direct deposit to the nominated bank.
 - *Credit Card*: an additional credit card fee is also added
- Payments received are credited to the oldest debt first.
- Families will be issued with an invoice 2 weeks prior to the end of the Term for the following Term.
- Families will be given reminders of the Term fee due dates two weeks before the date of payment.
- A dishonor fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees.

Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the Principal.

Failure to Pay

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued after one week and then again after two weeks, where the fees are still outstanding the Principal will be advised and a child's position may be terminated if payment has not been made after the three weeks. If applicable the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the service will initiate its debt collection procedure.

Late Fees

- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the Nth Balgowlah Campus. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time of 4pm. Currently, a fee of \$15.00 per 10 minutes block and part thereof.
- Primary OSHC is an outside organisation and they will bill the parent directly for any outstanding fees.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late.

Change of Fees

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of four weeks written notice is given to all families. This is determined by the Farmhouse Montessori School Board.

Termination of Enrolment

- Parents are to provide one terms written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the Farmhouse Montessori School.

Responsibility of Management

- The Financial Administrator is responsible for the billing and chasing of fees.
- Should families wish to discuss fees, they will need to see the Principal.
- The Farmhouse Montessori Board sets the school fees.
- ensuring all families are aware of our *Payment of Fees Policy*
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information
- providing families with regular statement of fees payable
- notifying families of any overdue fees
- providing families with reminder emails as required
- terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid
- discussing fee payment with families if required

Maintenance Levy

This amount may be paid each term or annually. There is one Maintenance levy per family and this amount will be listed on your annual invoice

Source

- National Quality Standards
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook
- <https://www.dese.gov.au/resources-child-care-providers/child-care-provider-handbook>
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Early Childhood and Care* <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-0>
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs*
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).
- Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

| Policy Review Date | Modification | Next Review Date |
|--------------------|--|------------------|
| June 2018 | New school logo added to policy. Changes made to comply with regulations. Updated references to comply with the revised NQS | June 2019 |
| 2019 | Minor formatting for consistency throughout policy. | 2020 |
| 2020 | Update the responsibility of Management section in policy Sources updated | 2024 |
| 29/3/2022 | Child Care Benefit Section -Deleted no longer relevant Child Care Cash Rebate Scheme-Deleted No longer relevant Point added deleted from Late fees about OSHC-Nth Head Word changed in Payment of fees section from year to Term in bullet point 3. Fees charged wording added to Term fees section. Membership statement added to Society fees section. | 2024 |