

## **FEES POLICY**

### **1. AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Highmount Pre-School Committee at its **21 October 2009** meeting.

### **2. REVIEW DATE**

This policy shall be reviewed as required each year.

### **3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

- Parents whose children attend the preschool
- Parents who wish to have their child attend the preschool
- Staff

### **4. DEFINITIONS**

**Fees** – A payment for a place at the preschool which covers part of the cost of attendance.

**Deposit/holding fees** – A non-refundable amount which is required as part of the booking process for a place at the preschool in the future.

**Non-refundable administration fee** – Fee associated with lodging an application to enrol a child for a program at the preschool.

### **5. POLICY**

#### **VALUES**

This pre-school is committed to:

- Affordability of fees to parents of this preschool
- Responsible financial management of this preschool
- Application of the fees policy in a non-discriminatory manner
- Fair negotiation of late or non-payment of fees

#### **PURPOSE**

- To inform all parents of the normal rates, methods and options for payment of fees.
- To provide a fair and manageable system for dealing with failure to pay or inability to pay outstanding fee debts.
- To inform parents of the rights and responsibilities of the preschool in the setting and collection of fees.
- To inform parents of the procedures should they experience difficulty in payment.
- To inform parents of the consequences and procedures where persistent non payment occurs, and no other arrangement is made.
- To maintain confidential details regarding parents' financial circumstances within the Committee of Management.

## 6. OUR POLICY AIMS TO ENSURE THAT:

### FEE SETTING

The Committee of Management will decide the rate of fees payable, the period of time (e.g. term) for which the fee is fixed and the method of payment. The Committee of Management will take into account:

- The running cost of the preschool
- Affordability to parents
- Extra charges such as excursion fees, participation surcharge, fundraising levies etc.

### (SEE APPENDICES FOR FEE DETAILS)

All parents will be notified that the kindergarten is not a free service and relies on fee collection to cover a percentage of running costs. Fees must be paid as directed by the Committee of Management and notice to this effect will be given to parents prior to collection of fees.

### NON PAYMENT OF FEES

Fee collection is mandatory and the committee has the discretion to withdraw service of non-payment of fees. Parents should approach the kindergarten teacher if they are having difficulty with payment of fees as the preschool has a process for negotiating alternative arrangements.

### SPECIAL CASES

This kindergarten has a policy of non discrimination, however, fees are structured to recognise the difficulty for parents under certain circumstances.

- Three-year-old kindergarten (see separate fee structure at end of policy)
- Four-year-old kindergarten – this must be financial and authorised by the Dept of Human Services (DHS).
- Four-year-old kindergarten - Health care card holders/Pensioner Health Benefit card holders will receive the DHS rebate. To receive a discount, the relevant card must be presented to the Treasurer or Enrolment Officer and a photocopy of the current card and a photocopy of subsequent renewals must be kept at the Preschool and Child and Family Care Network Inc. to be entitled to a discounted fee.
- When a child leaves permanently from the Preschool in the middle of a term, the fees will only be refunded if the child's place is filled by another child. Fees will be refunded on a pro-rata basis for the period of time in the term that another child fills the place.
- More than one child from the same family attending at the same time – the Participation Surcharge is payable (and deductible in accordance with this policy) in respect of one child only.

### KINDERGARTEN FEE SUBSIDY

To benefit from the kindergarten fee subsidy a child must meet the following criteria:

- The child is eligible to attend a funded kindergarten program, and individually holds, or has a parent or guardian who holds,
  - Health Care Card
  - Pensioner Concession Card
  - Temporary Protection/ humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 or 786
  - Asylum Seekers on Bridging Visas A - F and Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visas holders 200- 217
  - Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card
  - If you have triplets or quadruplets attending kindergarten in the same year you are also eligible for the subsidy for each child.

For more information and frequently asked questions visit [www.education.vic.gov.au/kindergarten/feesubsidy](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/kindergarten/feesubsidy).

## 7. PROCEDURES

### HOW FEES ARE SET AND WHEN

The rules of the preschool provide for the fees to be set and varied by the Committee of Management.

The Committee of Management will prepare a budget and fix fees for the following year.

#### Excursion Fee

This fee may be added to the term fees when the Statement of Fees is sent out each term. It is refundable if the child does not participate.

#### Participation Surcharge

To encourage parent/guardian participation in kindergarten activities, a participation surcharge as set out in the attached appendices is payable on top of Term 1 Kinder fees. The participation surcharge will be deducted from Term 4 fees or paid during Term 4 as a refund on fees if during the year in which the participation surcharge is paid a parent or guardian of the child attending kindergarten:

- attends a working bee; and/or
- is a member of the Committee of Management; and/or
- performs some other task approved by resolution of the Committee of Management.

The administration of the participation surcharge will be overseen by a nominated Committee member.

#### Late Collection Fee

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to collect their child promptly at the conclusion of the Kindergarten session. The Committee of Management recognises however that there may be isolated occasions when parents/guardians may be delayed through no fault of their own. Parents are encouraged to call the preschool when such a situation arises so that staff can reassure their child that the person is on the way.

Highmount Preschool has adopted the "Child and Family Care Network" kindergarten cluster policy where a late fee may be applied if a parent/guardian is late in collecting their child. The implementation of the policy is done at the Committee of Management's discretion.

The policy states that on the first occasion the parent/guardian will be issued with a warning. On subsequent occasions the late collection fee will be charged.

The late collection fee is applied as stated in the kindergarten cluster policy:

- If the parent/guardian is between 15 and 30 minutes late in collecting their child then the fee will be \$5 for the first five minutes, then \$1 per minute after that until the child has been collected.
- If the parent/guardian is more than 30 minutes late in collecting their child then the fee will be \$5 for every ten minutes, or part thereof, for the first 30 minutes from the conclusion of the session and then \$10 for every ten minutes or part thereof, after that.

### PROCEDURE FOR FEE COLLECTION

#### Fee Calculation

- Fees are calculated based on the per capita grant, the preschool budget and the number of children enrolled.

#### Term 1 Fees

- A non-refundable deposit on Term 1 fees as set out in the attached appendices is due at the time of acceptance of a place.
- Applicants accepting a place after the Annual General Meeting in the year prior to attendance will be required to pay their non-refundable deposit within 14 days of accepting the place.

- The balance of Term 1 fees are due by the end of the first week of Term, statements being issued 4 weeks prior.

### **Invoicing**

- An invoice will be issued by the Enrolment Officer two weeks before the end of each term to be paid by the end of the first week of the following term giving 5 weeks for payment, except for Term 1 fees (see above).

### **Discounts**

- Fees of children who enrol when the term has already commenced will be charged on a pro-rata basis. Thereby the term fee is divided by the number of weeks in that particular term and payment should be made within two weeks of the commencement date.

### **Method of Payment**

Payment may be made by:

- (a) cheque (cheques are to be made payable to the "Highmount Pre-School Association"); or
- (b) crediting cash or cheques into the Highmount Pre-School Association bank account; or
- (c) Internet banking into the Highmount Pre-School Association bank account; or
- (d) as directed by the Enrolment Officers.

### **Late Payment**

- Dishonoured Cheques  
The banks charge both parties for any dishonoured cheques. The Pre-School's Enrolment Officer will inform the parent responsible for presenting a dishonoured cheque as soon as practicable after the bank notifies the Pre-School of the dishonoured cheque. The parent responsible will be notified he/she is required to pay the Pre-School's bank fees on the dishonoured cheque together with the amount of the dishonoured cheque within fourteen (14) days of the notification to the parent.
- The Enrolment Officer will issue one (1) reminder to late payers of fees.
- On non receipt of late fees after fourteen (14) days, the issue shall be referred to the Committee of Management.

### **Procedure of Non-Payment of Fees**

- The Committee of Management will set up a sub-committee, or nominate a person, to deal with non-payment of fees.
- The Committee will decide criteria which will assist the sub-committee/person to decide whether the basis for non-payment of fees is unwillingness or inability e.g.
  - Has the person always previously paid on time?
  - Have they expressed a reason that suggests whether they are either unable or unwilling to pay?
  - Is this consistent with other behaviour?
- It is the responsibility of the sub-committee, or nominated committee representative, to carry out the negotiating process with any parents identified by the Enrolment Officer as not having met the fee payment dates. The sub-committee or nominated representative will operate to protect the parents' confidentiality and be aware of the degree of financial flexibility for negotiating as advised by the committee.

### **Inability to Pay Fees**

The following options may be considered by the committee, *in extenuating circumstances*, as choices for negotiating unpaid fees:

- **Payment by instalments** – parents may negotiate to pay fees at the unfettered discretion of the Committee of Management on a weekly/monthly payment basis.

### **Refusal to Pay Fees**

1. A letter and a *Fees Policy* will be sent to those parents who have not paid their fees by the due date with a 14 day timeline for response and the name of the person to contact. The letter will highlight the need for parents to contact the preschool and the fact that the service will be withdrawn for non-payment of fees.
2. Telephone calls will be made to those parents who have not responded to ascertain why they have not paid.
3. A meeting will be arranged by the sub-committee with parents who have not paid, to negotiate a suitable arrangement. This will be done on an individual basis and will remain confidential
4. In the instance of a parent still refusing to pay after having been given all the facts, the parents will be warned that the service will be withdrawn and a date given for the withdrawal of the service and the parent will be warned that the committee will undertake the processes necessary to recover the unpaid fees. This option will be put in writing immediately after the meeting.

**The Committee takes full responsibility for this process and staff will not be involved in this final stage of fee collection.**

### **Commonwealth Childcare Rebate**

Parents may be eligible for the Commonwealth Childcare Rebate if both parents are working (full-time, part-time or casual), self-employed, on paid or un-paid leave, looking for work or studying. There is no income limit for receiving these payments. Parents may ask Enrolment Officers for information or apply to the Family Assistance Office for information.

## **IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT**

### **8. COMMITTEE STRUCTURES**

- A sub-committee will be set up to deal with any instances of non-payment which are referred to the Committee of Management by the Enrolment Officer.

### **9. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES**

The Enrolment Officer is responsible for:

- Fee collection
- Follow up late fees
- Reporting of problems to the Committee.

The Committee of Management is responsible for

- Initially deciding whether to pursue particular problems or amend the policy.

The sub-committee is responsible for

- Negotiating a solution to particular payment problems.

The Committee of Management also:

- Gives approval to substantially alter or waive fees.
- Gives final approval to sub-committee decisions.
- Makes the final decision to withdraw the service from a family.

## **10. IMPLEMENTATION AND CIRCULATION RESOURCES**

- The Enrolment Officer will keep a record of the regularity and correctness of fee payment and report to the Committee instances where one or two people get very behind, or many people get slightly behind in payments.
- Discussion on the broad reasons for this can be held at the committee meeting to decide the need for a change to the policy or further investigation.
- The Enrolment Officer shall pass on relevant contact numbers of non-payers to the sub-committee as part of the referral process.

### **PEOPLE WHO NEED TO KNOW THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES EXIST**

- Parents whose children attend the preschool.
- Parents who wish to have their child attend the preschool
- Committee members
- Staff

### **METHOD**

- A copy will be placed on the preschool notice board.
- A copy will be added to the preschool policy booklet.
- A summary of the policy will be included in the preschool information booklet.

### **SEE ATTACHED APPENDICES:-**

**SCHEDULE OF FEES – 4YO – 2009**

**SCHEDULE OF FEES – 3YO – 2009**

**SCHEDULE OF FEES – 4YO – 2010**

**SCHEDULE OF FEES – 3YO – 2010**

### HIGHMOUNT PRE-SCHOOL SCHEDULE OF FEES 4 Y.O. 2009

| Due Date  | Service  | Fee                 |                   | Amount Payable |              |
|---|--|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
|   |  | Standard            | With Subsidy      | Standard       | With Subsidy |
| The date set by the enrolment officer   | Term 1 Fees non-refundable deposit to secure 4yo position for 2009 | \$100.00            | \$100.00          | \$100.00       | \$100.00     |
| All term fees are due to be paid at the end of the first week of the relevant term. | Term 1 Fees balance plus Participation Surcharge                   | \$140.00<br>\$50.00 | \$0.00<br>\$50.00 | \$190.00       | \$50.00      |
|   | Term 2 Fees  | \$240.00            | \$5.00            | \$240.00       | \$5.00       |
|   | Term 3 Fees  | \$240.00            | \$5.00            | \$240.00       | \$5.00       |
|   | Term 4 Fees  | \$240.00            | \$50.00           | \$190.00       | \$0.00       |
|   | minus Participation Surcharge                                      | **(\$50.00)         | **(\$50.00)       |                |              |

**Non-refundable administration fee** – Payable as required by the Monash City Council central enrolment scheme.

**Please note:** Current Health care card holders/Pensioner health benefit card holders are eligible for a discount each term on satisfying the requirements set out in clause 6 of this policy. Fees are subject to change at the committee's discretion, this is a guide only.

\*\*Participation Surcharge is only deducted from Term 4 fees if the parent/guardian satisfies the requirements set out in clause 7 of this policy, otherwise the total amount payable in Term 4 is \$240.00

### HIGHMOUNT PRE-SCHOOL SCHEDULE OF FEES 3 Y.O. 2009

| Due Date  | Service  | Fee                 | Amount Payable |
|---|--|---------------------|----------------|
| The date set by the enrolment officer   | Term 1 Fees non-refundable deposit to secure 3yo position for 2009 | \$100.00            | \$100.00       |
| All term fees are due to be paid at the end of the first week of the relevant term. | Term 1 Fees balance plus Participation Surcharge                   | \$160.00<br>\$50.00 | \$210.00       |
|   | Term 2 Fees  | \$260.00            | \$260.00       |
|   | Term 3 Fees  | \$260.00            | \$260.00       |
|   | Term 4 Fees  | \$260.00            | \$210.00       |
|   | minus Participation Surcharge                                      | **(\$50.00)         |                |

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**Please Note:** Fees are subject to change at committee's discretion; this is a guide only.

\*\*Participation Surcharge is only deducted from Term 4 fees if the parent/guardian satisfies the requirements set out in clause 7 of this policy, otherwise the total amount payable in Term 4 is \$260.00

### HIGHMOUNT PRE-SCHOOL SCHEDULE OF FEES 4 Y.O. 2010

| Due Date  | Service  | Fee                 |                   | Amount Payable |              |
|---|--|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
|   |  | Standard            | With Subsidy      | Standard       | With Subsidy |
| The date set by the enrolment officer   | Term 1 Fees non-refundable deposit to secure 4yo position for 2010 | \$100.00            | \$100.00          | \$100.00       | \$100.00     |
| All term fees are due to be paid at the end of the first week of the relevant term. | Term 1 Fees balance plus Participation Surcharge                   | \$155.00<br>\$50.00 | \$0.00<br>\$50.00 | \$205.00       | \$65.00      |
|   | Term 2 Fees  | \$255.00            | \$20.00           | \$255.00       | \$20.00      |
|   | Term 3 Fees  | \$255.00            | \$20.00           | \$255.00       | \$20.00      |
|   | Term 4 Fees  | \$255.00            | \$65.00           | \$205.00       | \$0.00       |
|   | minus Participation Surcharge                                      | **(\$50.00)         | **(\$50.00)       |                |              |

**Non-refundable administration fee** – Payable as required by the Monash City Council central enrolment scheme.

**Please note:** Current Health care card holders/Pensioner health benefit card holders are eligible for a discount each term on satisfying the requirements set out in clause 6 of this policy. Fees are subject to change at the committee's discretion, this is a guide only.

\*\*Participation Surcharge is only deducted from Term 4 fees if the parent/guardian satisfies the requirements set out in clause 7 of this policy, otherwise the total amount payable in Term 4 is \$255.00

### HIGHMOUNT PRE-SCHOOL SCHEDULE OF FEES 3 Y.O. 2010

| Due Date  | Service  | Fee                 | Amount Payable |
|---|--|---------------------|----------------|
| The date set by the enrolment officer   | Term 1 Fees non-refundable deposit to secure 3yo position for 2010 | \$100.00            | \$100.00       |
| All term fees are due to be paid at the end of the first week of the relevant term. | Term 1 Fees balance plus Participation Surcharge                   | \$170.00<br>\$50.00 | \$220.00       |
|   | Term 2 Fees  | \$270.00            | \$270.00       |
|   | Term 3 Fees  | \$270.00            | \$270.00       |
|   | Term 4 Fees  | \$270.00            | \$220.00       |
|   | minus Participation Surcharge                                      | **(\$50.00)         |                |

**Non-refundable administration fee** – Payable as required by the Monash City Council central enrolment scheme.

**Please Note:** Fees are subject to change at committee's discretion; this is a guide only.

\*\*Participation Surcharge is only deducted from Term 4 fees if the parent/guardian satisfies the requirements set out in clause 7 of this policy, otherwise the total amount payable in Term 4 is \$270.00