

## **Department of Education and Children's Services**

### **Rural Care Fee Policy**

(as at June 2007)

#### **1. How the centre is funded**

The Rural Care program (the program) is jointly funded by both the South Australian Government and the Australian Government.

The program is administered centrally by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS). Fees are set, in consultation with the Australian Government, by the administrative body within the Department of Education and Children's Services.

Fees and funds (provided by the South Australian Government and the Australian Government) together provide the money to pay staff and provide equipment for the children. Fees are kept as low as possible for parents whilst ensuring that the quality of the service is not compromised. All fees are fed back into the program.

#### **2. Child Care Benefit**

Parents are responsible for seeking an assessment from the Family Assistance Office regarding eligibility to receive Child Care Benefit (CCB). A copy of the CCB assessment must be provided to the rural care service in order for fees to be adjusted accordingly.

#### **3. Bond Payments**

A bond payment is required in advance for all booked care. The amount of the bond to be paid is equivalent to two weeks of the required care booking. A bond receipt will be issued by the service. The bond monies are to be held by the service with the intention of offsetting the fees for the last two weeks of care. The bond amount should cover the parent contribution cost of care.

Note:- Where a alternative payment plan (i.e. fortnightly or monthly) is negotiated then the bond amount must reflect this arrangement.

#### **4. Fee Charging**

All booked sessions must be paid for.

Standard fees apply if children are absent from booked care during school holidays.

When the centre is closed on Christmas / New Year Break and public holidays no fee will be charged.

Casual users of the services will be charged prior to the care.

Invoices are issued weekly, unless an alternative payment plan is negotiated.

## **5. Payment of fees**

Fees are to be paid weekly, unless an alternative payment plan (i.e. fortnightly or monthly) is negotiated.

A receipt will be issued for all fees received.

## **6. After Hours Fees**

A late fee will be incurred where a child is left at the centre after closing time. The fee will be \$10 for every 5 minutes or part thereof.

## **7. Change / Cancellation of Booked Care**

Notice of 14 days is required to change or cancel a booking. Fees will be incurred during these 14 days unless the vacancy can be reallocated. Should part of the vacancy be reallocated then the unallocated part will incur a fee.

## **8. Overdue Fees**

Fees must be paid no later than one week after the invoice has been issued, unless an extended payment period has been negotiated. An extended payment period must be accompanied by an extended bond payment.

Should payment not be made at the agreed time, then care can not continue, unless payment is made within a week or an alternative payment schedule is negotiated. Care will be discontinued if payment is not made by the extended due date and will not be resumed until the outstanding debt is settled in full.

Where fees can not be collected by a service, then the matter will be referred to an administrative body to direct debt collection processes.