FEES POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 7

OUR COMMITMENT

Rangeview Pre-School is committed to:

- providing responsible financial management of the pre-school, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable pre-school, while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level
- providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts
- 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
- advising users of the pre-school about program funding, including government support and fees to be paid by parents/guardians
- providing equitable access for families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Person with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day-to-Day Charge, educators and parents/guardians with an enrolled child, or who wish to enrol a child at Rangeview Pre-School.

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FEES POLICY
Mandatory – Quality Area 7

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

WHY FEES ARE NECESSARY

The Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per capita funding as a contribution toward the costs of providing a four-year-old kindergarten program. Services meet the balance of costs through charging fees and fundraising activities.

DET provides a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (see below) that enables children from eligible families to attend a four-year-old kindergarten program free of charge, or at a minimal cost. DET also provides funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs.

Rangeview Pre-School provides a range of support options to parents/guardians experiencing difficulty with payment of fees (see below).

HOW FEES ARE SET

As part of the budget development process, the Committee of Management sets fees each year for the programs of the pre-school, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the pre-school
- the level of government funding provided for the program, including the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar pre-schools in the area
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards
- requirements of *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (Department of Education and Training) available from the DET website: www.education.vic.gov.au
- Fees set for the year are only reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

2020 STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES

Four-year-old (funded) kindergarten

15.5 hours per week

Families not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

	Fees	Other charges	Total
Kindergarten fee deposit	$40	$100 Refundable Maintenance Fee	$140
Term 1	$400 ($40 already paid in deposit)	$70 Resource Levy	$470
Term 2	$440	-	$440
Term 3	$440	-	$440
Term 4	$440	-	$440

Families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

	Fees	Other charges	Total
Kindergarten fee deposit	$40	$100 Refundable Maintenance Levy	$140
Term 1	-	-	-
Term 2	-	-	-
Term 3	-	-	-
Term 4	-	-	-

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Three-year-old kindergarten

6 hours per week

	Fees	Other charges	Total
Kindergarten fee deposit	$40	$100 Refundable Maintenance Fee	$140
Term 1	$390 ($40 already paid in deposit)	$70 Resource Levy	$460
Term 2	$430	$35 Incursions	$465
Term 3	$430	$35 Incursions	$465
Term 4	$430	$35 Incursions	$465

OTHER CHARGES

Other additional charges that may be levied by Rangeview Pre-School include:

- Kindergarten fee deposit
- Excursion, Incursion or service event charge:
- Maintenance Levy
- Resource Levy
- Late collection charge
- Fundraising

Additional information relating to each of these is detailed in 'Appendix 2 – Other Charges'.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The Committee of Management regularly reviews payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations. Fees are invoiced to parents/guardians directly via email and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice.

An invoice for Term 1 fees will be issued 2-3 weeks prior to the AGM. These fees must be received in full prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to secure your child's position in the program (provisional on confirmation of immunisation records).

For Terms 2, 3 and 4, an invoice will be issued no later than 4 weeks prior to the end of term for the following terms fees. Invoices must be paid within 14 days and prior to the commencement of the new term. 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 pre-school. Receipts will be provided for fee payments upon request.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the treasurer via treasurer@rangeviewpreschool.vic.edu.au to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The Privacy and Confidentiality Policy of the pre-school will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

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Accepted Payment Methods

Fees may be paid by electronic transfer or cheque as per the details below:

EFT:

BSB:	704-191
Account Number:	159814
Account Name:	Rangeview Pre-School Association Inc

Please use the invoice number or your child's name as your reference of payment.

Cheque:

Cheques are to be made out to "RANGEVIEW ASSOCIATION INC"

Unpaid Fees

If fees are not paid by the due date, the steps detailed in 'Appendix 3 – Management of Unpaid Fees' will be followed.

SUBSIDIES

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (four-year-old programs only)

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy is provided by DET and enables eligible children to attend kindergarten free of charge or at minimal cost. Please be aware that eligibility conditions change from time-to-time. If you are unsure, please contact the pre-school for further information via treasurer@rangeviewpreschool.vic.edu.au.

For guidance on who may be eligible, please refer to 'Appendix 4 – Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (Typical Eligibility)'

Early Start Kindergarten fee subsidy

Three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children known to Child Protection are eligible to attend our program for free. Contact the pre-school for further information.

REFUND OF FEES

Refunds for families eligible for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

If a family becomes eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy during a term, a full refund of the applicable term fees (and fee deposit, where appropriate) will be provided. Fees may still apply for programs offering more than the required minimum hours per week.

Refunds for family withdrawing or deferring the program

There will be no refund of fees unless the fee refund request is submitted to the Committee of Management in writing within 30 days of the notification of withdrawal or deferment of a position.

Such written refund requests will be assessed subject to the criteria below:

- If a child is withdrawn or defers from the kinder prior to the start of a new term or during the first half of a term, 50% of that terms fees will only be refunded if that vacancy is filled within that term. If a child is withdrawn during the second half of a term, no refund will be given.
- If a child defers in the first half of a term 50% of that terms fees will be held until the child recommences the following year. If a child defers in the second half of the term no refund will be given.
- Special circumstances may be considered on an individual basis by the Committee of Management.

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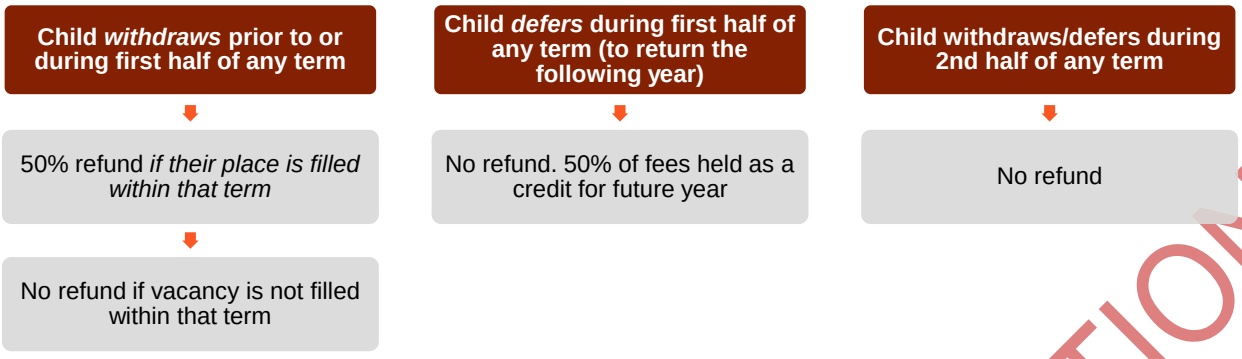
Refer to flowchart below for explanation of refunds for children withdrawing/deferring from the program.



There will be no refund of fees when a child is absent from a session due to any of the following:

- A child's short-term illness
- Public holidays
- Family holiday during operational times
- Closure of the pre-school for staff training days
- Closure of the pre-school for one or more days when a qualified educator is absent and a qualified reliever is not available
- Closure of the pre-school 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.

Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services is available from the kindergarten and a list can be supplied to those families who require it.

CHILDREN TURNING THREE DURING THE YEAR OF ENROLMENT

Full payment from the first day of Term 1 is required if a place is to be reserved for a child in the three year-old kindergarten program. However children can only commence the program when they have turned three.

LATE ENROLMENTS

For families wishing to commence later in the year, and "hold" a position, the process will be as follows:

- If the late enrolment is taking place prior to the commencement of a term the kinder will require a non-refundable deposit PLUS the full terms fee PLUS the resource and maintenance levies, in order to hold the position. The position will only be held upon total payment made or payment plan arranged.
- If the late enrolment takes place during the current term, with the child commencing immediately, pro rata of the current terms fees PLUS the resource and maintenance levies will need to be paid prior to the child commencing at the kinder.

NOTIFICATION OF FEE CHANGES DURING THE YEAR

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

Parents/guardians will be notified one term in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

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ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION FOR STAFF

RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles	Responsibilities
Committee of Management / Executive	The Committee of Management / Executive (Approved Provider and Person with Management and Control) are responsible for: • reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements • developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability • implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Sources) • considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Rangeview Pre-School and removing those barriers wherever possible • reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered • considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families • clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way, and in the family's first language where possible • ensuring that the Fees Policy is readily accessible at the service (Regulation 171) • providing all parents/guardians with fee information • providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges upon enrolment of their child • providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement • ensuring fees are collected and receipted • collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable • complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees • notifying parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected (Regulation 172(2)), and ideally providing one term's notice.
Director	The Director (nominated Supervisor and person in day-to-day charge) is responsible for: • assisting the Approved Provider in developing this policy, and ensuring that this policy is based on the *Kindergarten Funding Guide* (refer to *Definitions)* • implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the Approved Provider and staff, and in line with the requirements of DET's *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (refer to *Sources*) • considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Rangeview Pre-School and removing those barriers wherever possible • considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families • communicating this policy, the availability of the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way and in the family's first language where possible • providing all parents/guardians with fee information • providing all parents/guardians with a statement of fees and charges upon enrolment of their child, and ensuring that the *Fees Policy* is readily accessible at the service • providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement

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Roles	Responsibilities
	• collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable • complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees • notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
All other Staff	• informing the Approved Provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service • referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, Rangeview Pre-School 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
- monitor the number of families/children excluded from the service because of their inability to pay fees
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)) unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

Sources, Related Policies & Other Reference Material

Sources

- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training): www.education.vic.gov.au
- The constitution of Rangeview Pre-School

Service policies

- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursions and Service Events Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

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, including Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1 – DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

Term	Definition
Early Start Kindergarten	A funding program that enables three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for up to 15 hours per week. Details are available at: www.education.vic.gov.au
Enrolment application fee	A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service. This fee is applied by the Whitehorse Pre-School Association which manages a Central Application Scheme for Pre-Schools in the City of Whitehorse.
Fees	A charge for a place within a program at the service.
Health Care Card	A Commonwealth Government entitlement providing concessions for low-income earners and other eligible people. Details are available at: www.humanservices.gov.au
Kindergarten fee deposit	A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. A portion of this deposit is then deducted from term 1 fees.
Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS)	A state government subsidy paid in addition to per capita grants to subsidise the costs of parent fees and enable eligible children to attend a funded kindergarten for 15 hours free of charge (The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Sources)).
Late collection charge	A charge that may be imposed by the Approved Provider when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/children from the program.
Voluntary parent/guardian contribution	A voluntary payment for items not directly related to the provision of the children's program. Attendance at the service is not conditional on this payment.

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APPENDIX 2 – OTHER CHARGES

Kindergarten fee deposit

Families pay this to secure their child's place for the following year. The fee is maintained and becomes partial payment of the first term's fees. If a child defers from the Pre-School prior to the start of the Pre-School year, the deposit will be held until the child recommences the following year. Families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy are required to pay the deposit, however, this will be refunded providing supporting documentation is sighted by the teacher prior to the commencement of Term 1.

Excursion, Incursion or service event charge:

This charge is required to cover the cost of excursions or special events that occur throughout the year in response to emerging children's program needs and interests. Affordability and relevance to the children's interests and the service program will be taken into consideration before a decision is made that will require families to pay this additional charge (refer to Excursions, Incursions and Service Events Policy). Events that are planned ahead are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget and do not incur this additional charge. The Pre-School will have excursions that are extensions of the educational program the children are involved in at the time. Three-year-old fees will include a separately identified amount for incursions and excursions on the fees invoice. The fee for incursions is not optional and must be paid.

The 4-year-old incursions/excursions are included in the overall term fee. As the additional amount only partially contributes to the overall cost of holding excursions, there will be no refunds given for inability to attend a planned excursion. As the date for the excursion approaches, permission slips will be distributed to parents. Parent involvement may also be requested and at times, an additional charge may be involved. Parents will be advised when this is necessary.

Maintenance Levy

A significant amount of work is undertaken by the pre-school each year to maintain the pre-school facilities and prepare for upgrades such as the backyard redevelopment currently underway. To help keep fees affordable, a working bee is held each term where parents help with these tasks.

Because not all families are able to help in this way, the pre-school has replaced voluntary labour with paid labour in the form of a refundable levy. The Maintenance Levy of $100 is charged to all families at the start of the year. It is refunded at the end of the pre-school year to those families who have participated in at least two scheduled working bees.

Families who cannot attend working bees can sometimes do other extra tasks available in lieu of attendance (such as covering books); please approach your child's teacher if you are interested in this option. Eligible concession card holders are not required to pay this levy. The levy is not intended to be a barrier to participation and families experiencing difficulties should discuss this with pre-school.

Resource Levy

A Resource Levy of $70 per child per year is included in the total fees charged by the pre-school. This non-refundable payment will be invoiced with Term 1 fees, or upon commencement date.

Late collection charge

The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the pre-school. If late pick up occurs on more than two occasions, $5 per five minutes will be charged to cover the staff's extra time waiting for late parents. If a family is fined more than once, the child's position in the Pre-School may be reviewed.

Fundraising

Not all pre-school costs are covered by DET per capita funding and the fees charged by the pre-school. Fundraising is undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the pre-school. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

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APPENDIX 3 – MANAGEMENT OF UNPAID FEES

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.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted by phone to confirm receipt of the reminder letter and to follow up payment of unpaid fees.
- 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 pre-school 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.
- The Committee of Management will continue to offer support and will reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector.
- If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the pre-school, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.

APPENDIX 4 – KINDERGARTEN FEE SUBSIDY (TYPICAL ELIGIBILITY)

Families who may be eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (four-year-old programs only) include those with a child who:

- Is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; or
- Holds, or has a parent/guardian who holds a Humanitarian or refugee Visa; or
- Is a multiple birth child (triplets or more); or
- Holds, or has a parent who holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Veteran's Affairs Card.

Where a child is identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, no verification is required.

If your child is eligible for one of these concessions, you are required to tick the box on your child's enrolment form and provide evidence of this concession prior to your child beginning pre-school. Your child is eligible for this subsidy for the full term in which your concession is valid.

Eligibility conditions change from time-to-time – contact the pre-school for further information via treasurer@rangeviewpreschool.vic.edu.au.

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