



Fees Policy

Background

The Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) is committed to offering the programs and services expected by our community for as low a cost as is economically feasible. BNC is a not-for-profit organisation that is financially accountable to several government bodies and formally reports to stakeholders annually. The Committee of Management (COM) has identified the need to outline a consistent framework for determining fees for all courses provided by BNC and to set out strategies for appropriate advertising, collection and recording of fees and charges.

Aims of the Policy

The aims of the policy are:

- To ensure the future viability of BNC by setting appropriate fees and charges.
- To provide quality services that are affordable, sustainable and accessible.
- To ensure that BNC fees, charges and refunds are fair and reasonable.
- To provide participants in any program at the Centre with adequate information about costs of programs and any additional materials required.

Policy Statements

- The BNC annual budget will include an estimate of the costs and anticipated participants for each course in order to develop sustainable fees and minimum numbers required to run.
- BNC will set fees to achieve no lower than an annual break-even level.
- Fees are collected to assist with the provision of classes, educators, administration, facilities, equipment and resources as well as support the repairs and maintenance of the venue.
- The Centre will be aware of the charges of similar organisations to ensure a reasonable and competitive rate is maintained.

Payments

Full course payment is required at the start of each term, excepting casual weekly payments. Full payment for workshops is due prior to attendance. Payment can be made at reception by cash, cheque or EFTPOS which is recorded on daily payments sheets. These payment records are reconciled daily. Payment is also accepted over the phone or by bank transfer. To reduce administrative costs, invoices and/or receipts are generally not issued but are available upon request. Invoices are issued for room hire and for overdue fees.

Balances owed for licensed Children's Room programs are collected via Debit Success, a third-party payment collection company. Families must complete the authorisation form and childcare statements and payment details are emailed every fortnight.

Concessions, Discounts and Community Rates

There is a concession rate available for annual memberships. This rate is offered upon the presentation of a valid concession or senior's card. Additionally, annual membership fees are discounted to half price for members joining during Term 4.

For community organisations, a community rate is offered for venue hire. This rate is 10% less than standard hire rates.

The Cardinia Shire Council offers a 50% subsidy to Volunteers within the Shire for Computer and First Aid courses.

Other discounts are generally not offered as courses are already presented at the lowest reasonable prices. In the case of financial difficulties, individual payment plans, or other arrangements can be organised with the Centre Coordinator or Bookkeeper. Discussions are confidential and agreements made on a case-by-case basis, taking all circumstances into consideration.

Deposits

Deposits are payable for certain services at the Centre to ensure there is a value assigned for locking in a place or booking that is then made unavailable to anyone else. Non-refundable portions of a deposit ensure that associated costs are covered if there is a cancellation.

To secure a place in the following year's Occasional Care sessions, a \$20 non-refundable deposit is required from the first Monday in September. This deposit is deducted from the fees charged for the first session attended. If parents choose to defer their child's start, the deposit may be carried over to following terms following consultation with the Centre Coordinator.

To secure a place in the following year's Playgroup, a \$20 non-refundable deposit is required from enrolment day in November. This deposit is deducted from Term 1 fees. The deposit will be forfeited, and the place no longer held if not taken up within Term 1.

To secure a casual booking of the Children's Room, a \$30 non-refundable deposit is required. The Meeting and Craft rooms require a \$50 deposit, of which \$25 is non-refundable. This fee is deducted from the balance of hire fees. If a booking is cancelled, charges and refunds are in accordance with the hire agreement.

Refunds

All courses are non-refundable unless there are exceptional circumstances. In the case of exceptional circumstances, the Centre Coordinator will review any requests for refunds.

If it is necessary to leave a course mid-term, a refund for the balance of the term may be issued if notice is given to the office as soon as practical and issuing a refund does not jeopardise the continuation of the course for other participants.

Full refunds will be issued if a course is cancelled by the Centre.

Extraordinary external events that may impact activities at BNC could arise (such as pandemics), and specific decision-making to vary standard policy guidelines will be undertaken at that time. Any changes to refunds will be determined and communicated by BNC based on the circumstances of the event. Generally, an approach that is considered fair to all parties will be undertaken.

Arrears

Arrears are a debt of overdue fees owed to BNC. The Centre takes a consistent approach when dealing with unpaid accounts and encourages communication. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter in a fair and reasonable way.

Any outstanding fees from previous activities or enrolments must be paid prior to incurring new fees, even if the debt was “written-off”. BNC reserves the right to exclude attendance if fees are in arrears.

Bonds

Bonds are collected as basic financial protection for a breach of hire terms. For weekday, after-hours venue bookings, the bond is \$100. For hiring the Children’s Room, the bond is \$200. Hiring the digital projector includes a \$100 bond. Hiring the hall for a casual booking attracts a \$500 bond.

Bonds are refunded approximately one week after the hire date or cessation of a regular hire contract if no problems are noted. In the case of a breach of the hire terms, the full bond is held until compensation is calculated and charged accordingly.

Program

The Program Coordinator will produce a program each quarter and ensure that it is distributed prior to the commencement of each term to advertise the upcoming courses. Fees associated with each class will be clearly defined. The program will also specify the terms and conditions regarding memberships, bookings, payments, cancellations and refunds. Any identified printing errors will be advertised at the earliest opportunity.

Low Class Numbers

In general, classes should be cancelled if there are less than the number required enrolled two days before class starts. The Centre Coordinator and Committee of Management each have the discretion to allow some classes to proceed with less than the required minimum. The basis for this decision would include:

- Renegotiating tutor fees component
- Balancing same tutor fees from their other more successful classes to reach a net break even
- Subsidy or grant available for this course
- Support for a new and seen to be valuable program
- Firm belief that this activity/workshop must be provided to the community.

Trial Classes

BNC understands that a class may not always be a good fit or the right timing for a child and allows for a trial class to be undertaken in certain programs prior to the term commitment. The trial class will incur a pro-rata fee for the session plus membership if not already a member. The fee is calculated by dividing the term fee by the number of weeks in the term. Trial classes are offered for Children’s Dance and Playgroup sessions which already have sufficient attendees to run.

Children’s Room Programs

The programs in the Children’s Rooms have specific policies and procedures which are reviewed annually. The fees are generally structured as follows:

Occasional Care

Fees:

BNC is a registered childcare provider and so government assistance may be applicable. Families apply directly to Centrelink for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and eligible families will be entitled to a rebate which reduces fees payable based on their personal circumstances.

Each session has a maximum of 21 available places and required staff ratios for different age groups will determine the actual number of under and over three-year-old attendees for each session.

Fees are calculated by multiplying the session time by the applicable hourly rate. There are two types of enrolment options for the service:

1. Parents can secure a place for their child in any weekly session which is deemed a permanent term commitment. Fees are charged per session with an equivalent hourly rate of \$11.40. There is no obligation to stay for the entire session, but the full session fee is due regardless of the portion of time attended.

2. Emergency or casual enrolment is offered on a first come, first served basis, pending the availability of a place. Permanent place enrolments are prioritised. A text message with details of availability will be sent to all those registered to receive such notifications with the maximum possible notice of a vacancy. An hourly rate of \$12.50 with a minimum of 3 hours will be charged per casual attendance. Any portion of one hour spent in care will attract the full hourly fee.

During term breaks, the Centre will offer a holiday program which is open for any new or existing enrolments on a first come basis. Fees are charged per session with an equivalent hourly rate of \$11.40. Bookings are finalised as firm enrolments on the last day of term before each holiday program. Any cancellation or absence after this date shall be charged per the usual absence procedure.

Absences:

Make-up sessions are not available.

Full session fees are charged for any absences of permanent place enrolments. CCS has an allowable number of absences per year, so parents will usually only pay the gap between the session fees and their CCS entitlement. Waiving of the gap fee may occur in circumstances approved by the Department of Education & Training (DET).

Discounts:

The Centre does not offer discounts on these sessions. Government concessions are managed through the CCS and not within the Centre's control.

Playgroup

Fees:

Each Playgroup session has 21 available places and fees are payable for the full term. Payment is due within the first two weeks of attendance. The term fee is calculated based on the number of available sessions within a term multiplied by the sessional rate of \$7.50. If an enrolment commences during the term, a pro-rata fee will be calculated which is the term fee divided by the number of weeks in the term and multiplied by the remaining weeks.

Absences:

Make-up sessions are not available and there is no refund for absences.

Discounts:

There is a discounted rate for a second sibling equivalent of \$4.00 per session and a further discounted rate equivalent of \$2.50 per session for additional siblings or babies. Sibling attendance must be within the same term to receive the discounted rate.

Associated Documents

Children's Room Programs Policy

Enrolment & Orientation Policy

Playgroup Policy

Child Care Subsidy Management Policy

Membership Policy

Document History

Version	Title	Author	Authorised	Date	Changes to Previous
1	Fees & Concessions	Unsure	Unsure	Nov 2012	Original
2	Fees Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Sept 2019	Yes
3	Fees Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	May 2021	Yes
4	Fees Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Aug 2022	Yes
5	Fees Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Aug 2024	Yes
6	Fees Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Oct 2024	Yes