



PURPOSE

This policy provides information about the West Wimmera Shire Council policy for requesting and accepting bookings, including prioritisation of bookings.

POLICY STATEMENT

Edenhope Early Childhood Service is a not-for-profit service that is committed to accurate, timely, and equitable access to bookings where possible.

Edenhope Early Childhood Service defines permanent bookings as bookings that are the same each week during approved provider term. For example, every session on Tuesday and Wednesdays each week

Edenhope Early Childhood Service defines casual bookings as bookings that change week to week.

The following processes will be followed for service bookings:

- Edenhope Early Childhood Service will accept booking requests made in XAP waiting list, in person, over the phone or in writing via email to the service
- Not all requested bookings are able to be met, depending on the licensed capacity of the service and the staffing arrangements per session
- Edenhope Early Childhood Service will endeavour to meet all booking requests where practical
- Parents and carers will identify permanent bookings in the enrolment form and Edenhope Early Childhood Service will action these booking requests where practical
- Edenhope Early Childhood Service will adjust permanent bookings as requested by parents or carers, provided the identified notice period is adhered to in order to avoid cancellation fees
- Parents and carers must provide notice for booking changes as follows:
 - Notify Edenhope Early Childhood Service via email or phone prior to the close of business 5:00pm two working days prior for booking changes
- A person with management or control of the approved provider, West Wimmera Shire Council (or a person to whom the task is delegated by the provider) will regularly undertake the management of reporting of sessions of care, absences, and business continuity payments as required as under Child Care Subsidy approval (see **Appendix 1**).

Access and Inclusion

- Edenhope Early Childhood Service has a licensed capacity for the number of children that a service can support at one time (46)
- All children and families have a right to access the service as per the Equal Opportunity Act
- In situations where the demand exceeds places, Edenhope Early Childhood Service will allocate bookings based on the Priority of Access Guidelines (Refer to Enrolment and Orientation Policy and **Appendix 1**: Edenhope Early Childhood Service Priority of Access Guidelines).

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Educators and Supervisors	Person with Management or Control, Educators, Supervisors, Nominated Supervisor/Educational Leader will oversee the implementation and service adherence to this policy



	All Educators are responsible for the daily implementation of the policy when directly supervising children.
Parent or carer	As account holders, parents or carers must ensure they fulfill their payment obligations and provide their banking details prior to their child starting care, as required.
Approved provider	Provide official sign off on the Policy

Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed every 12 months. The ongoing monitoring and compliance to this policy will be overseen by the Nominated Supervisor, Edenhope Early Childhood Service and Person with Management or Control of the Service where practical. Feedback from Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD), received through the assessment and rating process and/or compliance visits will inform this policy review. Feedback from stakeholders, e.g., families and carers, service community, etc. will also inform policy updates and review.

REFERENCES

Legislation, Standards, and Provisions

- [Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)
- [A New Tax System \(Family Assistance\) \(Administration\) Act 1999](#)
- [A New Tax System \(Family Assistance\) Act 1999](#)
- [Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017](#)
- [Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017](#)
- [Family Law Act 1975](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [National Quality Standards - Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety](#)
- [National Quality Standards Quality Area 6 - Collaborative Partnership with Families and Communities](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Fair Work Act 2009](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- [Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Worker Screening Act 2020](#)

Supporting Documents

- **Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)**
[ACECQA National Quality Standard](#)
[National Quality Agenda IT System](#)
[ACECQA Sample forms and templates](#)
- **Australian Government Department Education, Skills and Employment (DESE)**
[Child Care Provider Handbook - Child Care Subsidy System 2019](#)
[Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy](#)
[Child Care - Financial Integrity](#)



RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Governance and Management of the Service
- Fee Policy

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- 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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1: Managing and reporting sessions of care

AUTHORISATION

The Approved Provider of West Wimmera Shire Edenhope Early Childhood Service adopted this document on 26/04/2022.

REVISION	DATE APPROVED	AUTHOR	SIGNATURE	DATE OF NEXT REVISION
1	05/01/23	Tracey Bone	<i>TL Bone</i>	05/01/24



Acknowledgement

I acknowledge:

- receiving the Edenhope Early Childhood Service Booking Policy;
- that I will comply with the policy; and
- that dependent on the seriousness of any breach there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in the termination of my employment.

Your Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	
Edenhope Early Childhood Service sign off:	Date:



Attachment 1

Managing and reporting sessions of care

The delegated person responsible for Child Care Subsidy (A person with management or control of the approved provider, or a person to whom the task is delegated by the provider) will regularly undertake the management of reporting of sessions of care, absences, and business continuity payments. Session reports will be provided for each child for each week that care.

Topics addressed and details of information required in the weekly session report include:

Topic	Details
Type of report	Can be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initial report • variation (change) to a report, or • withdrawal of a report.
Dates	Start and end dates of the week the report covers.
Session details	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • date • session start and finish times.
Attendance times	Child's actual in and out attendance times must be reported for each session of care (except where an absence is reported).
Absences	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notification of absences (if applicable) • a reason for any additional absence (where child has used more than 42 absence days in a financial year).
Actual fee charged	The actual fee charged must reflect the amount the parent was liable to pay for the session of care. Where the parent directly benefits from another subsidy or discount that reduces their fee liability for the session (that the service knows of), the amount in this field must reflect the remaining amount after the other subsidy or discount has been applied. Likewise, if the parent is not liable to pay the whole fee charged for the session (because a third party has accepted liability to pay some of the fee), this field must only reflect the portion that the parent is liable for.



<p>Other subsidies paid to Edenhope Early Childhood Service to reduce the individual's fee liability</p>	<p>Where the actual fee charged for the session was reduced by the amount of another subsidy that the parent directly benefited from (for example, employer contribution to parent's child care fees):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must indicate—yes/no. <p>If 'yes':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name of the other subsidy payer • other subsidy amounts—hourly or session amount.
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Reporting absences

Child Care Subsidy is payable for up to 42 absence days for a child in a financial year for sessions of care a child is enrolled in and did not attend, but only for sessions of care where an individual still incurs a genuine fee liability to pay for the care. A reason does not need to be provided for a child's initial 42 days of absence.

Once 42 absence days have occurred in a financial year, [insert approved provider name] CBC will ensure that Child Care Subsidy is only paid for any additional absences where they are taken for a reason set out in Family Assistance Law. These reasons are:

- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner, or another person with whom the child lives is ill and the service has been given a medical certificate by a medical practitioner
- the child is attending preapproved provider
- alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day
- the child has not been immunised against an infectious disease, the absence occurs during an immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner has certified that exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child
- the absence is because the child is spending time with a person other than the individual who is their usual carer as required by a court order or a parenting plan, and the service has a copy of the relevant court order or parenting plan for the child
- the service is closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency
- the child cannot attend because of a local emergency (for example, because they are unable to travel to the service), during the period of the emergency or up to 28 days afterward
- the individual who cares for the child has decided the child should not attend the service for up to seven days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency.

In shared care arrangements (where separated parents both claim the Child Care Subsidy for the child's care), the 42 absences are allocated to the child, not to each individual parent.

Child care fee assistance is payable for sessions of care provided to a child for an attendance or an allowable absence and not on the number of places a child care service has available on a day. Therefore, where a child is absent from a session of care that was pre-booked and Edenhope Early Childhood Service will charge the family and claims an absence on their behalf, the service can offer the absent child's place to another child.

Edenhope Early Childhood Service may decide to discount fees in situations where a parent is able to provide advance notice and the place can be filled by another child. If the fees are discounted, Edenhope Early Childhood Service will report the discounted fees to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) so that the correct Child Care Subsidy can be calculated based on the actual fee the parent is charged for that session.

Reporting attendance times



Edenhope Early Childhood Service will provide children's actual in-and-out attendance times in both statements of entitlements to families and session reports to the Australian Government. Attendance times are not used to calculate Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy. Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy are calculated based on the length of each session of care individuals are liable to pay for as reported in the session report. Reporting actual attendance times is intended to help parents understand the relationship between the fees they are charged, the amount of subsidy paid to their child care provider on their behalf, and their out-of-pocket expenses.

Making business continuity payments

Business continuity payments may be made if a situation arises that is beyond the control of the Edenhope Early Childhood Service and are prevented from submitting session reports for reasons beyond their control. These payments are an emergency measure only and do not replace the requirement to submit session reports.

Examples of situations where business continuity payments may apply are:

- a disruption to the operation of communication infrastructure the service uses that cannot be rectified by the end of the relevant period
- where the service is significantly affected by a natural disaster, such as flood, storm, fire, or earthquake.

Business continuity payments are intended to allow a service to continue operating until electronic reports can be provided. Payments made in this way should still be passed on to parents as fee reductions. Then, once Edenhope Early Childhood Service is able to provide session reports again, any business continuity payments will be offset against Child Care Subsidy payments (including those that are calculated for a past period in respect to which any business continuity payments were made).

The amount to be paid will be based on the average weekly amount paid to the service during a similar previous period (for example, a similar number of children and similar time of year), known as a 'test period'. The amount of the weekly payment will be rounded to the nearest \$100.

When the service is new and there is no payment history to establish a test period, the amount will be 50 per cent of 50 hours of care for the estimated number of children in care for the week at the Child Care Subsidy hourly rate cap for the service type.

If Edenhope Early Childhood Service is in a situation where it cannot submit session reports for reasons outside its control, the Nominated Supervisor or Person with Management Control will contact the Department of Education, Skills and Employment Child Care Subsidy Help Desk, 1300 667 276 or email: ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au for support.