Occasional Care is a valued early learning and care program offered at Pennington Kindergarten for children between the ages of 2 – 5 years. This program is funded and managed by the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD).

**The program is:**

- A “now and then” child care service for children prior to preschool age
- Integrated with the Kindergarten learning environment both indoors and outdoors
- Administered and funded by DECD and co-funded by parent fee contributions

**Booking Practice**

- Staff will aim to ensure equitable access to occasional care for all families in our community.
- The needs of current and new families will be **reconsidered every term**, with families provided the opportunity to indicate their preferences for session times prior to the commencement of each term.
- Children may access **one occasional care session per week where demand permits**.
- Where demand exceeds supply (more children than places/not enough places) families may find they are only able to access/book the program on a reduced schedule which could be weekly.
- Where supply exceeds demand (vacant places) children may attend more than one session per week.
- Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect or children under the guardianship of the Minister are automatically eligible for two care sessions per week.
- In special circumstances where a site leader determines that the needs of an individual child warrant an additional allocation, two sessions of care that week may be booked.
- Where there are competing demands for Occasional Care places, the Director will balance the priority guidelines with any difficulties families may have in accessing other children’s services.
- Families are not able to access full day occasional care except for an emergency situation and only at the discretion of the Director.

**Priority of Access**

From Term 3, 2015 families will be allocated sessions according to the following priority of access criteria.

- Children NOT already accessing other child care services including family day care, child care or long day care
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from low-income families (identified as those with a health care card)
- Children with additional needs or at risk
- Children of parents with a disability
- Children whose families are experiencing high levels of stress or trauma
**Determining the priority**

- The priority will be determined after conversation between staff and the family upon enrolment.
- The Director works with the centre staff team to manage priority of access.
- If needs or circumstances change, families are required to inform the Director as soon as possible.
- Upon enrolment, families agree to accept the conditions of enrolment including the implementation and observation of priority of access guidelines.

**Fees**

Occasional care fees are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Group</th>
<th>Income level</th>
<th>Fees to be charged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Have a health care card concession</td>
<td>$1.50 per session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Standard fee</td>
<td>$5.00 per session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sibling fees**

Families with more than one child enrolled receive a 50% reduction of the fee for the second and any subsequent children attending the same term.

**Cancellation Practice**

In order to ensure the smooth running of our occasional care service, high utilisation of each session and access to care for all families, we require families to cancel any sessions that their child will miss due to illness, holidays or family occasions.

We understand that due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness, children may not be able to attend a booked session. As the centre is debited for any non-attendance of a booked session, we request the opportunity to try and fill your missed session with a family on our waiting list. Therefore:

- Cancellation notification must be made [prior to or no later than 8am for the same day morning session](#).
- Cancellation notification must be made [prior to or no later than 12 noon for the same day afternoon session](#).
- Calls after 8am or 12 noon will be considered a [non-cancellation](#) and will incur your usual session fee.

Please call (08) 8268 1200 and inform a staff member or leave a message on our answering machine.

Every effort will be made by the kindergarten to contact children on the waiting list who may then access the session.

*This policy has been ratified by the Pennington Kindergarten Governing Council on 26th June 2015.*

*This policy will be reviewed in June 2016 or when circumstances related to the programme warrant an earlier review.*