



10 July 2020

Key Messages

- The Centre will continue to operate while Stage 3 COVID-19 restrictions are in place, including sessional kindergarten.
- For the next 2 weeks, if your child is absent from childcare for COVID-related reasons, the Centre will waive the gap fee.
- Please contact the office to let them know that your child will be absent.
- If your child attends the centre you will be charged the gap fee.
- The Committee of Management will need to determine the Centre's ability waive fees for non-attendance beyond the initial 2 week period.
- Please continue to observe the health and hygiene practices that have been implemented at the Centre.

Dear Families

As you will be aware, the Victorian Government has made a series of significant announcements about the re-introduction of Stage 3 restrictions across metropolitan Melbourne to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). This letter provides information on matters relating to the Centre's operation while Stage 3 COVID-19 restrictions are in place.

Early childhood education and care – including sessional kindergarten

The current advice from Victoria's Chief Health Officer and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) is that Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services can continue to operate, with appropriate risk-mitigation measures in place, unless instructed by the Department of Health and Human Services to close.

The Range Children's Centre will continue to operate, including sessional kindergarten, with term 3 starting on Monday 13 July.

Fee waiver for non-attendance due to COVID- related reasons

The Australian Government's ECEC Relief Package is scheduled to end on 13 July, with families required to cover any CCS gap fee from that date. This week the government announced that all services located in areas subject to Stage 3 COVID-19 restrictions can elect to waive parent gap fees if children are not attending child care for COVID-related reasons from Monday 13 July.

At this stage the government has provided no information regarding how the Centre will cover the fee shortfall. **The Centre could face a revenue drop of up to 25% by waiving the gap fee.** If this waiver continues over a long period this will impact on the Centre's long term viability.

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Accordingly, at this stage the Centre will implement the gap fee waiver (for any non-attendance only) for an initial period of 2 weeks. This means that for the next 2 weeks:

- If your child is absent from childcare for COVID-related reasons, the Centre will waive the gap fee;
- If your child attends the Centre you will be charged the gap fee;
- If your child becomes ill or is feeling unwell in our care your child will be sent home, you will be charged for their attendance for that day.

If you choose for your child not to attend you will not be charged and you will not lose your place. **We request that to assist with catering and rostering that you contact the office to let them know that your child will be absent.**

The Committee of Management will make a decision during the week of 20 July regarding the Centre's ability waive fees for non-attendance beyond the initial 2 week period. Our intent is to implement the non-attendance fee waiver if we are able to do so without impacting the viability of the Centre.

Kindergarten fees

The Department of Education and Training will continue Four Year Old kindergarten fee relief funding but at a reduced rate, this will be credited in your term statements.

At this stage no additional funding has been announced for three year old kinder. Accordingly, to protect the viability of the Centre, fees will be charged for term 3 of three year old kinder.

Health and hygiene practices

We will continue to reinforce excellent hygiene and cleaning practices as well as adjusting our programming to maximise outside play and social distancing.

Our valued staff do not have the option of working from home, and without them, the Centre could not operate. Please respect them by observing the health and hygiene practices that have been implemented at the Centre. A further email will be sent out to families next week to reinforce these practices.

If you have any questions, or if you intend to keep your child at home for COVID-19 related reasons, please contact the office.

Kind regards

Geoff Kaandorp

On behalf of The Range Children's Centre Committee of Management

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