REVIEW DUE:
05/01/2027

PAYMENT OF SERVICE FEES POLICY

Background

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Little Petal is required to ensure that policies and procedures are in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service (Regulation 168). Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure these policies and procedures are followed (Regulation 170).

Principles

Little Petal is committed to providing fair and transparent fee structures that allow families and individuals to access high-quality services. This includes ensuring that all clients are fully informed about fees during enrolment and intake, providing at least 14 days' notice of any changes to the fee structure, and maintaining systems to process payments accurately while upholding confidentiality.

Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for:

- The setting, payment, and collection of service fees.
- Ensuring the financial sustainability of all Little Petal services, including in-home child care and Children's Contact Support Services.
- Equitably applying fees across programs while maintaining a high standard of service delivery.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Little Petal administration and finance personnel.
- Parents, guardians, individuals including NDIS participants, and plan managers utilising any of Little Petal's services.

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Policy Statement

Little Petal is committed to:

- Providing responsible financial management, including fee structures that ensure service viability.
- Supporting families experiencing financial hardship by offering manageable payment options and support systems.
- Maintaining confidentiality regarding financial andpersonal circumstances.
- Clearly communicating fee structures, payment options, and changes to all clients.

Guidelines

Fee Structure:

- In-home child care services tailored to meet the individual developmental and care needs of children.
- children contact support services that provide supervised environments for child-parent interactions.
- Qualified and trained Family Engagement and Support Educators, equipped with resources to deliver educational, developmental, and supportive care.
- Compliance with the National Quality Framework, ensuring safety, accountability, and service excellence.

Fee Information and Payment Requirements:

- All clients will receive a detailed Service Delivery Agreement outlining fees and charges upon enrolment or intake.
- Fees will be invoiced weekly and must be paid in full by the due date indicated on the invoice.
- Payment instructions, including available methods, will accompany each invoice.
- A one-time registration fee is charged during enrolment, covering administrative costs such as the social worker assessment conducted in the client's home.

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Fee Changes:

- Clients will be notified of any changes to the fee structure or payment methods at least 14 days in advance, as required by Regulation 172(2).
- Fees are reviewed annually as part of the budgeting process but may be adjusted in extraordinary circumstances, such as decreased attendance rates affecting service viability.

Unpaid Fees:

- An initial reminder will be sent via text, email, or letter.
- If payment is still not received, a follow-up contact will be made offering support and the option to establish a payment plan.
- Continued non-payment may result in a final notification of service withdrawal unless payment is made, or a payment plan is arranged within a specified timeframe.
- Little Petal reserves the right to engage a debt collection service for unpaid fees.
- Clients will receive written notice if services are withdrawn due to non- payment.

Refund policy

Fees are generally non-refundable. Exceptional circumstances may be considered at Little Petal's discretion.

No refunds will be provided for:

- Service closures due to extreme or unavoidable circumstances, such as bushfires.
- Unused booked hours where a family chooses not to engage.
- Late cancellations or no-shows, as outlined in the cancellation policy.

Cancellation of Services:

- Clients must provide at least 24 hours' notice for cancellations.
- Fees will still apply for cancellations made within 24 hours of the scheduled booking.

Responsibilities

Approved Provider and Management:

- Review budgets and set fees that balance affordability with service sustainability.
- Provide clear, culturally sensitive communication about fees and payment options.
- Ensure compliance with privacy policies regarding financial and personal information.

Parents, Guardians, and individuals including NDIS Participants:

- Comply with the fee payment requirements outlined in this policy.
- Notify Little Petal if experiencing financial difficulties and work to establish a payment plan.

Evaluation

The Approved Provider will:

- Seek feedback from clients and employees about the fee policy's effectiveness.
- Monitor compliance, complaints, and financial outcomes related to this policy.
- Revise the policy as needed, notifying clients of changes at least 14 days in advance.