

# ABSENCES FROM CARE



SA MONTESSORI  
quality early childhood education and care

## What to do if your child will be, or is Absent

If you are aware ahead of time that your child will be absent from his/her usual enrolled days for an extended period of time, please let us know in writing by emailing us, including the exact dates your child will be away. We can then mark your child as absent in our system, and on your return, the Qikkids Kiosk Sign-In system will prompt you to acknowledge these absences (*please see a teacher if you require assistance to do so*). Fees will still be due and payable for all periods of absence, and CCS will be applicable as usual for up to 42 days of absence.

If your child will be absent due to sickness or unexpected circumstances and you are unable to notify us in advance, it would be appreciated if parents would inform the centre as soon as possible in the morning by phone or email. Fees will still be due and payable, and CCS will be applicable as usual. On your return to the centre, you will be prompted by the Qikkids Kiosk Sign-In system to authorise your child's absence (please see a teacher if you require assistance to do so).

To ensure that Australian Government child care fee assistance (Child Care Subsidy **CCS**) is paid at the correct rate, it is essential for your Preschool to provide the government with regular attendance record reports. These reports must contain accurate information regarding your child's absences and attendances. Statements of fees will be emailed to families on a regular basis, and include an absence count for your information.

## Absences due to Public Holidays

Please note that full session rates will apply for public holidays (less any CCS due as per usual). This is to compensate for the fact that teachers, like most other employees, are still entitled to be paid for public holidays when they would otherwise be at work, and the centre needs to maintain ongoing operating costs during these periods of closure. Centrelink has advised that public holidays will be counted as part of the 42 allowable absences if the child would normally have attended the service on that week day, and fees have been charged for that day for the child.

## Absences due to School Term Holiday Programs

As part of our requirements as an 'Approved Centre for Commonwealth Childcare Benefits', our Montessori Preschools must prove to run a continuous service for 48 weeks of the year. Therefore school holiday programs will be conducted during breaks between school terms. A child's placement is continuous throughout this period and fees must be paid accordingly to retain the placement.

However, we actively encourage families who are not in need of child care during this time to allow their child to experience this important "time off" to spend with family and older siblings. This also provides the child with the 'down time' required to rest and re-energise after each busy term. We have found that children who do take time off in the holidays tend to demonstrate positive outcomes in terms of their emotional and physical well-being.

## Centre Closure over Christmas Period

Our Preschools will close each year for two to four weeks over the Christmas period. No fees will be charged during this period of closure (and therefore no CCS applies for this period of time). As a result, time away from the centre during this period is not considered to be an 'absence', and so is not included in the 42 days of absences tallied by the government for CCS purposes. However, please refer to the Centrelink Assistance information overleaf, as overseas and extended holidays (of more than 14 weeks) that immediately surround this closure **will** be impacted by this closure.

# **IMPORTANT: Centrelink Assistance for Absences**

## **NUMBER OF ALLOWABLE ABSENCES**

The government will pay CCS for **42 absence days** per child each financial year across all services the child attends. These can be for any reason, and include public holidays, sickness and general holidays or unexpected circumstances. These days will *not* require proof of absence. Additional absences can be claimed **once a family has used all of their initial 42 absence days**. There is no limit on the number of additional absence days a recipient may claim, providing the absence days are taken for specified reasons, and supporting documentation, where required, is provided. Please note that our Preschools do not have the authority to approve additional absence days. Specified reasons for additional absences include illness (with a medical certificate), or another absence due to sickness of the child, a carer, carer's partner or sibling (with medical certificates).

**FULL FEES** (ie with no Centrelink entitlements) will be charged for any absence **once 42 total absences have been reached** (unless an additional absence is claimed). **For further information,:** <https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-if-your-child-absent-from-child-care?context=41186#howmany>

## **ABSENCES WHILST TRAVELLING OVERSEAS** (More than 6 weeks)

Your subsidy will stop if you 1) leave Australia for more than **6 'continuous' weeks**, or if you 2) return to Australia, then go again within 6 weeks, or if you 3) go to live in another country. Centrelink will also include our Christmas closure period during their definition of 'continuous weeks away' from the centre if your holidays/absences are immediately adjacent to this closure. It is important to note that in the conditions outlined above, Centrelink will automatically *reverse* any CCS entitlement payments that may have *already been applied to your statement* for your child from the start of your period of absence. **This means that any CCS that had been provided during that 6 weeks will be revoked, and you will then need to pay back the resulting balance to the centre. This can sometimes be a significant amount.** Alternatively, if you have given us advance notice that you will be away for this substantial period, then full fees will commence as soon as your extended absence begins (as we can then prepare the system for this absence in advance). Effectively, this means that if you and your child are away overseas for more than 6 weeks, you will be charged **full fees** for your child's sessions (during all times the centre is open) in order that your child's placement is maintained at the centre whilst you are away, and ready for you to return to when you arrive back in Australia. If you are aware that you will be away for longer than 6 weeks overseas **OR** if your total amount of absences within one financial year will surpass 42 absence days due to your scheduled holiday, we *highly recommend* that you set aside sufficient finances to cover **FULL FEES** for your enrolled sessions.

**FULL FEES** (ie with no Centrelink entitlements) will be charged **if you are overseas for longer than 6 weeks**.

**For further information please refer to:** <https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/travel-outside-australia-rules-for-child-care-subsidy?context=41186>

## **ABSENCES FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME** (More than 14 weeks)

If you have been away from the centre for longer than **14 'continuous weeks'**, Centrelink will automatically end your enrolment *within the Centrelink system*. If your enrolment is ended by Centrelink due to an absence that has surpassed 14 weeks, no Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy is payable for any session of care that occurs after the last day a child physically attended care at the provider if the child is absent on their last day of the 14 week period. **This means that any CCS that had been provided during that 14 weeks will be revoked, and you will then need to pay back the resulting balance to the centre. This can sometimes be a significant amount.** Please note that Centrelink will include our Christmas closure period within their definition of '14 weeks away from the centre' if your holidays/absences is immediately adjacent to this closure period. **Please be aware of this, especially when planning holidays close to Christmas, or if you are planning time away from the centre for any reason!** If your child will not be returning to care for fourteen weeks or more, but you wish to reserve his/her place at the centre whilst he/she is absent, the following will be required:

- You will be required to pay **full fees** for the entire period your child is away from the centre.
- A new **Complying Written Arrangement** will be required prior to the child's return. This means that before CCS payments can recommence, our Preschool will need written correspondence from you confirming that you are still in agreement with your child's enrolment terms and policies.
- You will then also then need to **reapprove your child's enrolment at your Preschool within Centrelink via MyGov**. **The following link may be helpful:** <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/confirm-your-childs-enrolment-details-child-care-subsidy>

**FULL FEES** (ie with no Centrelink entitlements) will be charged **if your child is absent for longer than 14 weeks**.

**For further information please refer to:** <https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-if-your-child-absent-from-child-care?context=41186>

## **ABSENCES ON FIRST OR FINAL DAYS OF ENROLMENT**

Please also note that if your child is absent either on their first or last day of enrolment, we are required to mark the roll for your child as a 'Cessation of Care' and not as 'Absent'. In this case, CCS **WILL BE FORFEITED** for all days of absence before their first physical day of attendance, **and/or** for all days of absence after their last physical day of attendance. Full fees will be charged for these periods of absences. This is a condition of the Australian Government and not of our Preschools. If your child attends (or even partially attends) their first day or last day of enrolment as booked, then they are still eligible for any CCS due as per normal. We would therefore strongly recommend that parents bring their child into the centre on their first and final day of enrolment (even for a short period of time), in order to receive entitlements due for that day (and any absences immediately surrounding that first/last day).