



THE BIG FAT SMILE PARENT HANDBOOK



Our Vision

VISION

A braver, brighter, more creative world.

PURPOSE

To be Australia's best-run and most respected provider of programs, services and products for kids, families and the community.

VALUES

- Imagination
- Courage
- Integrity
- Respect

BELIEFS

- We are creative
- We are fun
- We are diverse
- We are leaders
- We are learners



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Parent Handbook current as at November 2015. This handbook is updated from time to time. For the most up to date version please visit bigfatsmile.com.au

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About Us

Welcome to Big Fat Smile

Welcome and thank you for enrolling with Big Fat Smile.

This handbook explains key policies and procedures on enrolment, fees and issues affecting the health and welfare of children in our care.

We ask that you sign the Enrolment Record after your child's place is confirmed to acknowledge that you have read and understood the policies and procedures.

We welcome your feedback on this publication and invite you to contact your centre director or the operations team at Corrimal HQ. Contact details are listed at the back of this publication.

Who we are

Established in 1981, Big Fat Smile Group Ltd exists to serve children, families and the community.

Ours is a not-for-profit, community-owned company, that began as an action group campaigning for the rights of families to affordable child care.

We have grown to become the largest and most respected children's services provider in southeastern New South Wales.

We are known best for the 42 preschools, long day care centres and fun clubs (primary age) we operate across ten local government areas.

Governance

The Board of Big Fat Smile is elected by members of the company. The Board determines policy for the operation of the company and the conduct of its members. These decisions are binding on all employees and the membership of parent and community groups.

The Board comprises people who are committed to providing high quality children's services and programs for the community.

Membership

Members acknowledge that the company is established for the purposes expressed in the Constitution of the company.

The Board of Big Fat Smile determines the annual membership fee. The fee is \$5 for each individual member. The annual membership fee is due by 31 March each year. Current financial membership is a requirement for any person seeking election to the Board.

A copy of the Constitution and a membership application can be obtained by contacting Corrimal HQ.

Keeping you informed

Big Fat Smile thanks you for the trust you have placed in us. You can be assured of our commitment to your child's safety, welfare and development.

Real time parent communication

We offer a secure, highly encrypted app which can be used on any smart device or desktop

computer via the web browser. It is used by our entire network of Community Preschools and Fun Clubs to communicate with parents.

You can also check news and events at:

bigfatasmile.com.au;
[facebook/bigfatasmilegroup](https://www.facebook.com/bigfatasmilegroup); or
[instagram.com/big_fat_smile](https://www.instagram.com/big_fat_smile).

Big Fat Smile's annual report can also be viewed on the website.

Big Fat Smile publications can be made available in a number of languages if required. Please ask your centre team for more information.

Policies and Procedures

This handbook forms part of the terms of enrolment for your child. We update this handbook from time to time.

Visit bigfatasmile.com.au for the latest version. We have summarised some of our most important policies and procedures in this handbook. You may access a complete copy of our policies and procedures for our centres at your child's centre.

Parent involvement

Parents, family members and community representatives are important partners in the delivery of quality outcomes for children and families in our local centres.

Big Fat Smile values the contributions of families, and respects how and when you would like to participate.

Following are some of the ways you might like to become involved within your child's centre:

- Sharing skills, interests, experiences or resources (for example, computing, building, cooking, gardening, sewing, creative arts or language skills)
- Becoming a member of the centre's parent and community group
- Assisting with excursions or at centre events
- Participating in fund-raising activities

We encourage families to call or visit our centres and we are happy to discuss how your child's day is going, or to speak about any other issues of interest.

Parent feedback

Feedback may take the form of compliments, suggestions, enquiries, concerns or complaints. Big Fat Smile is committed to the fair and effective resolution of all complaints in a timely manner.

We will make all reasonable attempts to resolve concerns in an informal manner, through discussions with the centre director and team. If we are unable to resolve your concern or complaint to your satisfaction, please contact one of our operations managers, located at Corrimal HQ, on 4283 9900.

Codes of conduct

The Big Fat Smile Code of Conduct establishes the standards for all employees of the company, whether in child-related or other roles.

Big Fat Smile employees also abide by the ethical responsibilities outlined in Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics and Network of Community Activities' Code of Professional Conduct for Staff where applicable to their roles.

Early childhood services

Children learn through exploration, play and discovery, and learn best alongside their peers, in a safe and well-planned environment. Our educators take time to plan and implement developmentally appropriate experiences for children that promote learning and understanding in response to children's interests and needs. Our teams provide a balance of experiences throughout the day, comprising indoor/outdoor, quiet, energetic and group activities.

The educational program provided in our early childhood services is guided by *'Belonging, Being and Becoming'*, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. A copy can be viewed at your centre. Information about the content of your centre's educational program is on display and individual child programs are made available to families upon request. Our educators develop an individual program to meet your child's developing strengths and interests.

Your centre's team actively seeks your input and feedback concerning your child's experiences whilst in our care. They will liaise closely with you about all aspects of your child's development and participation in the program.

Community Preschools

Our community preschools cater for children aged 2 to 5 years or 3 to 5 years and generally operate between the hours of 8.30am and 3.30pm, for up to 41 weeks each year.

Community Preschools 0-5

Our long day community preschools cater for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years and generally operate between the hours of 7am and 6pm, for 50 or more weeks each year.

School age services (Fun Club)

Our school age programs provide care, recreation and leisure time for children of primary school age. The program provided in our school age care services is guided by *'My Time, Our Place'*, the school age care framework for Australia. A copy can be viewed at your centre. Information about the content of the program is displayed and individual child programs are made available to families upon request.

We offer supervised, age appropriate activities that encourage children to interact with friends. These activities include creative arts (such as visual arts, photography, drama, music and filmmaking), sports, cooking, reading, games and excursions.

Your child's ideas and interests form the basis of the programs. The programs offer a wide range of stimulating activities as well as visits from Big Fat Smile's creative leaders.

Staff actively seek your input and feedback concerning your child's experiences whilst in our care. They will also liaise closely with you about all aspects of your child's development and participation in the program.

Before School Care

Our before school care services operate typically from 7am to 9am during school terms.

After School Care

Our after school care services operate typically from 3pm to 6pm during school terms.

School Holiday Programs

Our school holiday programs operate typically from 8am to 6pm during school holidays.

Excursions

Children learn from experience, and excursions are a valuable component of many of our programs. We focus on planning to maximise the learning potential of the experience, whilst ensuring the safety of all those involved. We require your written consent for your child to attend excursions.

Meals

Big Fat Smile is committed to providing nutritious food and drink, as well as promoting healthy eating habits.

Community Preschools

Big Fat Smile recommends and promotes nutritional meals and snacks for children who bring their own meals and snacks and lunch from home.

Community Preschools 0-5

Hot meals are served in our 'longer day' preschools. Our cooks provide children with at least 50% of their daily recommended dietary intake of nutrients with safe, fresh and appetising food, as set out in the Dietary Guidelines for Australians. The daily menu is displayed at each centre, and family input is encouraged.

Fun Club

In our school age services, we provide breakfast during before school care and afternoon tea in our after school program. Nutritious snacks are provided during our holiday programs.

Special dietary requirements

Please advise your centre director if your child is following a special diet.

Allergies and medical conditions

Please advise your centre director if your child has allergies or medical conditions. Asthma and Anaphylaxis action plans must be provided by your GP. The team will work with you to develop plans to ensure your child's safety and wellbeing.

Health and medical exclusion

Infectious diseases

To ensure the health and safety of all children, families and employees, we request that your child does not attend the centre when suffering from an infectious disease or any condition that affects reasonable participation in the centre's program.

Centre directors will inform parents or authorised emergency contacts of an infectious occurrence as soon as possible. Similarly parents are asked to inform the centre in the event of a child suffering an infectious disease as soon as possible.

Each centre has a current list of infections and conditions requiring exclusion, sourced from the National Health and Medical Research Council. Any child excluded from a centre must remain absent for the recommended exclusion period.

Families continue to pay fees during any absence due to illness or exclusion. Please contact your centre director for more information.

Immunisation

In accordance with the *Public Health Act 2010*, families are required to provide an ACIR Immunisation History Statement that shows that each child enrolled at the centre is up to date for their age with their scheduled vaccinations. Alternatively a Medicare Immunisation Conscientious Objection form can be provided. This information needs to be provided to the centre's team prior to your child's commencement with Big Fat Smile.

Centre directors will inform families of any outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease. Parents are asked to immediately inform the centre of a vaccine preventable disease which has been discovered in their family. If your child attends a second child care centre and a vaccine preventable disease is identified at the other centre, parents are asked to immediately inform us. This is important, in order to minimise the risk of infection to other children and educators.

Big Fat Smile is required to notify NSW Health upon identifying any case of a vaccine preventable disease at the centre. Consequently, NSW Health may require you to exclude your child from the centre for a period of time if your child is not currently immunised.

Fees are payable during these periods away from the centre.

Incident, injury & trauma procedures

In the event that your child needs urgent medical attention, parents or authorised persons will be notified as soon as possible.

If the parents/guardian or emergency contact persons are unavailable, a team member will accompany the child in the ambulance.

If a minor accident occurs and your child is given first aid at the centre, we will discuss the incident with you.

We are required to notify the Department of Education and Communities if your child requires medical attention for an injury, illness or trauma that occurs at a Big Fat Smile centre. A representative from the Department of Education and Communities may contact you to follow up the incident. Your centre director will notify you if this is to occur.

Emergency and evacuation procedures

All centres prepare risk assessments for any potential emergencies (e.g. fire, flood or centre lockdown) relevant to them.

Evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the centre and are rehearsed at least once every three months. If you would like to view these procedures and plans please speak to the centre team.

Medication procedures

If your child requires medication whilst at the centre, you need to ensure the following:

- The medication must be presented on arrival in the original container bearing the original label, instructions and before the expiry or 'use by' date. Please ensure the medication is labelled with your child's name. We will not administer unlabelled medication.
- Families must complete the appropriate medication form and present it to a team member for verification.
- When collecting a child from the centre, a parent or authorised person must sign the medication form in acknowledgement of the medication administration.

If your child requires medication, please see a team member, who will assist you with the process.

Collection of your child

We are committed to ensuring your child's safety whilst in our care and our team will only let children leave with people who have been authorised to collect your child on your enrolment form. Any parent or guardian of your child may authorise another person to collect your child. Families must provide prior notice when different people need to be authorised to collect a child.

If we do not recognise the person who comes to collect your child, we will ask for current photographic identification, and will compare this with the child's enrolment form before allowing the child to leave. Families must ensure that anyone coming to collect your child has this form of identification with them.

If children remain at the centre after closing time, we will attempt to make contact with the family and the emergency contacts on the enrolment form. If, after thirty minutes, we have been unable to make contact and/or arrange for the child to be collected, we will contact the nearest police station.

Publicity and promotions

Big Fat Smile seeks your consent for employees, students, volunteers or media representatives to take appropriate photographs, videos, films or audio tapes of your child during operating hours for authorised publication, broadcast or research.

You can indicate your consent or otherwise in the section provided on your child's enrolment form. You may also allow us to take photographs of your child for internal

purposes (for example, to document your child's development or display in the centre).

Confidentiality of records

Information collected on your child and family remains confidential. Enrolment forms and accompanying documentation are kept in a secure, locked location.

For more information refer to our Privacy Statement on page 14.

Child protection

Big Fat Smile supports each child's right to live and learn in a safe and secure environment.

As mandatory reporters, employees are required to report and act in accordance with the procedures for recognising, responding to and reporting child abuse and neglect to the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

Guiding children's behaviour

We use a positive approach in behaviour management and guiding children's behaviours. We encourage children towards positive and responsible behaviour, and give children the opportunity to become self-reliant and to develop their self esteem.

The centre team will explain the expectations in regard to your child's behaviour and will provide details of the company's Behaviour Guidance Procedures on request.

Workplace health and safety

Big Fat Smile has a Workplace Health and Safety Policy which covers children, families, visitors, contractors and employees at each centre.

To assist in meeting legislated health and safety requirements, everyone must be

aware of and abide by the Emergency and Evacuation Procedures that are displayed at each centre.

Insurance

Big Fat Smile has a public liability insurance policy that covers the cost of damages awarded in respect of personal injury and property damage for which the company or its employees are found to be legally liable. The policy does not respond automatically in the event of an accident. There must be a finding of negligence by a court, or a decision by the insurer to settle the claim out of court.

Children enrolled in our services are covered by Group Ambulance Cover. This policy covers the costs incurred by the centre in transporting a child by ambulance. However, the policy requires the parent to claim the cost of the ambulance transport through their private health fund or Health Care Card, in the first instance.

Our Group Ambulance Cover will only apply in the instance that parents do not have private health insurance or a Health Care Card.

We do not provide personal accident cover for your child.

Other services available to families

Include Me

Big Fat Smile coordinates programs that support children's centres to provide inclusive environments and programs for all children, including children with additional needs.

This is made possible through funding from the Australian Government's Department of Education, and the NSW Government's

Department of Family and Community Services and Department of Education and Communities. Further information is available at www.bigfatasmile.com.au/includeme

Supported Playgroups

Supported playgroups operate to assist children and families with identified needs in their development and readiness for school. Big Fat Smile works in partnership with other agencies to provide supported playgroups across the Illawarra. For further information, contact our Include Me team or visit www.bigfatasmile.com.au/inclusion-program/supported-playgroups

Transition to School

Our Transition to School supports children as they enter formal schooling through a range of school and community activities, the sharing of research on best practice, provision of practical support to child care services and schools, and access to resources.

Parents, carers and practitioners can access information on upcoming events and activities along with the latest research at www.bigfatasmile.com.au/transitiontoschool

Artspace

Creative arts classes operate from the Artspace studio in Corrimal during school terms and holidays. Artspace caters for children aged 3-16 years. Classes are taught by degree qualified and practising artists and educators and are inspired by the Reggio approach.

Artspace encourages children to engage in contemporary, best practice arts education, through an investigative approach to the arts. Programs are designed to stimulate children's imaginations and innate artistic abilities. Artspace is also an excursion venue. For more information about Artspace visit www.bigfatasmile.com.au/artspace.

Green Bean Play Café

Green Bean Play Café is the only venue of its kind for children in the Illawarra. Offering safe and inspiring indoor play for preschoolers, fresh, contemporary food and a community engagement program, Green Bean is aimed at the parents of children up to six years.

Proceeds from Green Bean Play Café support our community preschools. For more information visit www.bigfatmile.com.au/greenbean

Fees, attendance and fee relief

Fees

This policy applies to all centre-based services provided by Big Fat Smile. All fees are reviewed annually by the Board, and always as part of the budget development and review process. While every effort is made to maintain fees at the lowest possible levels, fees may increase during the course of the year to meet unanticipated costs.

Payment of fees

Fees can be paid by:

- direct debit; or
- Centrepay through Centrelink

Each parent is responsible for following procedures set by the Commonwealth Family Assistance Office for applying and/or varying the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate.

It is important to notify Big Fat Smile if you have any other children attending approved care, whether with Big Fat Smile or another provider, as this will affect your Child Care Benefit entitlements if entitled.

Statements are issued weekly via email, to ensure the correct Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate are on your account.

Statements are emailed to the email address you provided on the enrolment form. Should you wish to receive your statement via post, please contact your fee management officer directly.

Late payment of fees

It is essential that all fees are paid on time. Each centre's annual budget is based on timely receipt of fees to cover costs including salaries. All fee accounts are monitored to ensure that they are kept up to date, and a late fee is applied to any account that is two weeks in arrears.

In instances of poor payment history, Big Fat Smile may refuse enrolment or continuing enrolment.

Fee relief - Long day care/Fun Club

Child Care Benefit

Families may be eligible for the Australian Government's Child Care Benefit if they have children enrolled in a Community Preschool 0-5 years or a Fun Club (5-12 years).

Where approved, the value of the Child Care Benefit is deducted from the full daily fee for child care and the remaining 'gap fee' is payable to Big Fat Smile. To be eligible for this reduced 'gap fee', a parent and child must have a Customer Reference Number (CRN) and updated immunisation records, which can be obtained through the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

Child Care Rebate

The Child Care Rebate covers up to 50 per cent of 'out-of-pocket' child care expenses ('gap fees') for approved child care up to the maximum legislated amount per year per child in approved care. Child Care Rebate can be paid either directly to the centre or directly to the family.

Note: Further information can be obtained through the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

Fee relief - Term only preschools

Fee Relief

Families on low incomes may be eligible for fee relief if they have one or more children enrolled in a Community Preschool. This assistance allows eligible families to pay a lower 'gap fee' for preschool attendance. Eligibility for this type of fee relief is determined locally and should be discussed with your centre director.

Other Fee Relief

Families with high gross incomes may be eligible for a separate rebate, upon meeting government requirements and production of receipts confirming preschool attendance. Local Medicare offices administer this benefit. For more information, contact Medicare on 13 20 11.

Further assistance with fees

If you require assistance with any matter regarding your fees, please contact the fee management team on 02 4283 9900 or via email at feemanagement@bigfatmile.com.au

Procedures for overdue fees

It is essential that all fees are paid on time. Each centre's annual budget is based on timely receipt of fees to cover costs including salaries. All fee accounts are monitored to ensure that they are kept up to date, and a late fee is applied to any account that is two weeks in arrears.

In instances of poor payment history, Big Fat Smile may refuse enrolment or continuing enrolment.

In circumstances of genuine hardship, your fee management officer will discuss and negotiate a signed agreement where you may repay the outstanding balance within a reasonable period, and keep your fees up to date.

Big Fat Smile maintains a list of families that have outstanding fees. The fee management team is obliged to ensure any outstanding fees are paid or that a suitable payment plan is negotiated prior to any re-enrolment.

Late collection of children fees

If a child remains in the centre after closing time, fees will be charged. These are an administration fee of \$25 and a 'late collection of children fee' charged at the rate of \$1.00 per minute per child for the first 10 minutes, increasing to \$3.00 per minute thereafter. This amount is to be paid within fourteen days of the account being issued.

Non payment of fees on days when a service is closed

Community Preschools and Community Preschools 0-5

Fees are not charged for public holidays and other days of centre closure.

Fun Club (before and after school)

Fees are charged for all gazetted school term days, but not for public holidays and other days when Fun Clubs are closed.

Vacation care is offered on public school pupil free days for all Fun Clubs aside from Bellambi Point and Wollongong City Fun Clubs. For all other pupil free days, no fee applies as the centres operate before and after school care only. Fees are charged on days when schools are closed due to industrial action.

Notice of withdrawal and change of days

Two weeks written notice is required, if you intend to withdraw your child or reduce their days of attendance between February and November. Four weeks written notice is required in December and January. Full fees will be charged for all booked days, in the notice period whether or not your child attends the centre. Please see your centre director for the relevant forms.

Refunds

Refunds will be given if Big Fat Smile is unable to offer care on a day in which your child is ordinarily booked.

Refunds are not given where a child does not attend on a day for which they are enrolled.

Failure to notify of planned after school care absence

Due to the large amount of staff time expended in locating children who fail to attend after school care as expected, a fee of \$5 per child will be charged. This fee is charged to parents who do not inform the centre of their child's absence. This fee is in addition to the daily fee charged.

Signing in (arrival) and signing out (departure)

Children must be signed in on arrival and signed out on departure each day. We are required to maintain a record of the children in our care at all times. This record is also vital in case of an emergency. When a child arrives or departs, unaccompanied by the parent, staff will note and initial the time of arrival or departure from the centre.

Explanation of absences

Community Preschools 0-5 and Fun Clubs are part of the Australian Government funding system. The Department of Education and the Family Assistance Office require a record to be kept of all absences. Therefore, it is compulsory to specify the reason for each absence, e.g. sick, parent's RDO, birthday party. This is to be advised on your child's next day of attendance. You will still be charged fees (gap fee) for this day. The Government allows forty-two absences where the gap fee is all you will be charged. After that, absences must be for reasons approved by the Family Assistance Office, otherwise full fees apply.

You cannot start or end an enrolment on an absence. You will be charged full fees for this, as you cannot claim Child Care Benefit or the Child Care Rebate for these days. Our centres do not offer make-up days for absences.

Enrolment for school leavers

For all children starting primary school, their enrolment at the centre will cease at the end of the preceding December. If you require care for your child during the January before they start school, care may be available at:

- one of our vacation care centres; or
- subject to availability of short term places, at the centre your child has been attending.

Big Fat Smile Privacy Statement

We collect your personal, sensitive and health information to enable us and our third party suppliers to provide education and care products and services to you or to another organisation that we are working with to support you, and to give you information on other services we offer. We are also required by education and care laws to collect some personal (including sensitive) information.

If you do not provide us with this information we may not be able to provide you with our services.

We may collect your information from you, a person authorised to provide this information on your behalf, family member or a third party.

Where you provide us with personal information about another person, you must ensure that you let them know what information you are giving to us and have their consent to do so.

We may disclose your personal information to people or organisations in Australia including our agents and service providers and professional advisors, other individuals you have nominated, health service providers, government agencies or other parties to whom we are authorised or required by law to disclose information. We may also disclose your personal information to another family member where required to deliver education and care services to your child.

We may disclose your information overseas to China, Belgium and the United States of America as part of our ordinary business i.e. cultural exchange program and parent communication tools.

Our privacy policy contains more information about our privacy practices including the use of your personal information and how you may opt out of receiving promotional materials. The policy also details how you may request access to, or correction of, personal information we hold, how you can make a complaint and how we manage such complaints.

You can obtain the latest version of our privacy policy by contacting us or by visiting our website www.bigfatssmile.com.au.

You can also write to our Privacy Officer;

Privacy Officer
Big Fat Smile Group Limited
PO BOX 475
Corrimal NSW 2518

or email privacy@bigfatssmile.com.au

**Please check our website
for a full list of centres
and contact details.**

Smile

Big Fat Smile®

Not-for-profit. Community owned.

bigfatsmile.com.au

