



THE BIG FAT SMILE PARENT HANDBOOK 2018



Our Vision

VISION

Educating for 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 July 2018. This handbook is updated from time to time. For the most up to date version please visit bigfatmile.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:

bigfatmile.com.au;
[facebook/bigfatmilegroup](https://www.facebook.com/bigfatmilegroup); 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 bigfatmile.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

In this section you will find all you need to know about fees and payments.

Big Fat Smile is a not-for-profit, community owned company. Each year our Board reviews our fees and budgets, and these fee policies apply to all of our Centres. 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.

Weekly Statements

Each week we will send you a Statement via email before your weekly direct debit, to ensure that the correct Child Care Subsidy has been applied to your account.

Please check these Statements to ensure all payment details are correct and accurate. If there are any issues, please contact our Fee Management officer right away.

Payment of fees

Big Fat Smile facilitates the following methods of payment for your fees each week:

- Direct debit from your nominated bank account or credit card; and
- Centrepay through Centrelink.

Direct debits are deducted each Friday. Please keep this in mind and ensure there are sufficient funds in your account to cover this weekly payment.

Other payment options may be available to you upon written request. Please speak with your Centre staff regarding additional options.

Fee reductions: Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

If you have a child enrolled in one of our Centres or Fun Clubs you may be eligible for the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy.

It is the responsibility of each parent or guardian to follow the procedures set by the Department of Human Services to apply for and/or vary their Child Care Subsidy. This Subsidy is passed on to families by Big Fat Smile through a reduction in fees. The remaining 'gap fee' is payable directly to Big Fat Smile.

To be eligible for a reduction in fees through the CCS you need to provide us with your Centrelink Customer Reference Number/s and dates of birth for both you and your child. You must then approve the child's enrolment through your MyGov account to receive this subsidy.

We are not able to pass on a fee reduction until your CCS is formally approved by Centrelink and you have approved the child care enrolment through your MyGov account.

At Big Fat Smile, we understand that these things can be overwhelming and complex to start with. We have a dedicated Fee Management Team and also encourage you to seek help through the Centrelink Family and Parents line by calling **136 150**.

Further assistance with fees

If you have any questions regarding your fees, or need assistance, please contact our Fee Management team on (02) 4283 9900 or via email at feemanagement@bigfatasmile.com.au

Procedures for overdue accounts

It is important that all fees are paid on time. As a not-for-profit, community owned organisation, each Big Fat Smile Centre has an annual budget that is based on regular and timely receipt of fees. Your fees cover essential costs such as Centre food for meals, rents, educator's salaries – right through to nappies and sunscreen.

If your account is more than fourteen days late, a \$25 late fee will be applied.

Where fees are 21 days or more late, Big Fat Smile will take action to collect overdue payments and your child's care may be cancelled.

In situations where families are experiencing genuine hardship, please speak with our Fee Management Officer as we will make every effort to work with those who have overdue accounts. We can look to negotiate a payment plan *Agreement to Bring Your Account Up to Date* within a reasonable period.

Additional Fees

The following additional fees may be charged.

- Late collection fees:
If a child remains in a Centre after closing time, the following fees will be charged to your account:

- \$25 administration fee
- A 'late collection of children fee' charged at the rate of \$1 per minute per child for the first 10-minutes, increasing to \$3 per minute thereafter

Late collection fees will be added to your account and must be paid within fourteen days.

- Overdue account fee:
A \$25 late fee will be applied to any account that is fourteen days or more overdue
- Direct debit rejection fee:
Our direct debit service is provided by a third party called EziDebit. Please note that EziDebit may levy their own fees and charges for unsuccessful payments, as per the terms of the Direct Debit Agreement.

When we don't charge fees

One of the many wonderful things about Big Fat Smile is that we don't charge fees for public holidays and other days of Centre closures.

Specifically, for our Out of School Hours Care Fun Clubs, fees will be charged for all gazetted school term days, but not for public holidays and other days when services are closed. Vacation Care is available on public school pupil free days at all of our Fun Clubs, with the exception of Bellambi Point and St Columbkille's.

However, Big Fat Smile will charge fees on days when schools are closed due to industrial action.

Refunds

Big Fat Smile will only provide refunds if we are unable to offer care on a day when your child is ordinarily enrolled.

Refunds will not be provided where a child does not attend on a day for which they are enrolled.

Attendance: Arrival and departure

Each day you must sign your child in when you arrive and sign them out when you leave. We are required to maintain a record of the children in our care at all times. This record is also critically important in the case of an emergency.

We use a digital sign in and sign out system called QK Kiosk to monitor our children's in and out times. Each authorised contact person will use their phone number and personal PIN number to sign children in and out. For the safety and security of your children and the Centre, personal PIN numbers must not be shared with unauthorised people.

Families are responsible for ensuring that their contact information, including information on authorised people, is kept up to date at all times.

Attendance: Explanation of absences

All of Big Fat Smile's Centres are part of the Australian Government funding system. The Department requires us to maintain an accurate record of all child absences from our care.

The Child Care Subsidy will be paid for up to forty-two absences per child for each financial year. Additional absence days will be charged at full fee, unless otherwise approved by the Department (documentary evidence may be required to support additional absences).

Attendance: Notification of absence from after school care

It is important for you to notify your Centre Director as soon as possible if your child will be absent from After School Care.

It takes significant time from our staff to locate children who don't attend After School Care as planned. As such, a fee will be charged where a parent or guardian fails to let the Centre know if their child will be absent.

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.

Changing or cancelling your booking

Big Fat Smile requires written notice if you intend to:

- Reduce your child's days of attendance at a Centre; or
- Withdraw your child from care at the Centre (i.e. end their enrolment)

Written notice may be given by completing a *Change of Booking Form* or by sending an email to your Centre Director.

The following notice periods apply to changes and cancellations:

- February to November: two-weeks' notice
- December to January: four-weeks' notice.

Fees will be charged for all booked days during the applicable notice period, whether or not your child attends the Centre.

Starting or ending care with an absence

The Family Assistance Legislation prevents us from applying the Child Care Subsidy to absences at the start and end of an enrolment.

This means that Big Fat Smile must charge full fees for the following days if your child does not attend the Centre:

- The first booked day(s) of their enrolment; and/or
- The last booked day(s) of their enrolment (including during a two or four-week notice period).

Following recent changes to the Family Assistance Legislation, an enrolment will be automatically 'ended' by the Government if it remains unused for eight weeks or more.

This means that regulations relating to absences at the start and end of an enrolment will also apply in the following circumstances:

- If your child ONLY attends a Vacation Service and is absent on the first or last booked days of care during a holiday period; and
- If your child is enrolled with Big Fat Smile on a casual basis and does not attend the Centre for a period of eight weeks or more.

Care for children starting primary school

If your child is enrolled at one of our Early Learning and Care Centres and Term Only Community preschools, their enrolment will cease at the end of December each year.

If your child is starting primary school but requires care in January, we will assess this based on availability of short term places at the Centre your child has been attending.

Alternatively, we encourage you to consider enrolling your child at one of our Vacation Care Services. Please contact your Centre Director to explore this option further.

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.bigfatasmile.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@bigfatasmile.com.au

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



Big Fat Smile

Not-for-profit. Community owned.

bigfatsmile.com.au