

Voluntary Contributions Policy

Authorised by: This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Ripponlea Kindergarten

Approved date: 28 May 2025

Review date: May 2026

This policy applies to 2026 enrolments and should be read alongside the Free Kindergarten Fees Policy.

1. Why Voluntary Contributions are vital to the viability of Ripponlea Kindergarten

The Department of Education (DE) provides per capita and Free Kindergarten funding as a contribution toward the costs of providing Three-Year-Old and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten programs. **Services meet the balance of costs through voluntary contributions and fundraising activities.**

Ripponlea Kindergarten has opted into the Free Kindergarten initiative, so while mandatory fees cannot be levied, the Kindergarten is requesting a voluntary contribution be made that covers the difference between the amount the state government pays under the Free Kindergarten initiative and the fee that would have applied in the absence of Free Kindergarten.

How voluntary contributions are computed

A condition of Ripponlea Kindergarten opting into the Free Kindergarten initiative is that mandatory fees cannot be charged to parents, other than in certain circumstances described in this document such as the waitlist fee and late collection fee. However, a **voluntary contribution can be requested, being the difference between the Free Kindergarten funding and the fee that would have applied in the absence of Free Kindergarten.**

Voluntary Contributions are used to pay for fixed costs such as wages, rent, maintenance and educational resources used for the children's program.

As part of the budget development process, the Committee of Management sets budgets each year for the programs of the service, considering:

- the financial viability of the service
- the level of government funding provided for the program
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the capacity of parents/guardians to contribute
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards

2. Other charges

Holding deposit: The holding deposit secures your child's place at Ripponlea Kindergarten and is payable on acceptance of enrolment. When enrolment is accepted, a \$250 holding deposit is levied. The holding deposit is calculated pro rata for mid-year enrolments: Term 1 - \$250.00, Term 2 - \$225.00, Term 3 - \$150, Term 4 - \$75.00. Once the child commences at the kindergarten, the holding deposit will be refunded unless the parents/guardians agree to allocate the holding deposit towards voluntary contributions. This deposit is **not refundable** where the child's enrolment is withdrawn and the child does not commence at the kindergarten.

Late collection fee: The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection fee when parents/guardians are **frequently late** in collecting a child from the service. This fee is based on \$10 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, from the end of the session. This is monitored and invoiced by a late book near the sign in sheet. The teachers also have commitments to attend outside of the Kindergarten hours and are not paid for an extended period after the session ends.

Excursion/service event charge: At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (*refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy*).

3. Payment of voluntary contributions

A Voluntary Contribution request/invoice will be sent each term, being **\$300 per Term**. Where a Holding deposit has been paid to secure a child's place, as part of enrolment, parents/guardians can choose to allocate the holding deposit towards voluntary contributions. For example, the \$250 holding deposit can be allocated towards the \$300 Term 1 voluntary contribution. Once the holding deposit has been fully allocated, parents/guardians can choose to make additional payments for the voluntary contributions.

From 2026 families will be given the option to pay the voluntary contributions up front. In doing so they will receive a \$50 discount.

If you do not wish to pay the voluntary contribution, please respond to our bookkeeper who issues the invoice, notifying them that you would prefer not to pay, and the invoice will be removed from your account.

4. Children turning 3 and other children starting during the year of enrolment

Children can only commence the Kindergarten program once they have turned 3 and they must have had their third birthday by 30 April during the year of enrolment. A Voluntary contribution request will be computed pro-rata from a child's commencement date at the Kindergarten service.

5. Enrolment Agreement Form

All families must complete and submit the online Enrolment Form agreeing to the conditions as stipulated in this Voluntary Contribution Policy before the child commences at the Kindergarten.

6. Voluntary Contribution schedule

Group	Voluntary Contribution Request
4 Year Old - 15 hours per week	\$300 per Term
3 Year Old - 15 hours per week	\$300 per Term