

FEE AND CANCELLATION POLICY

Applies to: Staff members, Management Committee Members, Volunteers./Students.

Specific responsibility: Manager and Management Committee.

Version: 7

Date approved: 24-Jul-2024

Next review date: Jul 2027

Policy context: This policy ensures that all individuals are informed about cancellation policies and procedures.

Legislation / Standards or other external requirements	- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practices Standards) Rules 2018 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018 - National Disability Scheme (Protection and Disclosure of Information) Rules 2013 - NDIS Children's Rules 2013 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (Approved Quality Auditors Scheme) Guidelines 2018 - Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998 - Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 - Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988. - Freedom of Information Act 1982 - Associations Incorporation Act 2009 - Associations Incorporation Regulation 2022 - Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 - NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits 2024-25 Pricing arrangements NDIS
Contractual obligations	- Client Service Agreements and Schedule of Supports - NDIS Service Registered Service Provider obligations - DoE (Sector Capacity Building project contract) Funding Terms and Conditions (Funding Agreement)

POLICY STATEMENT

The provision of supports to children, families and community stakeholders, by Early Connections – Manning and Great Lakes (Early Connections – MGL) requires the collection of payment in order to maintain financial sustainability. Fee charging structures, collection procedures and appointment cancellation policies are reviewed regularly to manage this.

Early Connections – MGL is committed to:

- The provision of a fair, clear, and consistent fee structure, claiming process and cancellation policy for children, families and stakeholders receiving supports from Early Connections- MGL.
- Complying with all regulations regarding the charging and collections of fees and the implementation of reasonable cancellation charges.
- Informing clients of their obligations and rights in relation to cancellations, fee charges and collection processes with Early Connections - MGL.
- The effective management of resources in order to maximise supports available to clients.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) guides service providers on appropriate fees, charging guidelines and cancellation rules. Early Connections – MGL is committed to working within the NDIA's Pricing Arrangement and Price Limits: [Pricing arrangements | NDIS](#)

The impact of cancellations on the sustainability of the organisation is considered in consideration for the charge of short notice cancellations and "no shows" in accordance with NDIA guidelines. Providers can charge cancellation fees directly to participants / families, provided the arrangement is detailed in the service agreement.

PROCEDURES

On intake to the service a Service Agreement with a Schedule of Supports is negotiated and signed by both parties outlining the roles and responsibilities of the service provider and participant (or participant representative). This includes statements regarding to:

- The rights and responsibilities of both parties in regard to the charging and claiming of fees,
- A Schedule of Supports, outlining a proposed list of supports to be delivered to the client and family including how much these supports will cost from the child's NDIS plan.
- The fee/charging process according to Plan Management type (Agency, Plan or Self-Managed), including payment timeframe requirements.
- The right to charge the client/family for some costs relating to late notice cancellations and travel costs.

EC-MGL may implement changes to fees, or increases to fees as set by the NDIA, as they occur throughout the year. The NDIA publishes a new Price Arrangement and Price Limits guide at periods throughout the year. EC – MGL will always refer to this new guide to determine if fees will increase and will notify participants of any changes via email. This email will form an amendment to existing Service Agreements, unless revoked by participant representatives.

1. FEES AND CHARGES

Early Connections – MGL delivers supports which are funded by participants NDIS packages under the following funding categories:

- a) Early Intervention Supports for Early Childhood (Improved Daily Living Skills, Registration Group Number 0118)
- b) Therapeutic Supports (Improved Daily Living Skills, Registration Group Number 0128)

The current hourly rates charged by Early Connections – MGL are:

Staff Type	Hourly fee
Early Intervention Teachers (University qualified)	\$193.99
Therapists (Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy)	\$193.99
Psychology	\$222.99
Allied Health Assistants (Cert III or IV, or University Student in Allied Health Degree)	\$86.79
Groups	As per shared cost agreement

Supports will be charged for:

1.1 Direct Service Provision (Client Facing) including:

- Home Visits
- Early Connections centre visits
- Early Childhood Education setting visits
- School visits
- Community visits
- Tele-practice / Video consults
- Workshops

- Parent Education groups

1.2 Indirect Service provision (Non-Client-Facing) including:

- Appointment planning and preparation
- Appointment follow-up including Service Reports
- NDIS admin eg Service Summary Report
- Assistive Technology Report and/or Forms
- Reading of / writing reports
- Reading of / writing Home Programs
- Making Resources
- Research (e.g. equipment, resources, individualised best practice support)
- Team collaboration with the Key Worker / collaborative team and with other professionals (E.G GP, Teacher, Family Workers, external providers etc.)
- Phone calls/emails relating to your child's goals.
- Completion of forms or letter or support
- Travel, as per Schedule of Supports/ Service Agreement and NDIS Price guidelines.
- Cancellations as per Service Agreement and NDIS Price guidelines
- Support planning reviews and consultation for next plan.

Early Connections – MGL is a Registered NDIS Provider and can offer supports to participants who have Agency Managed, Plan Managed or Self-Managed NDIS plans. EC-MGL undergoes certification through the NDIA Quality and Safeguards Commission, ensuring it complies with the NDIS Commissions Practice Standards for Early Childhood Supports and the NDIS Code of Conduct.

1.1 FEES FOR TRAVEL

Early Connections – MGL is committed to Best Practice and promotes working with children in their natural environments, and in doing so will be required to travel to these settings.

In accordance with the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits, fees for staff travel will be charged for supports provided outside of the Early Connections – MGL premises. These fees include travel time that EC-MGL incurs costs when employees are traveling to deliver Face-to-Face supports to clients and families, such as running costs of the vehicle (either organisations vehicle or employees, requiring reimbursement to the employee) and employees travel time.

Early Connections- MGL does not currently charge Non-Labour travel costs (allowed through NDIS), however this may be revised by the Management Committee if necessary. If this is to be charged in the future clients/families will be notified via email.

The cost of travel will be factored into the Schedule of Supports within the Service Agreement. This allocation is an estimate, which may alter depending on the ability to offer shared travel costs with other clients.

More information on travel regulations under the NDIS can be found under NDIS Pricing Arrangement and Price Limits 2024-25 (Pg 18-20):

[Pricing arrangements | NDIS](#)

2. CANCELLATIONS

Short Notice cancellations or “No Shows” will incur a billable cancellation fee, in accordance with the NDIS Pricing Arrangement and Price Limit guidelines. Early Connections – MGL

If a parent/carer makes a short-notice cancellation, which is after 9.30am the day before the service, or fails to attend an appointment without notice, the provider may charge up to 100% of the agreed price for the cancelled appointment, for unlimited number of cancellations throughout a plan timeframe.

NOTE: *Whilst the price guide allows billable cancellations for cancellations made within a **2-day time frame**, our organisation understands the complexities of family life and are committed to maintaining our previous agreement of charging only for cancellations after 9.30am the day prior to appointments. For Monday appointments cancellation notice must be given by the previous Friday at 9.30am.*

Participants are notified of their appointment with monthly appointments being sent out via email or post as well as a reminder SMS sent two days prior to appointment. **To ensure no billable cancellation charge is made parents/carers are asked to use the SMS response system to reply, Yes or No, BEFORE 9.30am the day prior to appointment.** Consideration will be taken into account for extreme circumstances, with approval by Manager. However, frequent cancellations, as stated in service agreement, may result in the need for Early Connections-Manning and Great Lakes to reconsider the terms of our service provision.

It is the responsibility of Parents/carers to ensure that current mobile numbers are registered within our system so that SMS reminders are sent to the correct person.

Cancellations can be made by:

- a) Responding “No” to the SMS reminder prior to 9.30am the day before appointment, where no cancellation fee will be charged.
- b) Contacting the Early Connections – Manning and Great Lakes administration staff between the hours of 8am and 4.30pm.

**Email: admin@earlyconnections-mgl.org.au
Ph: (02) 65527333 (Taree) or Ph: (02) 65572016 (Tuncurry)**

Should the Early Connections - MGL staff member be unable to attend the session due to illness or unforeseen circumstances and all alternative options have been exhausted they will notify the participant, a minimum of 1 hour prior to appointment. No claim against the Participant's Plan will be made under such circumstances.

It is the responsibility of the client representative (parent/carer) to notify Early Connections – Manning and Great Lakes staff if the child is unable to attend an appointment. This is applicable for ALL appointment types:

- Home visits
- Child Care/School visits
- Early Connections centre sessions
- “Tele” Therapy sessions eg Skype, Facetime, phone consultations.
- Schedules meetings

A record of all cancellations will be made by staff in the child's CRM file (Echidna).

In the event a cancellation notification has not been received, and the staff member travels to the appointment location, the cost of travel will also be charged.

Early Connections - MGL staff will make every effort to explain to parent/carer when cancelling that a short notice cancellation may incur a cancellation fee and will note time of cancellation and reason in the child's client file. Administration/Management will use their discretion in determining whether fail to attend appointments will or will not be charged for. For example, in extenuating circumstances or where no previous failure to attend has occurred for the client, it may be determined that this fee should be waived.

Invoices/Statements will state the fee charged (at the usual appointment rate) with a “billable cancellation” statement.

Where the client fails to attend, for excessive appointments, staff will make every effort to contact the parent/carer to discuss engagement concerns and discuss any difficulties or options that may suit both parties. Where engagement is not able to be resumed the service agreement may be discussed and continuation of service may be renegotiated.

(or ceased) with the client representative/parent/carer. See “Suspension of Supports” statement in Service Agreement.

All disputes in relation to charges for “Billable Cancellation” appointments are to be directed to either the Finance Manager or Manager and will be promptly responded to. The “Managing Complaints” process will be adhered to where applicable.

Detailed information on the *NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits*, please see:

[Pricing arrangements | NDIS](#)

3. CLAIMING AND DEBT COLLECTION

All supports scheduled and provided by Early Connections – MGL are recorded through our client management system. Our administration team aim to provide prompt, clear correspondence regarding charges, invoicing and where needed, debt collection. All families will receive a tax invoice for supports delivered via email and payment is required as per Service Agreement:

The Participant has nominated their NDIA plan to be (as specified on plan):

a) NDIA Agency Managed

The Participant has nominated the NDIS to manage the funding supports provided under this Service Agreement. After providing those supports, Early Connections- Manning and Great Lakes will claim payment for those supports from the NDIA.

b) Plan Managed (through external Plan Manager)

The participant has nominated to have NDIA funds Plan-Managed for supports provided under this Service Agreement. After providing those supports, the Provider will issue an invoice via email (unless otherwise requested) to the designated Plan Manager, who will be required to draw down funds from the participant portal and forward payment to the provider for those supports. Payment for supports is required within 7 days of invoice notification.

c) Self-Managed

The Participant has nominated to Self-Manage NDIA funds for supports provided under this Service Agreement. After providing those supports, the Provider will be issued an invoice via email (unless otherwise requested) and will be required to draw down funds from the participant portal and forward payment to the provider for those supports. Payment for supports is required within 7 days of invoice notification.

Failure to pay for services provided by the due date will result in proceeding to organisational debt collection processes. This may require ceasing supports to client/family, until such time as outstanding debts are paid and/or legal action taken. Support and assistance will be offered by the administration team and management where needed. For further information please refer to Debt Collection Policy.

DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	- Conflict of Interest Policy - Managing Complaints Policy - Financial Management Policy - Debt Collection Policy
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	- Service Agreement signed by both parties - Signed schedule of supports outlining agreed services and cost. - Intake Checklist & Conflict of Interest Declaration

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Annually	Manager	Management Committee

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	22 nd Nov 2017	Management Committee	Nov 2018
2	27 th July 2018	Management Committee	July 2019
3	July 2020	Management Committee	July 2021
4	26 th Aug 2020	Management Committee	Aug 2023
5	07-Dec-2022	Management Committee	Dec 2024
6	17 th Oct 2023	Management Committee	Oct 2026
7	24 th Jul 2024	Management Committee	Jul 2027

Management Committee:
24-Jul-2024