

## 17 PROCEDURE: OPTIONAL CHARGE

### Aim

To ensure families are aware of how the optional charge contributes to the day to day financial running of Montessori Children's House Wanaka.

#### 17.1 Guidelines

- 17.1.1 Any family on returning their enrolment / attestation form that has selected 'do not agree to pay the optional charge' is issued with a letter from the Managing Teacher. (see attached)
- 17.1.2 If the family after receiving the letter are still averse to contributing to the cost of their child's education a meeting between the parents and two Board members will be arranged by the Managing Teacher.
- 17.1.3 Following the meeting with the Board if a grace period of three months or an alternative time frame is given, subsequent meetings will be scheduled between the parents, Managing Teacher and Board members to review the family's capacity to pay and or willingness to pay.



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**RE: OPTIONAL CHARGE**

I am writing to you with regard to your non-payment of the optional charge at Montessori Children's House Wanaka.

By way of brief background the early childhood centre (ECE) funding framework gives early childhood centres the discretion to apply an optional charge (in addition to the funding the Centre receives from the government) to cover a wide range of additional costs. As you are aware, the optional charge is currently \$2 per hour.

The types of additional costs that the optional charge covers include the following:

- Montessori Children's House Wanaka employing above 80% registered teachers;
- Montessori training;

If Montessori had elected not to apply an optional charge it would not be possible to offer the various activities and registered teaching ratio set out above. In other words, the government funding does not cover all our costs. As a consequence, if one or more parents elect to stop paying the optional charge this immediately places a financial burden on Montessori and potentially jeopardises the scheme for all parents. Ultimately, it is the children who will miss out if the current learning environment becomes financially unsustainable due to non-payment of the optional charge.

Montessori Children's House Wanaka elected to apply an optional charge of \$2 per hour after a significant amount of consultation with the Montessori parent community as to the benefits of the scheme. For the current scheme to work it takes commitment from both parties.

While we are sympathetic to your situation the Board has a policy of only allowing non-payment of this charge in extraordinary circumstances (many parents have faced challenging economic circumstances particularly in recent times). We therefore need to ensure we have a consistent approach to this issue in light of our parent community's election to support the imposition of an optional charge.

If you wish to pursue your request not to pay the optional charge please let me know as I will need to inform the Board. Our standard policy is for two Board members to arrange a meeting with you to discuss this matter.

Kind Regards

Anne-Marie Love  
Managing Teacher