School principals whose community would benefit from a new or expanded OSHC service are encouraged to apply for a one-off grant under the Before and After School Care Fund

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (updated December 2016)

1. What is the $20 million Before and After School Care Fund

The NSW Government created the $20 million Before and After School Care Fund to help establish new Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services in government and less well-resourced non-government school communities.

In 2016, under phase 2 of this initiative, schools without an OSHC service, schools with an existing OSHC service that have a need and capacity to expand their service and local councils that have unmet demand for before and after care places may apply for a one-off grant of up to $30,000.

The grants can be used for site modification and fit-out costs, project management (including tendering or regulatory costs), or to pay for necessary equipment to support new or expanded services.

The NSW Department of Education, guided by a cross-sectoral steering committee, which includes representatives from the Catholic Education Commission NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW, administers the Fund.

2. Who can apply for the grant?

The following may apply for grants under the Fund:

- principals of NSW government and non-government schools that have a demonstrated need and capacity to establish a new OSHC service
- principals of NSW government and non-government schools that have a demonstrated need and capacity to increase the number of places in their existing OSHC service
- officers of NSW local councils that have unmet demand for before and after school care places.

Under the Fund, schools which are campuses of a wider school/college structure located over a large geographic area may apply for grants separately.

3. How can the grant be used?

Grant funding must be used to increase the number of approved OSHC places by creating a new service or by increasing the number of existing approved OSHC places. Within these parameters, the grant may be used for site modification and fit-out costs, project management (including tendering or regulatory costs) or to pay for necessary equipment to support additional places. The proposed service must provide before and/or after school care but may also provide vacation care.

4. How does a school establish an OSHC service?

All OSHC providers in NSW need to apply for regulatory approval to operate their service. The Department of Education, through its Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) directorate, is the regulator for services in NSW and is responsible for granting regulatory approvals.

OSHC operators need to obtain two types of regulatory approval: a provider approval and a service approval. A provider is the entity that operates the OSHC service and the ECEC directorate checks that
it is ‘fit and proper’ to deliver care to young children. A service approval allows an approved provider to deliver OSHC at a specific site.

ECEC’s regulatory relationship is only with the provider of the service and not with the owner or lessor of the site where OSHC is being delivered. For this reason the approvals process is separate from any licensing or tendering processes for OSHC conducted by the Department of Education or the non-government school authority.

The approval process starts with an application to the ECEC directorate for provider and/or service approval. Provided the application is complete and meets ‘threshold’ requirements, directorate officers will pay a visit to the site. Provided there are no issues identified at the visit, approvals are then issued.

More information about OSHC regulations and how providers obtain regulatory approval is available via the ‘children and youth’ pages on the Department’s website.

There may be additional requirements to consider when establishing an OSHC facility. For instance, the NSW Department of Education’s Community Use of School Facilities Policy and its associated implementation procedures apply to government schools.

As the approval process involves a number of requirements, the time required to establish an OSHC service varies. This is largely dependent on the engagement, or not, of an approved provider. The series of actions is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Estimated timeframe for establishing an OSHC service (some actions may be undertaken concurrently)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Estimated timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identify community demand and conduct site investigation</td>
<td>6 to 8 weeks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Scoping of the level of community demand and the feasibility of the prospective site (which may be on- or off-site) for delivery of OSHC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identifying and assessing the prospective site for the service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Undertaking stakeholder consultation or surveys</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Planning for an implementation timeline</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Identify appropriate process to determine the service provider</td>
<td>8 to 10 weeks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If applicable, conduct a tendering process for a service provider</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeking approval to go to tender</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preparing tender documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conducting the tender</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Preparing the Tender Evaluation Report</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Awarding the contract and execution of agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Obtain regulatory approval</td>
<td>up to 13 weeks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• For new providers only: application for provider approval (which can be submitted prior to the tender being finalised)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Application for service approval after the tender is awarded</td>
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</table>

5. How can a school establish evidence of demand for an OSHC?

Establishing an OSHC service requires close collaboration with the school community. Engagement of the community may take various forms. For example, schools may conduct a survey of parents to ascertain any intention to use the proposed service and determine their preferred before and after school care hours.
6. What options are available if there is not enough physical space for an OSHC in my school?

In schools where an OSHC service is needed but where there is no capacity to deliver the service on the school site, the grant may be used to establish the service at an alternative location such as a local preschool, council or other non-government organisation.

7. How do schools engage OSHC providers?

The process of engaging OSHC service providers varies across the school authorities.
- Government schools should refer to the NSW Department of Education’s Community Use of School Facilities Policy, its associated implementation procedures, and the online toolkit.
- Catholic systemic schools should check with their diocesan authority.
- Independent schools should refer to the OSHC requirements on the regulator’s website.

8. Can a school use an already approved provider?

Yes. Schools can arrange for an existing approved OSHC provider to apply for approval of the new service. Schools unsure about how to identify a prospective existing provider can contact the Network of Community Activities for advice by phone 02 9212 3244 or email network@networkofcommunityactivities.org.au.

For existing OSHC services, the current service provider must agree to expand the service.

9. How do schools apply for a grant?

To apply for a grant under the Before and After School Care Fund, school principals seeking to establish a new service or expand an existing one should complete an online application on SmartyGrants. The online application form is tailored for each of the school education sectors.

Two or more schools may collaborate to establish a service but only one of the schools may apply for the grant. If the application is successful, this school will receive and manage the expenditure and acquittal of the funds.

10. Would schools that applied for the first round of grants in 2015 be eligible to apply in this round of applications?

Schools that have received grants in the first round and schools with first round applications that are currently being assessed will have the opportunity to apply for a supplementary grant of up to $10,000 through their SmartyGrants application. These schools will not need to start a new application and will be contacted by their sectoral representative with further information regarding the process to apply for the additional funding.

11. How do local councils apply for a grant?

Local councils seeking a grant under the Fund will need to prepare a funding proposal for consideration by the cross-sectoral steering committee. Councils should contact the Department on telephone 02 9244 5057 in the first instance. Applications from local councils will be assessed on a case by case basis. There is no need to apply through SmartyGrants.

12. How will applications from schools be assessed?

Grants for eligible schools will be awarded on the basis of the school’s capacity to establish and support a viable OSHC service including:
- demonstrated community demand that supports the establishment or expansion of an OSHC service
progress in identification of a site that meets requirements
progress in securing an approved OSHC provider.

Applications from schools will be assessed in two stages:
• In-sector assessment in which sectoral panel members will assess the applications within their respective sectors.
• Cross-sectoral assessment in which sector recommendations will be considered and endorsed.

For non-government schools, priority will be given to applicants in Education Resource Index categories 4 to 12.

Sectoral panels will convene each term to assess applications. The following are the closing dates for applications in 2017:

Term 1: 5 April  
Term 2: 28 June  
Term 3: 20 September  
Term 4: 30 November

13. How will schools know if they are successful in their application?

Successful applicants will be notified by email through their school sector authority. The email will contain instructions on the method and timing of disbursement of funds as well as outcomes and financial reporting requirements for school principals.

14. When will the grant be paid to schools?

Grants will be paid through the school sectors upon approval of the school’s application.

15. What will the reporting requirements be for schools receiving grants?

Each school that receives a grant under the Before and After School Care Fund will be required to provide a progress report and complete a financial acquittal process.

16. Who could schools contact for further information about the Fund?

More information about the Before and After School Care Fund is available from the following sectoral representatives.

**Association of Independent Schools of NSW**
Susan Wright  
Consultant: Government Education Policy  
Telephone: 02 9299 2845  
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