

1.0 PURPOSE

Autism Queensland (AQ) understands there are times when planned sessions cannot go ahead. Costs are incurred by AQ regardless of whether a client attends a session. This policy aims to minimise the negative effect on both AQ and its clients when a session is cancelled.

2.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees of Autism Queensland. A reference to “employees” or “staff” includes permanent, fixed-term, temporary and casual employees, directors, contractors, volunteers and other representatives acting on behalf of Autism Queensland in any capacity.

This Policy applies to all clients who access services provided by Autism Queensland.

3.0 POLICY

Autism Queensland aims to balance customer and organisational financial interests in relation to cancellations and no-shows, and to make all reasonable attempts to safeguard customers who no-show. This Policy reflects requirements of the relevant government agencies that fund services clients purchase from AQ (e.g. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Terms of Business for Registered Providers and the most current National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Price Guide, or other).

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Adequate Notice Cancellation

Cancellation with more than two (2) clear business days’ notice.

4.2 Short Notice Cancellation

Cancellation of the scheduled delivery of supports with less than two (2) clear business days’ notice. Failure of an online session to go ahead due to technical difficulties at the client’s end, and which are not due to any fault of Autism Queensland, is considered a Short Notice Cancellation.

4.3 No Show

Non-attendance for scheduled delivery of supports without notice. This includes services delivered using technology, e.g., online.

4.4 Business Day

Monday to Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm.

4.5 Program of Support

Some group programs, paid for with NDIS funding, are covered by an NDIS approach called program of support. Under this approach, providers claim against the participant’s NDIS plan for every session of the program as though they had attended, whether or not they did. Supports delivered as part of a program of supports are not subject to the short notice cancellation rules. Participants are able to exit the program without incurring costs if they give two (2) weeks’ notice of their intention to do so.

5.0 PROCEDURE

5.1 Cancellations

Autism Queensland’s Cancellation Policy will be discussed with all clients at the time of the initial offer of services, via telephone or email.

Autism Queensland’s Cancellation Policy will be reiterated to all clients before signing an Autism Queensland Service Agreement.

To cancel an appointment, clients can contact the office of the appropriate Autism Queensland centre within business hours. Alternatively, clients may leave a message if contacting over a weekend or public holiday. However, the business days' notice periods still apply.

Please note: for services where an SMS reminder is sent prior to the appointment, the reminder is a courtesy only. Failure to receive the SMS reminder is not accepted as reason to not attend an appointment.

When clients are unable to participate in an online session due to technical difficulties at their end, they will contact either the employee scheduled to support them or the relevant Autism Queensland centre with this information to ensure that the AQ employee does not initiate the required safeguarding procedure (see [5.7 Safeguarding and No-Shows](#)).

5.2 Notice Periods

- 5.2.1 Where Autism Queensland cancels as the service provider, no charge is made to either the participant or to the NDIS.
- 5.2.2 Where the participant cancels with adequate notice, no charge applies ([4.1 Adequate Notice](#)).
- 5.2.3 Where the participant cancels with short notice ([4.2 Short Notice Cancellation](#)) or no-shows ([4.3 No Show](#)), Autism Queensland will charge 100% of the scheduled fee
- 5.2.4 Wherever possible, Autism Queensland will charge the relevant funding body (e.g. NDIS) directly. If the funding body rejects the cancellation payment for any reason, the client will be charged directly as above.
- 5.2.5 For services operating under an NDIS Program of Support approach, where the participant has given the appropriate notice of their intention to exit the program ([4.5 Program of Support](#)), Autism Queensland will charge 100% of the scheduled fee for sessions taking place during the 2-week notice period. No charges will be made for sessions after those taking place during the required 2-week notice period.

5.3 NDIS Funded Services

- 5.3.1 For all NDIS-funded supports where the person's NDIS funding is able to be used for short notice cancellations and where Program of Support arrangements do not apply, 100% of the session fee will be charged to the client's NDIS plan for each session, as per [5.2.1](#) to [5.2.4](#) above.
- 5.3.2 Where the NDIA does not permit charges against the NDIA plan, the customer will be personally charged as per [5.2.1](#) to [5.2.4](#) above. This will be recorded on the service delivery record and the relevant charge will be invoiced to the client personally.
- 5.3.3 *NDIS Program of Support*

Where the service is covered by the NDIS Program of Support approach, participants' NDIS plans will be charged for all sessions delivered within the period of the program, including sessions where the participant did not attend, regardless of how much notice of the absence was provided.

As part of this arrangement, participants are able to exit the program without incurring any costs for the remaining sessions not attended, if they give two (2) weeks' notice of their intention to do this. Participants will be charged for sessions taking place during the 2-week notice period, regardless of if they attend the sessions or not.

5.4 Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) Funded Services

HCWA funds cannot be used to pay for sessions that did not take place. The charges as laid out in [5.2](#) apply and will be invoiced to the family. Please refer to the specific conditions as stipulated in the Autism Queensland Service Intake Form.

5.5 All Other Forms of Payment (i.e. other than NDIS or HCWA)

For all other sources of payment for services including self-funding, Autism Queensland will invoice the client directly for payment according to the notice periods outlined in [5.2](#).

5.6 Special Circumstances

Charges may be waived if the customer has experienced a significant event. The decision to waive the charge is made as goodwill and can only be made by the Team Leader or Manager of the relevant service.

5.7 Safeguarding and No-Shows

In the event of a no-show, the employee scheduled to support the client will make every attempt to contact the client to determine if there are any special circumstances or safety concerns for the client:

- telephone the client to check on their safety (if appropriate to do so);
- telephone the client's nominated emergency contact person;
- contact the relevant Autism Queensland Team Leader and seek direction on next steps.

The Team Leader will:

- assess and determine the next steps including whether to persist with contacting the client, their emergency contact person or other authorities having regard to what is known about the client, their behaviours and risks; and
- make a decision regarding the client's next appointment (if relevant), including sending a reminder SMS and/or telephone call.

5.8 Suspension of Services

Some clients/carers may wish to request a temporary suspension of face-to-face service delivery (for example, due to going away on holiday, accessing another service).

The client/carer may wish for their place to be held for them until they return. Autism Queensland is unable to hold a placement without payment. If the client/carer wishes the place to be held open until their return, the client must pay for the service during the period of absence. Clients paying for services with NDIS funding cannot use that funding to pay for time periods in excess of what is laid out in Notice Periods above.

If the client/carer chooses not to pay for that position, the place will be offered to the next client on the waiting list for that service.

If the client chooses not to pay for that position and it is still available on the client's return, they will be restored to that service.

If the position has been filled, the client's name will be placed on the waiting list for that service and a place offered when available. The services that this applies to will each have specific arrangements and requirements in place, which will be discussed with the participant and/or family at the time of notification of the ongoing absence.

Continued consecutive absences, regardless of length of notice given, will be considered as subject to suspension of services. The placement in the current service will be discontinued and the relevant Autism Queensland staff member will contact the client / carer to discuss what services may be more appropriate at this time and / or how else Autism Queensland can be of assistance.

6.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation and Regulations

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Standards and Principles

Australian Privacy Principles

Human Services Quality Standards (Dept Communities, Disability Services and Seniors)

National Disability Standards (Cth)

NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Framework

NDIS Code of Conduct

NDIS Price Guide

NDIS Practice Standards
NDIS Support Catalogue
NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers

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