

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 clients who access services provided by Autism Queensland, except the AQ school, training and consultancy.

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.

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 NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits, or other).

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Adequate Notice Cancellation

Cancellation with more than seven (7) clear days’ notice, except where the supports are Supported Independent Living (SIL).

4.2 Business Day

Monday to Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm.

4.3 Client

Client refers to the client or client representative, unless otherwise stated.

4.4 No Show

Non-attendance for scheduled delivery of supports without notice or within a reasonable time. This includes not being present at an agreed place (e.g. the client’s home) within a reasonable time and failure to attend an online session.

4.5 Program of Support

Some group services or packages of support that include group-based supports, delivered under a Program of Support agreement to assist clients to achieve specific goals. These are scheduled in blocks of up to 12 weeks.

4.6 Short Notice Cancellation

Cancellation of the scheduled delivery of supports with less than seven (7) clear days’ notice, except where the supports are SIL.

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.

4.7 Supported Independent Living (SIL) Adequate Notice Cancellation

Cancellation of SIL supports with more than sixteen (16) weeks (112 days’) notice.

4.8 Supported Independent Living (SIL) Short Notice Cancellation

Cancellation of SIL supports with less than sixteen (16) weeks' notice.

4.9 Supported Independent Living (SIL) Unplanned Exit Payment

Under limited circumstances as defined by the NDIA, a payment made from an NDIS participant's plan where the participant no longer occupies the SIL residence.

4.10 Support Independent Living (SIL) Transition Period Payments

From April 19th 2022, where there is a change in support needs which causes a material change to a SIL NDIS participant's plan and impacts the amount, frequency, intensity and or ratios of support delivered, we will support this transition by providing a minimum period of 12 weeks to move to the new support arrangements.

5.0 PROCEDURE

5.1 Communication

Autism Queensland's Cancellation and No-Show Policy and Procedure will be discussed with all clients at the time of the initial offer of services, via telephone or email, and will be available on the Autism Queensland website.

Autism Queensland's Cancellation and No-Show Policy and Procedure will be specifically referenced in and attached to the 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.

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.

5.2 Cancellation Fees

- 5.2.1 Where Autism Queensland cancels as the service provider, no charge is made to either the client or to the NDIS.
- 5.2.2 Where the participant cancels with adequate notice, no charge applies ([4.1 Adequate Notice Cancellation](#)).
- 5.2.3 Where the participant cancels with short notice ([4.2 Short Notice Cancellation](#)) or fails to show ([4.3 No Show](#)), Autism Queensland will charge 100% of the scheduled fee.
- 5.2.4 A cancellation fee will only be charged if Autism Queensland is unable to find alternative billable work for the relevant worker for the time that would have been spent providing the cancelled support.
- 5.2.5 Program of Support are not subject to short-notice cancellation ([4.2 Short Notice Cancellation](#)) and you will be charged for all scheduled support even if the client do not attend.
- 5.2.6 Where a client has given the appropriate notice of their intention to exit a Program of Support ([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.
- 5.2.7 A cancellation fee of up to 100% SIL Short Notice Cancellations (see [4.8](#)) for a maximum period of 16 weeks or until the vacancy is filled if this time is shorter following written notification by the client , unless otherwise agreed in writing between the client and Autism Queensland.
- 5.2.8 A cancellation fee for SIL Short Notice Cancellations will not apply for any periods covered by SIL Unplanned Exit ([4.9](#)) or SIL Transition Period Payments ([4.10](#)).

5.3 NDIS Funded Services

- 5.3.1 Autism Queensland's Cancellation and No-Show Policy and Procedure (this document) is consistent with the *NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits 2022-23* guidelines.
- 5.3.2 Where a client'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 5.2.6 above.
- 5.3.3 Where the NDIA does not permit charges against the NDIS plan, the customer will be personally charged as per 5.2.1 to 5.2.4 above.
- 5.3.4 Where a service is delivered under 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.
- 5.3.5 Cancellation fees for SIL Short Notice Cancellations (4.8) cannot be charged to NDIS unless they also meet the criteria for Short Notice Cancellation (4.6) with less than seven (7) clear day.

5.4 All Other Forms of Payment (i.e. other than NDIS)

For all other sources of payment for services including self-funding, Autism Queensland will invoice the client directly for payment of cancellation fees.

5.5 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);
- if unable to contact the client, telephone the client's nominated emergency contact person;
- if unable to contact the client's nominated emergency contact, inform 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.

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 5.5 *Safeguarding and No-Shows*).

5.6 Suspension of Services

Some clients/carers may wish to request a temporary suspension of 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 the service fee 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 (refer to the *Discontinuation or Suspension of Services Policy & Procedure*). 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

- Competition and Consumer Act 2010*
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)*
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*

Standards and Principles

- Australian Privacy Principles
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

Other

- Autism Queensland Website
- NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits
- NDIS Support Catalogue

Internal

- AQ Service Agreements
- Service Enrolment Forms
- Discontinuation or Suspension of Services Policy & Procedure

Document Name	Cancellations and No-Show Policy & Procedure		Document Type	Policy & Procedure	
Document Approver	Chief Operations Officer		Version	V 8.0	
Date Created	March 2018	Date Published	September 2022	Next Review Date	September 2024