

Last Updated: 19 Jan 2024

1.0 PURPOSE

Active Eight understands there are times when planned appointments and programs cannot go ahead. Costs are incurred by Active Eight regardless of whether a client attends a service. This policy aims to minimise the negative effect on both Active Eight and its clients when a session might otherwise be cancelled. The need for this policy is reflective of the environment Active Eight is delivering supports within. Responding to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, significant weather events, and maturing NDIS framework and the associated policies and legislation changes in recent months.

Active Eight aims to balance client and organisational interests in relation to service disruption, and to make all reasonable attempts to continue supporting client goals and safeguarding them from harm. This policy reflects requirements of the relevant government agencies that fund the services that clients purchase from Active Eight (e.g., NDIS pricing arrangements), as well as our own commitment to providing exceptional outcomes.

2.0 SCOPE

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

This policy applies to all customers and clients of Active Eight. A reference to “members” or “participants” includes clients and customers on NDIS funded packages, private healthcare and out-of-pocket paying clients, as well as representatives acting behalf of the customer or client (i.e., parents/carers)

3.0 POLICY UPDATES

Active Eight reserves the right to update this policy as necessary with immediate effect. Policy updates are communicated to all actively and participating clients. These updates are distributed via email from Active Eight’s database. It is the responsibility of clients and their parents/carers to ensure their personal details are to date, and that regular checks of junk/spam folders are being done to ensure all communication from Active Eight is received. For new members, Active Eight’s services policies are also discussed during the initial consultation. The latest version of all service-related policies can be found in the footer link on Active Eight’s website.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Adequate Notice Period

More than three (3) business days’ notice of the scheduled session.

4.2 Short Notice Period

Less than three (3) business days’ notice of the scheduled session.

4.3 Short Notice Cancellation

Cancellation of an appointment within the short notice period. Short Notice Cancellations are charged at 100% of the service fee. Failure of an online session to go ahead due technical difficulties at the member’s end, and no fault of Active Eight, is considered a Short Notice Cancellation. Refusal to accept alternative delivery methods (5.2 *Alternative Delivery Service Methods*) for an appointment occurring within the short notice period is also considered a Short Notice Cancellation.

4.4 No Show

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

4.5 Reschedules

A reschedule can occur provided it is outside of the short-notice cancellation period. A reschedule is when a scheduled appointment can be moved to another day and/or time that is prior to the next

scheduled appointment.

4.6 Business Day

Monday to Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm.

4.7 Program of Support

Group programs (including term and holiday programs) that are paid for with NDIS funding are covered by an NDIS approach called Program of Support. Under this approach, providers charge for every session of the program as though they had attended, whether or not they actually 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. Please note that to ensure policy consistency and to cover our costs in providing group programs, Active Eight implements this approach to non-NDIS funded clients as well.

5.0 POLICY

5.1 Cancellations

To cancel an appointment, parents/carers must contact Active Eight reception on (07 38713886) during business hours or admin@activeeight.com.au outside of business hours. The cancellation notice period is based on clear business days when notification is received and therefore excludes weekends. 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 Alternative Service Delivery Methods

In the instance that Active Eight or the designated therapist is unable to deliver a session or program as planned for whatever reason, giving either adequate or short notice, the treating therapist/program lead will provide alternative service options. Alternative options include:

- online session during the scheduled appointment time via an encrypted zoom video/audio call
- alternative face-to-face delivery format during the scheduled appointment time utilising a trained therapy assistant (the therapist will notify whether the appointment is needed to be directly or indirectly supervised)
- parent/carer phone consultation during the scheduled appointment time
- development of therapy resources, support aids, or home programs during the scheduled appointment time
- virtual stakeholder meeting during the scheduled appointment time
- completion of upcoming reports during the scheduled appointment time
- appointment reschedule to another timeslot that is prior to the next scheduled appointment
- cancel the session

5.3 Notice Periods

- 5.3.1 Where the participant cancels with adequate notice, no charge applies (*4.1 Adequate Notice*).
- 5.3.2 Where Active Eight offers to reschedule or cancel the appointment, no charge applies.
- 5.3.3 Where Active Eight offers an Alternative Service Delivery Method (*5.2 Alternative Service Delivery Methods*) within a short notice period and it is declined by the parent/carer, Active Eight will charge 100% of the scheduled fee as a Short Notice Cancellation.
- 5.3.4 Where a client cancels with short notice (*4.2 Short Notice Period*) or no-shows (*4.3 No Show*), Active Eight will charge 100% of the scheduled fee as a Short Notice Cancellation.
- 5.3.5 For group programs operating under the Program of Support approach (*4.2 Program of Support*), where the client has given the appropriate notice of their intention to exit the program Active Eight 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.

- 5.3.6 Where a client decides that they wish to change from one group program to another part way through the scheduled term/holiday, and Active Eight can accommodate the change, then no charge will be made other than any gap payment/refund should the program fees differ.

5.4 NDIS Funded Services

- 5.4.1 For all NDIS-funded supports where the person's NDIS funding can be used for short notice cancellations 100% of the session fee will be charged to the client's NDIS plan for each session, as per 5.3.3 to 5.3.5 above.
- 5.4.2 Where the NDIA does not permit charges against the NDIA plan, the client will be personally charged as per 5.3.3 to 5.3.5 above. This will be recorded on the service delivery record and the relevant charge will be invoiced to the client's email address on file.
- 5.4.3 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.
- 5.4.4 As part of this arrangement, participants are able to exit a group program and receive a refund of any fees relating to the remaining sessions not attended, if they give two (2) weeks' notice of their intention to do this. Active Eight will retain payment for sessions taking place during the 2-week notice period, regardless of whether the client attends the sessions or not.

5.5 All Other Forms of Payment (other than NDIS)

For all other sources of payment for services including privately paying clients, Active Eight will invoice the client directly for payment according to the notice periods outlined in 5.3.

5.6 Safeguarding and No-Shows

In the event of a no-show, the Active Eight team member scheduled to support the client will attempt to contact the client's parent/carer or emergency contact to determine if there are any special circumstances or safety concerns for the client. This will occur if a client is not at their appointment after 10 minutes of the scheduled start time. The team member will attempt to make contact by calling and/or sending an SMS to the primary mobile on file. If after 20 minutes of the appointment start time, no response has been received then the team member will attempt to contact the secondary mobile on file (if one exists).

5.7 Suspension of Services

For a range of reasons, a client may wish to request a temporary suspension of services. Active Eight is unable to hold an appointment timeslot without payment. If the client wishes to hold the recurring appointment timeslot until their return, then they must be willing to continue to pay for the service during the period of absence. If the client chooses not to hold the appointment timeslot, then the recurring appointment timeslot will be offered to the next client on the waiting list for that service.

Should the appointment timeslot still be available upon the clients return, services can resume as they were. If the position has been filled, the client's name will be placed at the bottom of the waiting list for that service and a place offered when available.

5.8 Consecutive absences

Continued consecutive absences (three or more missed appointments), regardless of length of notice given, may be subject to suspension of services. An Active Eight staff member will contact the client's parent/carer to discuss what services may be more appropriate at this time or how else Active Eight might be able to assist.