



Administrative Procedures Memorandum

APB 002

Student Fees for Learning Materials and School Activities

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MEMO TO: All Staff

FROM: Director of Education

PURPOSE

With the support of the school communities, schools may wish to offer programming and materials beyond what is necessary to **enhance** the learning expectations of a particular grade or course. In these situations, it may be appropriate to charge a fee to offset the additional costs. It is the intent of this memorandum to provide direction to Catholic Elementary and Secondary schools with respect to the levying of students fees for learning materials and school activities.

REFERENCES

- The Education Act - section 170(1) 13: *Duty to Provide Learning Materials Without Charge*
- Ministry of Education Memorandum 2001:B02 (March 25, 2011)

FORMS

- Not applicable

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Guidelines for Student Activity Fees

COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES

The Province of Ontario provides for publicly-funded school systems through which all learners have a right to attend without the payment of fees. This administrative procedures memorandum does not apply to tuition fees for visa and international students, continuing education learners admitted to a school system, or fees for early learning programs offered outside the regular school day or other before or after school programs. Rather, the Ministry memorandum and this administrative procedures memorandum addresses fees levied by elementary and secondary schools for learning materials and related activities.

The vision of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board is ***“Our Catholic Schools ~ Heart of the Community, Success for Each, a Place for All.”***

As an inclusive education system, the purpose of developing procedures concerning fees is to identify as part of our *poverty awareness and reduction initiative* those barriers to participation in school activities and programs and to be proactive in providing a barrier free learning environment for all. Accordingly, the following procedures are in place with respect to fees for learning materials and school activities.

For the purposes of this administrative procedures memorandum, the following definitions are used based on the guidance provided by the Ministry of Education:

Student Activity Fees

Student Activity Fees are voluntary amounts that are used to supplement a student's school experience through materials and activities such as student agendas, student recognition programs, yearbooks, extracurricular activities, school dances, or theme days.

Extra-curricular Activities

Activities outside the regular day school program.

Co-curricular Activities

Activities inside the regular day school program.

Enhanced Programming and Materials

Enhanced Programming and materials are voluntary enrichments or upgrades to the curriculum or co-curricular activities beyond what is necessary to meet the learning expectations for a particular grade or course. For example, in some performance and production courses (for example, music, woodworking), students may wish to use a superior product or consumable than that provided by the school, in which case they may be asked to pay the additional cost of the upgrade.

Where students choose not to access these enhanced programs or materials, alternatives must be available as essential course materials required to meet the learning expectations of the course or grade are to be provided at no cost.

Optional Programming

Optional Programming refers to voluntary courses or activities that students normally choose to attend through an application process, with the knowledge that these programs are beyond the core curriculum. Examples may include Advanced Placement and Hockey Canada Skills Academy programs.

STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

1. Elementary schools may charge a voluntary student activity fee to cover the cost of the student agenda.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. Secondary schools may levy a voluntary initial student activity fee on a cost recovery basis associated with yearbooks, extra-curricular activities, student agendas, student recognition programs, school dances, theme days, etc.
2. Principals may collect fees at the beginning of each school year or as required throughout the school year. Each year the Principal shall make available a list of fees charged to each student providing a breakdown (item-by-item) of any initial student fees; for example, yearbook, extracurricular, student agendas.
3. Student activity fees charged at the beginning of the school year or term may not be all inclusive with respect to the various charges throughout the school year that are permitted under this policy and are collected when the events occur during the year. Examples are: fees for enhancements to courses, special lunch days, graduation, and athletic fees.
4. The maximum amount a school may charge for an initial student activity fee shall be determined annually for secondary schools by the Superintendent of Learning Student Success and Faith Development in consultation with the Secondary Administrators.

5. The initial student activity fee shall not include Yearbook costs. Yearbook costs may be added to the fee but must be specified as such.
6. Families with two or more children registered at the same school at the same time will not be required to pay initial student activity fees for their third or subsequent child.
7. Each student should have an equal opportunity to benefit from the education system; students must be able to participate in school activities and access to resources regardless of personal financial barriers.
8. Those students or parents/guardians who wish to have the school pay for or provide alternative arrangements for payments of any student activity fees, may consult with their school Principal for assistance in such situations. Under no circumstances will this information be made public as to the individuals' circumstances or amount of assistance. All information shared is strictly confidential.
9. Where there are staff or adult volunteer costs for an activity, the school is responsible for covering these costs. These costs are not passed on to students.
10. A school may charge a fee for an activity, material, course or program if it is:
 - a. Not required as part of the regular day school program,
 - b. Voluntary, and alternatives are offered,
 - c. Non-essential or extracurricular in nature and is not required for graduation by an individual student, or,
 - d. A voluntary upgrade or substitute of a more costly material to the material provided for course purposes.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY FOR BOTH ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. In order to assist parents/guardians and students in planning for the school year, administrators will develop an annual plan specifying which fees shall be collected and at what times of the year, for example, September, or at intervals throughout the year as various activities occur. The plan will include an item by item breakdown of all student fee to be levied during the year. The principal shall take into consideration the advice of the Catholic School Council and school staff in the development of the plan.
2. The annual plan shall be submitted to the appropriate supervisory officer for approval prior to the plan being posted on the school web page and communicated to parents and Catholic School Council.
3. The annual plan submitted to the appropriate supervisory officer for approval will indicate the date(s) when the Catholic School Council and staff provided advice for the plan.
4. All student activity fees shall be collected and recorded in accordance with the school generated funds procedures. This includes **any** fee or charge to students or parents/guardians in the course of the school year.
5. Annually, through the school generated funds activity report, the Principal shall report to the school council and school community on the amount of student activity fees levied during the previous year and how the fees were expended. This information can be included in a fall school newsletter, posted on the school's website, referenced in the student agendas, or presented and recorded in the minutes of a fall school council meeting.
6. The process to confidentially address financial hardships should also be publically available to the school community.
7. Where there is a course enhancement activity where not all students participate, the school will offer alternative activities at the school for those learners not participating in the enhancement activity. This is a requirement of Ministry policy where participation in the alternate activity rather than the enhancement fulfills the requirement for the learner's successful completion of the program/course. As such it is not appropriate to have learners remain at home when an enhancement activity is being conducted. Administrators are responsible for communicating this requirement to staff and the parent community.

Appendix A
Guideline for Student Activity Fees

Examples of Activities, Programs, or Materials Eligible for Fee Charges

The following are examples of student activities that **are eligible** for fee charges:

- Student Agenda
- Field Trips or excursions that are an extension of the curriculum and not mandatory as part of the completion of the grade/course. Alternative activities are provided for those not participating.
- Yearbooks
- Special lunch days
- Cost recovery for the replacement or repair of lost, damaged, or broken materials, such as:
 - Textbooks
 - Library books
 - Music or science supplies
 - Locks for student lockers
 - Vandalism of a locker or other school materials
 - Other loaned material
- Library book fairs
- Costs associated with Grade 8 or High School graduation
- Participation in enhancements to the physical and health education programs that are not required to complete as part of the course, such as:
 - Rock Climbing
 - Curling
 - Ice Rentals
 - Self-defense
- Participation in extra-curricular sports teams or events:
 - Rental of facilities (rink, field)
 - Costs of jersey or other equipment
 - Costs of tournament entry fees and associated accommodations and transportation
- Participation in extra-curricular school clubs
 - DECA
 - Band
 - Youth Leadership Conference
- Fees for printing and mailing transcripts or OSSD certificates to inactive students
- Voluntary purchases of school spirit wear
- School uniforms (most students deal directly with McCarthy's)
- Geography, History or other course trips abroad that are not required to complete the course. Alternative activities are provided for those not participating in the trips.
- School dances, Semi-formals, and Prom
- Learning materials that are optional for the completion of the grade/course, such as:
 - Optional sewing kits and fabric in home economics
 - Higher quality electronic materials for projects
 - Superior construction materials than those required to complete projects
- Voluntary participation in elementary retreats as part of the sacrament preparation program. Alternative arrangements for those not participating in the retreat.

Examples of Activities, Programs, or Materials Ineligible for Fee Charges

The following are examples of student activities or learning materials that **are not eligible** for fee charges:

- A textbook fee or deposit
- Learning materials that are required for the completion of the grade/course, such as the items listed below.
The list below is not exhaustive:
 - French workbooks
 - Spanish workbooks
 - Accounting ledgers
 - Mathematics workbooks
 - Recorders or reeds
 - Calculators, protractors, and other required math materials
 - Standard art or science supplies
 - Lab materials or safety goggles
- Locker fees or lock deposit
- Field trips or excursions where participation is mandatory for the completion of the grade/course or a quiz/test/project is required based on the field trip or excursion
- Items that are funded through the allocated budget of a school board, such as:
 - Computers
 - Staff development and training costs
- Learning materials that are required to meet the learning expectations of the grade/course, but are consumed by the student and cannot be used again by another student in the next grade/semester
- Fees for printing and mailing transcripts or OSSD certificates to active students
- Timetables or admit slips
- Mandatory participation in elementary retreats as part of the sacrament preparation program
- Participation in secondary retreats as part of the Religious Education program
- Participation in mandatory physical and health education programs that are required to complete the course.
- Mandatory flat fees for any course leading to graduation other than optional programming