

AP 5060: School Fees, Deposits and Financial Hardship - *In Progress*

Background

The School Act requires that instruction in an educational program be provided free of charge to every student of school age who is resident in British Columbia and enrolled in an educational program operated by a District.

Schools do not charge fees for anything that is referred to as educational resource material. These are materials and equipment necessary to meet the learning outcomes or assessment requirements of an educational program provided by the district. Educational resource material also refers to information represented or stored in a variety of media and formats that is used for instruction in an educational program including, with limitation, the materials referred to in Section 3 of Ministerial Order 333/99, the Education Guide Orders.

The district may charge fees for goods and services, as defined under School Regulation 265/89. These goods and services are provided by the district in accordance with Ministry Orders and the School Act section 82(3).

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to clarify when, and for what purposes, fees and deposits may be charged and to ensure that no student is denied an opportunity to participate in the required educational programs or activities based on financial hardship as outlined below.

Procedure

1. General

- 1.1. The Superintendent will ensure that the following District fee guidelines for elementary, middle and secondary schools are aligned to the School Act.
- 1.2. Principals will establish a schedule of fees and deposits in consultation with the school Parent Advisory Council, with secondary students, and with staff.
- 1.3. The schedule of fees and deposits for the following year must be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools prior to March 15 of each year.
- 1.4. The Superintendent will review the schedule of fees and deposits to ensure that they meet Board Policy and Ministry requirements. Prior to June 1 of each year the Superintendent will present a schedule of fees for each school for Board approval.
- 1.5. If, after June 1, new courses are developed which are not on the list of courses for which fees can be charged, the fees for those courses must be approved by the Board prior to September 30.
- 1.6. The schedule of fees and deposits must include provision to waive in whole or in part, or to make alternate arrangements for payment of fees, for parents/guardians who cannot

afford to pay some or all the fee(s) or deposit(s). Students and parents/guardians must be treated with dignity and respect. Under no circumstances may schools address outstanding fees or deposits by identifying a child or a family to the school or the public.

- 1.7. Under no circumstances may schools withhold or delay report cards due to late payment of fees or deposits.

2. Fees

- 2.1. Basic materials to meet the required learning outcomes or assessment requirements of an educational program will be provided by the district. Principals may establish fees for materials and equipment of a nature, or of a quality, beyond what is necessary to meet the required outcome or assessment requirements of an educational program.
- 2.2. Students may be charged for paper, writing tools, student planners, workbooks, and other school supplies and equipment for a student's individual use.
- 2.3. Principals may charge for materials and activities that are outside of an educational program (e.g. student activity fees, school yearbooks, graduation activity fees and combination locks), however, the payment of such non-educational fees is not mandatory but is based on the optional participation in the activity by the student.
- 2.4. Students may provide their own musical instrument where that is necessary, or the district may charge for the purchase or rental of a musical instrument for the student's personal use.
- 2.5. With approval from the principal, students may provide their own tools, equipment and materials where necessary for a Trades program or the district may charge for the purchase or rental of tools, equipment and materials for the student's personal use.
- 2.6. Students may be charged fees relating to recovering direct costs incurred by the district in providing specialty academies that are in addition to the cost of providing the standard educational program.
- 2.7. Students may be charged fees for the costs associated with optional field trips that add value to a student's learning experience, but where learning outcomes are not assessed. Fees that recover the cost of transportation, accommodation, meals, entrance fees, equipment rentals, or other student costs specific to the trip may be charged.

3. Deposits

- 3.1. Principals may require a deposit(s) for educational resource materials such as textbooks, workbooks and electronic devices.
- 3.2. Deposits are refundable and students will be advised on the terms of the deposit at the time the deposit is required. If a school requires a deposit, it must refund all or part of

the deposit provided that the textbook, workbook or electronic device is returned to the school in a suitable condition by the end of the school year.

3.3. The school must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place so that proper records are kept of deposits paid and reimbursed.

4. Procedures in Cases of Financial Hardship

4.1. Principals of each school will establish procedures to facilitate the participation of students who would not otherwise be able to participate in a course, class or program which is part of a student's educational program due to financial hardship.

4.2. Principals will involve the staff and Parent Advisory Council in developing procedures for dealing with individual cases when financial hardship may prevent a student from participating in a curricular program or activity.

4.3. The procedures will incorporate the principles of fairness, confidentiality, and sensitivity, while maintaining family respect and dignity. Students, parents and staff will be advised of the procedure.

4.4. A statement informing parents of the hardship provisions will be included on permission forms for trips, events and programs. The procedure for addressing financial hardship will also be included in the student agendas and parent and staff handbooks.

4.5. The principal will receive and deal with all requests for support and consideration. In doing so, the principal will consider the following options.

4.5.1. deferred payment

4.5.2. payment over time

4.5.3. partial waiver

4.5.4. full waiver

4.6. All requests are held in strict confidentiality, respecting the privacy of the family and student.