

Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR579

Title: Student Activity Fees and Course Cost Fees, including French
Adopted: June 28, 2006
Revised: February 27, 2007, November 10, 2010, **September 16, 2011**
Authorization: Administrative Council

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide guidelines for the administration of student activity fees and course cost fees

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Student activity fee: 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.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Deputy Director - Academic

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1. Student Activity Fees

- (a) The current amount and intended allocation of the student activity fee shall be in each school's profile on the Board's website and in each school's agenda. Where possible information on student fees should be available in multiple languages and formats. Fee schedules for the upcoming school year should be made widely available to the school community and to new students and their parents in September before the school year begins. Information about the process to confidentially address financial hardship should also be included.
- (b) Each spring, principals will consult staff, school councils, and student councils in deciding the amount and breakdown of the student activity fee.
- (c) Fees raised for school purposes are to complement, and not replace, public funding for education. Fees charged should reflect the actual cost of the services or materials being provided to the student.

- (d) Funds collected through student activity fees shall be used as outlined in the student activity fee information
- (e) Written documentation in the form of a receipt will be provided to students and/or parents upon payment of the student fee, indicating the intended allocation of the fee.
- (f) Where the principal (or designate) is satisfied that a financial hardship exists for a student or family, all or part of the activity or special program fee may be waived in a confidential manner. Students must be able to participate in school activities and access resources regardless of personal financial barriers.

4.2. Course Costs

- (a) All students in regular day school programs can expect to be provided with course materials in order to complete the course expectations. Successful completion of a required course leading to graduation cannot be dependent on the payment of any course fee. No student will be refused admission to a course, program, or school because of failure to pay the course fee.¹
- (b) Mandatory learning materials that are required with the textbook for completion of the curriculum such as workbooks, cahiers, musical instruments, art supplies, science supplies, lab material kits, and safety goggles are ineligible for fee charges.
- (c) Enhanced programming and materials are voluntary enrichments or upgrades to the curriculum or co-curricular² activities beyond what is necessary to meet the learning expectations for a particular grade or course. To the extent possible, costs related to enhancing programming shall be kept to a minimum.
- (d) Optional programming fees may be appropriate where schools offer voluntary courses or activities that students normally choose to attend through an application process. This may be the case with the knowledge that these programs are beyond the core curriculum. Where fees are appropriate to maintain the quality of specialized programs, they should be minimized as much as possible, with the goal of supporting student participation in programs and activities regardless of individual economic circumstances.
- (e) All field trips for which there is a cost must be optional to a course. Where the student chooses not to participate in an optional field trip, alternative assignments must be provided.

¹ "Every school board shall provide without charge for the use of each pupil enrolled in a day school operated by the board textbooks for courses in which the pupil is enrolled." (s. 7, Reg. 298, *Education Act*). "A teacher has a duty to use only approved textbooks." (s. 264, *Education Act*).

² For the purposes of this guideline, co-curricular activities or materials are defined as related to the regular day school program. Extra-curricular activities are defined as outside the regular day school program.

- (f) If students are charged additional costs for enhanced or optional programs and/or material, the principal is responsible for providing advance notification to parents and students detailing the additional cost of the program.

4.3. French Course Costs

- (a) Students shall not be required to pay a fee for additional learning materials that are needed for the completion of the curriculum in French classes.
- (b) Payments made in French courses shall be consistent with payments in English courses. No student shall be required to pay for any course material in a French course which they would not otherwise pay for in an English course.

4.4 Accountability to the School Community

- (a) The principal is responsible for ensuring that there is a transparent accounting of monies collected, and that information about how the funds is spent are made available to the school community in a timely manner.
- (b) The principal shall approve all fees charged to students and ensure that there are appropriate communication/approval/accounting procedures in place at the school.