



**DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
ONTARIO NORTH EAST**

**Policy No. 2.1.33**

**Section 2.1: School Related Operations**

**Related References:**

**Approved: September 6, 2011**

**Revised:**

**Review Date:**

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**TITLE: Fees for Learning Materials and Activities**

**1.0 Rationale:**

Every student has the right to attend a school, where he or she is a qualified resident pupil, without payment of a fee. In general, there should be no fees charged for day school programs. However, some activities or events may require some recovery of the cost for participation. When schools or school boards choose, with the support of the school community, to offer enhanced or optional programming, parents/guardians may be asked to contribute resources in the way of time, money or materials to support these programs or activities.

## 2.0 Definitions:

### 2.1 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.

### 2.2 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 and are to be provided at no cost.

### 2.3 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. An example may include Hockey Canada Skills Academy.

## 3.0 Policy:

It is the policy of District School Board Ontario North East not to charge student fees for the costs of materials and activities for elementary and secondary education. When appropriate, and with the support of the school community, schools may wish to offer programming and materials beyond what is necessary to meet the learning expectations of a particular grade or course. In those situations, for which charging student fees may be appropriate, no student should be excluded from participating in any school activity or event, of a reasonable nature, based on the ability to pay. Procedures for the charging and collecting of student fees should, at all times, demonstrate the mission and values of the Board.

## 4.0 Guidelines:

- 4.1 The purposes for which the funds are collected are consistent with the Board's mission and values.
- 4.2 Fees charged for school purposes are to complement, and not replace, public funding for education.

- 4.3 Students must be able to participate in school activities and access resources regardless of personal financial barriers.
- 4.4 No student will be refused participation in any school activity or event, of a reasonable nature, due to the economic circumstances of that student or his/her family.
- 4.5 All reasonable expectations for privacy of students and parents will be respected during the student fee collection process, and those who may be experiencing financial difficulty will be managed in a discrete manner.
- 4.6 Financial reports will be maintained and made available to the school community.
- 4.7 Successful completion of a required grade or course leading to graduation cannot be dependent on the payment of any course fee.
- 4.8 Fee amounts should reflect the actual cost of the service or materials provided to the student, and in all possible cases, should be modest and within certain limits.
- 4.9 Members of the school community should be consulted in the development of a school's fee schedule and made aware of the use of student fees.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **1. Policy:**

It is the policy of District School Board Ontario North East not to charge student fees for the costs of materials and activities for elementary and secondary education. When appropriate, and with the support of the school community, schools may wish to offer programming and materials beyond what is necessary to meet the learning expectations of a particular grade or course. In those situations for which charging student fees may be appropriate, no student should be excluded from participating in any school activity or event, of a reasonable nature, based on the ability to pay. Procedures for the charging and collecting of student fees should, at all times, demonstrate the mission and values of the Board.

### **2. Key Principles:**

- 2.1 The fees referred to herein are fees other than tuition fees for visa students, international students, First Nations students attending pursuant to a tuition agreement, and adult or continuing education students. Nor do they include fees for early learning programs offered outside the regular school day or other before or after school programs.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this document, 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.
- 2.3 Activities for which funds are collected shall help to ensure the success of every student and demonstrate and help to foster integrity, acceptance, empathy, respect and responsibility.

### **3. Fee Charges:**

- 3.1 When determining whether fee charges may be appropriate, the following criteria may be considered. A fee charge shall be permissible for an activity, material, course or program if it is:
  - Not required as part of the regular day school program;
  - Voluntary and alternatives are offered;
  - Non-essential or extracurricular in nature and is not required for graduation by an individual student; or
  - A voluntary upgrade or substitute of a more costly material to the material provided for course purposes.

- 3.2 The following list provides examples of activities, programs or materials that may be considered for fee charges:
- Optional programming such as Hockey Canada Skills Academy program;
  - Extracurricular trips, events or activities that are extensions to the curriculum and not required for graduation (e.g. dances, school clubs, theme days, athletics, drama, student council activities);
  - Extended student trips or excursions that are not necessary to meet the learning expectations of a particular grade or course (e.g. trips abroad);
  - Optional art or music supplies or higher quality woodworking, design or technology materials that students choose to use for course completion, as long as the required materials are available at no cost;
  - Student activity fees;
  - Gym uniforms;
  - Parent and/or guardians may be asked to provide clothing, footwear and supplies not curricular in nature such as pencil cases, pencils, pens, paper, rulers or binders. If a student does not have the necessary supplies, schools should ensure that each student has what he or she needs to complete the activity or assignment;
  - Co-curricular activities, special events, program enhancements or field trips (e.g. for costs of participation, rental of equipment or travel), if alternative programming and assignments are offered to students who choose not to participate; or
  - Student agendas and/or yearbooks.
- 3.3 The following list provides examples of activities, programs or materials that are **ineligible** for fee charges:
- A registration or administration fee for students enrolled in any regular day school program;
  - A textbook fee or deposit;
  - Learning materials that are required for completion of the curriculum such as workbooks, cahiers, musical instruments, science supplies, lab material kits and safety goggles;
  - Fees charged for the creation of discretionary accounts by teachers or departments;

- Mandatory flat fees for any course leading to graduation other than optional programming;
- A fee for a guest speaker, visiting teacher, or in-class field trip or presentation where the material being presented is a mandatory element of the subject or course;

3.4 Schools may recover the costs for the replacement or repair of lost, damaged or broken materials such as textbooks, library books, music or science supplies or any loaned materials. These charges should not exceed the replacement or repair cost.

#### **4. Practices:**

- 4.1 All fees for student activities should be of a modest amount and be consistent across schools of the Board.
- 4.2 Families with three or more children in the Board will be charged a maximum of 75% of the total student activity fee amount.
- 4.3 Schools will have a central fund from which to create a subsidy program to support the full participation of students regardless of economic circumstances.
- 4.4 Fee amounts should reflect the actual cost of the service or materials provided to the student. If there are residual amounts at the end of the school year in an ongoing category (for example: student fees), the funds should be rolled forward to the next year and to help reduce these fees in future years.
- 4.5 Wherever possible, schools will minimize the costs related to enhanced programming and materials that are optional to a course.
- 4.6 Alternative assignments should be provided for students to meet the expectations of a course in those situations in which a student chooses not to participate in an activity for which a fee is charged.
- 4.7 If an event for which fees were collected is cancelled, fees should be refunded to students.

#### **5. Accountability:**

- 5.1 Fees should reflect the actual cost of the services or materials being provided to the student. A transparent accounting of the amounts collected and expenditures allocated must be made available to the school community.
- 5.2 Fee schedules each year should be made widely available to members of the school community in student handbooks, fall school newsletters, and/or on the school website.
- 5.3 The following information about the process to confidentially address financial hardship should be included in the fee schedules:

- 5.3.1 The parent/guardian or student (living on their own or of legal age) should inform the school Principal, in writing, of the need for assistance, and inform the Principal of those activities in which they would like to participate and for which a fee is being charged. The Principal will ensure that when fees are collected for those activities, the staff member collecting those fees will be informed that payment was received for that student(s) at the office.