Policy: Fees for Learning Materials and Activities at Schools

Reference No: P-BA-29

The Greater Essex County District School Board's mission, vision and strategic priorities support student success and well-being. The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensuring that all students are supported, and that its policies reflect equity and inclusion.

The Board acknowledges that every student has the right to attend a school, where they are a qualified resident pupil, without payment of a fee. However, fees for enhanced or optional programming may be requested. At no time will students be excluded from participating in any school activity or event based on their ability to pay. The dignity of every student and their families will be honoured.

Reference can be made to the Ministry of Education – "Fees for learning materials and activities at schools"

Greater Essex County District School Board

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A school may only charge reasonable fees for enhanced or optional programming which are in compliance with the Education Act as set out below. In situations where fees may be charged to students, no student shall be excluded from participating in any school activity or event based on their ability to pay.

A fee is permissible for an activity, material, course or program for which any of the following applies:

- 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; and
- A voluntary upgrade or substitute to a more costly material instead of material provided for course purposes.

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. Schools are not permitted to charge a flat-rate student activity fee but may request payment of activity fees, on a cost-recovery basis, for individual materials and activities. An itemized list of fees, purpose of the fee and rationale should be shared with the school community.

All student activity fees must be consistent with the Board's mission, vision, and strategic priorities. Student activity fees must be complementary to public funding for education.

Schools should have a flexible and informal process, led by the Principal, that respects the dignity of students and families who require accommodation due to financial hardship.

For guidance related to field trips, refer to Policy / Regulation PR-01 "Field Trips and Excursions".

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. 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.

Prohibitions for fee charges:

- Textbook fee or deposit;
- Learning materials that are required for completion of the curriculum (e.g. workbooks, lab materials, musical instruments, 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;
- Fees for guest speakers, or in-class field trip or presentation where the material being presented is a mandatory element of the subject or course;
- Items that are funded through the allocated budget of a school board (e.g. learning materials, computers, workbooks, textbooks);
- Learning materials that are required to meet the learning expectations of the course but are consumed by the pupil and cannot be used again by another student in the next semester.

School Generated Funds:

Any fees charged under this regulation are considered School Generated Funds. Requirements for School Generated Funds are described in Administrative Procedure AP-BA-13.

Reference:

Ministry of Education - Fees for learning materials and activities at schools