



Policy

Title: Student Fees for Learning Materials and Activities	Policy #: PO445
Policy Area: Operations	
Source: Superintendent of Education – Policy Development	
Date Approved:	
Dates of Amendment:	

1.0 Introduction

The Durham Catholic District School Board believes that students be provided with the necessary learning materials and equipment for programs and courses in which they are enrolled. Fees may be charged to students in cases where schools choose to offer enhancements or supplementary learning materials beyond the core curriculum or specialized programming. Schools may choose to collect a voluntary activity fee to be used to support materials and co-curricular programs that extends a student's participation in a variety of activities and opportunities beyond the classroom.

2.0 Definitions

Student Activity Fees – are voluntary fees for complementary learning materials and curricular and co-curricular activities and are amounts that are used to supplement a student's school experience through materials and activities such as student agendas, student recognition programs, yearbooks, extra curricular activities, school dances or theme days.

Extra-curricular Activities-activities occurring outside the regular school day program.

Co-Curricular Activities-activities occurring inside the regular school day program.

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 (i.e. music, woodworking), students may wish to use a superior product or consumable than that provided by the school, in which case they may be requested 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-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.

3.0 **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to clarify and provide direction for school principals when considering charging student fees for learning materials, programs, curricular and co-curricular activities.

4.0 **Application/Scope**

This policy applies to all schools of the Durham Catholic District School Board and the provision of learning materials, programs, curricular and co-curricular activities to all students.

5.0 **Principles**

5.1 The Board believes that:

- 5.1.1 every student has the right to attend a school, where they are a qualified resident pupil without payment of a fee (*Education Act* Section 32(1));
- 5.1.2 when schools or school boards choose to offer enhanced or optional programming, parents or guardians may be asked to contribute resources in the way of time, money or materials to support these programs or activities;
- 5.1.3 the purposes of which funds are collected are consistent with the Boards mission and values. Fees raised for school purposes are to complement, and not replace, public funding for Catholic education;
- 5.1.4 every student should have an equal opportunity to benefit from the education system without being required to pay a fee. Students must be able to participate in school activities and access resources regardless of financial barriers;
- 5.1.5 the dignity of every student and parent should be respected in the school fee collection process and collection methods maintain reasonable expectations of privacy;

6.0 **Requirements**

6.1 The Principal:

- 6.1.1 is responsible for ensuring that materials required to meet the expectations of the core curriculum are available without cost to students. No fee may be charged for learning resources that are essential to the delivery of core course or program;
- 6.1.2 may only charge reasonable fees which are in compliance with the *Education Act*. Every effort shall be made to assist students with limited financial means;
- 6.1.3 shall develop respectful practices for discrete identification of students/parents/guardians who may be experiencing financial hardship and communicate those to staff in a confidential manner;
- 6.1.4 may collect a fee at the beginning of a school year, term or semester or for an activity or excursion planned by the school;
- 6.1.5 may charge a fee where the student chooses voluntary enrichments or upgrades to the material or where purchasing the material is optional;
- 6.1.6 shall review all proposed optional charges for all courses or activities prior to the fee being levied;
- 6.1.7 shall not charge a fee for a textbook or a textbook deposit fee for a workbook used as a textbook;
- 6.1.8 shall ensure that all student excursions for which there is a cost must be optional to the course. Where the student chooses not to participate in an optional field trip, alternative assignments must be provided in order for the student to be able to meet the expectations for the course;
- 6.1.9 may request the payment of student activity fees to subsidize the cost of student agendas, yearbooks, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, optional student excursions, school dances or theme days. These fees are voluntary and may vary from school to school;
- 6.1.10 shall consult with staff, Student Councils (where applicable), and Catholic School Councils about student activity fees;
- 6.1.11 may charge fees or institute a book deposit if the student enrollment is contained on a continuing educational student register, and adult education credit course register or an international language student register;
- 6.1.12 shall not deny a secondary school student access to any course based on an inability to pay a course/program fee, nor will report cards or transcript be withheld for the same reason;

- 6.1.13 shall not deny access to a secondary student to any course, or to the use of the school learning commons and any related library on-line resources for failure to pay student activity fees;
- 6.1.14 shall ensure that Physical Education class clothing that meets OPHEA Guidelines and school uniforms compliant with the school dress code, are available for purchase for each secondary school;
- 6.1.15 may charge fees for the replacement or repair of textbooks, workbooks, learning commons material and or loaned materials and equipment if this loaned material is not returned as required or is returned in damaged condition. The fee may not exceed the current replacement or repair cost as appropriate.

7.0 **Sources**

- Education Act of Ontario, Section 32(1)

8.0 **Related Policy and Administrative Procedure**

- Student Fees for Learning Materials and Activities Administrative Procedure (AP445-1)