SCHOOL AND TRANSPORTATION FEES

Background

The Board believes that all students should have fair, equitable, and affordable access to the basic resources and materials required for publicly funded education as provided by the Government of Alberta. The Board further believes that, to the extent possible, these basic resources and materials should be provided at no cost to parents or students.

At the same time, the Board understands that it has a duty to provide quality programs for and services to students according to its unique features as outlined in its approved Charter. Moreover, the Board acknowledges that the Education Act permits a board to charge a parent of a student fees with respect to specified supplies and services.

Finally, the Board believes that its practices related to school fees must reflect the principles of clarity, transparency, fairness, and accountability.

In accordance with these beliefs and understandings, as well as with the provisions of the Education Act, the Board authorizes the establishment and collection of fees, as prescribed in and limited by the guidelines with this administrative procedure.

Definition

"Basic resources and materials" mean those resources and materials that are necessary to fulfill the compulsory components of the Alberta Program of Studies. Further, anything that the school determines to be mandatory, and thus essential to a student's compulsory coursework or daily functioning, is included in the definition.

Procedures

1. The school is authorized to charge instructional resources and course fees for the following supplies, materials, activities, and services:

    a. enrichment resources

    b. field trips

    c. extracurricular activities

d. lunch supervision services

e. transportation services

2. This administrative procedure does not apply to the following costs:

   a. The cost of general supplies and materials that a school may expect students to provide for themselves, i.e. pens, pencils, erasers, notebooks, binders, physical education gym strip.

   b. The cost of goods, services, and activities that a student/parent may choose to purchase from the school, i.e. school photos, hot lunches, yearbooks, school logo clothing/gear, graduation activities, school activity costs such as dances or other social activities.

3. Fees shall only be used for the purpose for which they were collected and must be directly related to the cost of resources, services, or activities provided to students.

4. The Board will approve annually the schedule of fees. Prior to an increase or decrease in fees, the school will consult with parents regarding the proposed change, via a duly constituted meeting of School Council. Consultation will include providing rationale for the change in fee, including the amount of change.

5. Prior to the start of each school year, the schedule of fees will be posted on the school's website.

6. A flexible payment schedule and a fee waiver program shall be developed and implemented to address circumstances of financial hardship.

<u>Basic Instruction and Course Fee Waivers</u>

1. For parents seeking a fee waiver for basic instruction and course fees each year, the parents must fill in a fee waiver application and provide supporting documentation that substantiates total family income. Fee waiver applications for basic instruction and course fees are available from the school's website. All fee waivers/partial waivers are valid only for the approved school year and applications for waivers/partial waivers must be submitted annually.

2. Upon receipt of a complete fee waiver application package for basic instruction and course fees, the school will advise all applicable parties including relevant school personnel and parents of the student, within ten business days, the school's decision for approving or denying the fee waiver application.

3. Where total family income of parents seeking a fee waiver for basic instruction and course fees is below the "LICO" or statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Off amount, the fee waiver application with automatically be approved.

4. Where parents are absent or incapacitated and therefore unable to complete a fee waiver application for basic instruction and course fees, school personnel will provide documentation satisfactory to adequately document the extraordinary circumstances that exist or extreme difficulty being faced. The Superintendent will review the fee waiver application and advise of approval or denial.

5. School personnel do not have the authority to approve or deny a fee waiver application. All fee waiver applications must be sent directly to the secretary-treasurer for approval.

6. Parents may appeal the school's decision for a fee waiver for basic instruction and course fees to the Board in writing. The appeal will be reviewed by the Board at its next duly constituted meeting. The Board will either confirm or deny the appeal and advise the parents of the outcome. Parents may appeal the Board's decision to the Minister.

<u>Basic Instruction and Course Fee Refunds</u>

1. Refunds for basic instruction and course fees will be dependent on the amount of the fee that has already been expended on the student. Information relating to the refund of basic instruction and course fees is available on the school's website.
2. Upon notification of withdrawal from a course or the school, the Secretary-Treasurer or designate will confirm withdrawal and process a refund of the unexpended amount to the original payer of the fee. Relevant school personnel and the parents of the student will be advised of the refund and amount of refund.

3. Parents may appeal the school's decision for a fee refund to the Charter Board in writing. The appeal will be reviewed by the Board at its next duly constituted

meeting. The Board will either confirm or deny the appeal and advise the parents of the outcome. Parents may appeal the Board's decision to the Minister.

Transportation Fee Waivers and Refunds

1. Annually, the Board will set the amount payable in respect to the transportation agreement. Transportation fees may not exceed the cost of providing transportation services.

2. Transportation fees will be charged to a student's parents for transportation, where parents elect to use the contracted transportation provider. The transportation fee is non-refundable after January 31st of the school year for which it has been paid, due to service levels contracted based on forms completed. If this agreement is entered into after the beginning of a month during the school year, the month in which the service agreement is entered into shall be treated as a full month for fee payment purposes.

3. Transportation fees cannot be waived or reduced.

4. Transportation fees must be paid in full by January 31 or the student will be removed from riding the bus effective February 1.

Settlement of Fees as a Condition of Registration/Re-Registration

1. Before a student can be considered as registered for the upcoming school year, parents must either:

    1.1. Settle all the current year's fees in full;
    1.2. Have an approved fee waiver application on file; or
    1.3. Be current on their installment plans, where one has previously been granted by the Secretary- Treasurer or designate.

2. Families with outstanding school resource, or transportation (bus) fees, as of March 15 will not be granted a student seat at STEM Collegiate for the upcoming school year.

Installment Plans

1. Installment plans must be coordinated with the Secretary-Treasurer or designate.

2. Installment plans shall be made via post-dated cheque unless otherwise

authorized by the Secretary- Treasurer or designate.

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