

## SCHOOL FEES

### Background

As part of the board's commitment to keep school fees assessed to a minimum, students are no longer charged fees for the cost of textbooks, workbooks, photocopying, printing or paper supplies. The remaining fees are charged to ensure quality programs and services are provided for students.

### Definitions

- **Administrative Fees** – a grouping of the following fees:
  - **Alternative Program Fees** – Amounts charged under *Section 21(4)* of the *School Act*, a program (not an individual course) that emphasizes a specific culture, religion, or subject matter or uses a particular teaching philosophy, including sports-related academies. Fees classified here are in addition to fees charged to students who are not in an alternative program.
  - **Fees for Optional Courses** – fees charged to cover a portion of the resources and materials provided in each specific non-core course (ie band, fine arts, advanced placement, Knowledge and Employability or Career and Technology Studies).
  - **Other Fees to Enhance Education** – Fees related to provide additional support to students toward educational programs not described or covered by the preceding fee categories. Examples may include additional exam preparation fees, tutoring and summer school.
  - **Technology Fees** – Amounts charged for use or rental of computers, iPads, or other electronic devices. Also includes fees assessed to cover the cost of software applications or infrastructure.
  - **Transportation Fees** – Amounts charged under the *School Transportation Regulation*, which are for regular bus services to and from school (excluding field trips). This includes the sale of Medicine Hat Transit Charter Service bus passes to ineligible Notre Dame Academy student riders living in South Ridge, Saamis Heights, Vista Heights and Hamptons. (Refer to Section 1.2.3.5.)
- **Curricular Activities** – activities that support the curriculum and take place during the school day.
- **Core Course** – any course or study in which enrolment is mandatory as per Alberta Education. In the Division, elementary and junior high core courses include: English/French Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Religion, Information and Communication Technology, Physical Education and Health and Life Skills. Art and Music are core courses only for elementary only. High school core courses are those required for graduation.
- **School Fees** – A grouping of the following fees:
  - **Activity Fees** – fees charged by schools for transportation, admission, accommodation and other charges for field trips or special events (including in-school clinicians & presenters) usually associated with curriculum. Additional examples include fees for swimming, skating, skiing and outdoor pursuits.

- **Extra-Curricular Fees** – Fees from clubs, sports teams, intramurals or other programs designed to broaden scholastic experience. Includes charges for materials, activities and travel associated with the club/team, etc. Extra-curricular activities take place outside of the school day.
- **Non-Curricular Travel Fees** – Travel, accommodation & admission associated with extended (overnight) optional non-curriculum travel for arts, athletic events and international travel.
- **Non-Curricular Goods & Services** – Fees charged to parents in exchange for goods or services common to most students or a cohort within the population including graduation ceremony fees.
- **School Generated Funds** – funds collected from school-based activities that are the responsibility of the Principal, including fundraising, donations and grants and field trip fees.

For the purpose of this document, fees that are treated in a similar way have been grouped together under the following headings:

ADMINISTRATIVE FEE GROUPING	SCHOOL FEE GROUPING
Alternative Program Fees	Activity Fees
Fees for Optional Courses	Extra-Curricular Fees
Other Fees to Enhance Education	Non-Curricular Travel
Technology Fees	Non-Curricular Goods & Services
Transportation Fees	

## Procedures

### 1. Approval

#### 1.1. Administrative & School Fees

1.1.1. *Board Policy 2, Role of the Board* establishes that the Board of Trustees (Board) will approve instructional/general fees for all students

1.1.1.1. The Principal shall establish a fee list, including the rationale to explain increases or decreases greater than 5 per cent, as well as a cost analysis to support the reason for the fee.

1.1.1.2. When prior year surpluses/balance forwards exceed 10 per cent of the total fee revenue collected in the prior year, the Principal will prepare an explanation and plan for the use of the surplus and demonstrate its impact on the fee charged in the current year.

1.1.1.3. The Principal shall present and discuss proposed fees at a School Council meeting and solicit feedback from School Council prior to February 28<sup>th</sup> of each year. All fees must be have the endorsement of the school community as represented by the signature of the School Council Chair

1.1.1.4. Where applicable, the Principal shall review proposed fees in order to ensure fees are comparable among schools.

1.1.1.5. The Principal shall forward proposed school fees to Senior Administration by March 1<sup>st</sup> for review. The proposed fee schedule will be presented to the Parent Association Council and feedback will be solicited.

1.1.1.6. Senior Administration will forward the proposed fees to the Board so they may be approved by March 30<sup>th</sup>.

## 1.2. Transportation Fee

### 1.2.1. Elementary Schools

- 1.2.1.1. Kindergarten to Grade 6 students who live 1.2 km or more from their designated school, Southland Transportation provided – no charge

### 1.2.2. St. Mary's School

- 1.2.2.1. Grade 7 to Grade 9 Regular Program: Students who live 2.4 km or more from St. Mary's School (designated school), Southland Transportation provided – no charge.
- 1.2.2.2. Grade 7 to Grade 9 Fine Arts Program: Students who live 2.4 km or more from St. Mary's School, Southland Transportation provided – no charge.

### 1.2.3. Notre Dame Academy

- 1.2.3.1. Grade 6 Regular & Sports Academy Program: Grade 6 Regular & Sports Academy students who live 1.2 km or more from Notre Dame Academy (designated school) and reside in South Ridge, Saamis Heights & Vista Heights, City Transit Bus provided - no charge.
- 1.2.3.2. Grade 6 Sports Academy Program: Grade 6 Sports Academy students who live 1.2 km or more from Notre Dame Academy and reside outside of South Ridge, Saamis Heights & Vista Heights, Southland Transportation provided - no charge.
- 1.2.3.3. Grade 7 to Grade 9 Regular & Sports Academy Program: Grade 7 to Grade 9 Regular & Sports Academy students who live 2.4 km or more from Notre Dame Academy (designated school) and reside in South Ridge, Saamis Heights & Vista Heights, City Transit Bus provided - no charge.
- 1.2.3.4. Grade 7 to Grade 9 Sports Academy Program: Grade 7 to Grade 9 Sports Academy students who live 2.4 km or more from Notre Dame Academy and reside outside of South Ridge, Saamis Heights & Vista Heights, Southland Transportation provided - no charge.
- 1.2.3.5. Grade 6 to Grade 9 Notre Dame Academy students living in South Ridge, Saamis Heights, Vista Heights and Hamptons who are not eligible for transportation, may purchase a Medicine Hat Transit Charter Bus Service 'paid pass' currently at a cost of \$38.50 per month on a 'first come first serve' basis. This rate will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Secretary Treasurer and forwarded to the Board for approval by March 30<sup>th</sup>.

### 1.2.4. Monsignor McCoy High School

- 1.2.4.1. Grade 10 to 12 students who live 2.4 km or more from Monsignor McCoy High School, Southland Transportation provided – no charge.

## 1.3. Lost/Damaged Material Fee

- 1.3.1. Schools may charge a fee to recover the cost for lost/damaged materials (ie textbooks) and/or equipment on a cost-recovery basis at the discretion of the Principal.
- 1.3.2. All non-payment of Lost/Damaged Material Fees may be treated in a manner similar to non-payment of all other fees (see clause 3. Outstanding Fees).

## 2. Communication Process

- 2.1. Administrative and transportation fees will be listed on both the district website and applicable school website. Schools shall provide students and parents/guardians with the approximate Administrative Fees at the time of registration.
- 2.2. School fees will be listed on the respective schools' website. Schools shall provide students and parents/guardians with the approximate School Fees at the time of registration.
- 2.3. Schools shall provide students and parents/guardians with an invoice at the beginning of the school year for Administrative Fees and for School Fees as they are incurred.
- 2.4. Fees are due 30 days following invoicing.
- 2.5. The collection of all fees is the responsibility of the school.

## 3. Outstanding Fees

- 3.1. In addition to other communication methods schools may use, schools shall issue by mail/email two reminder notices to parents/guardians with outstanding fees.
- 3.2. Regardless of fee payment status, students shall be able to participate in curricular activities.
- 3.3. Schools may, at the discretion of the Principal, decide on a student's participation in co-curricular or extra-curricular activities due to unpaid fees.
- 3.4. Schools can instruct students with a prior history of non-payment of fees to choose an option with a lower cost.

## 4. Waiving of Fees

- 4.1. In the event of financial hardship where the parent/guardian is:
  - 4.1.1. Unable to pay the school fees, the parent/guardian can apply for certain school fees to be waived.
    - 4.1.1.1. **Extra-Curricular Fees** – can be reduced or waived at the recommendation of the coach/supervisor and approval of the Principal.
      - 4.1.1.1.1. Parent or legal guardian of the student is to complete [Form 505-1](#) and return it to the school Principal.
    - 4.1.1.2. **Any Fees less than \$150** – can be reduced or waived at the discretion of the Principal.
      - 4.1.1.2.1. Parent or legal guardian of the student is to complete [Form 505-1](#) and return it to the school Principal
    - 4.1.1.3. **Fees greater than \$150 (other than Extra-Curricular Fees)** – can be reduced or waived at the discretion of the school Principal.
      - 4.1.1.3.1. Parent or legal guardian of the student is to complete the [Form 505-2](#) and forward it to the school Principal.
    - 4.1.1.4. **Academy Fees and Non-Curricular Travel Fees** – can be waived only under extreme circumstances and at the discretion of the school Principal.
      - 4.1.1.4.1. Parent or legal guardian of the student is to complete [Form 505-2](#) and forward it to the school Principal.

- 4.1.2. Not eligible to have fees waived and is unable to pay the full amount when due, the parent/guardian shall contact the school to be advised of payment options such as installment payments. The Principal is authorized to approve payment options and the payment plan must be completed by April 30th.
- 4.2. Staff at each school are to become familiar with the circumstances and process for which fees are waived. The process is to be discussed at the first staff meeting of the school year and **Forms 505-1 and Form 505-2- Application for Waiver of Fees** is to be posted in a common area in the school (ie staff room, front office, etc) and readily available to staff and parents.
- 4.3. **Administrative Procedure Form 505-1 and 505-2 Application for Waiver of Fees** is to be communicated to Parents in September of each school year.
- 4.4. Disputes and concerns can be made in accordance with *Board Policy 13: Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters*.
- 4.5. All waiver requests shall be provided directly to the Principal in a sealed envelope by the Parent.
- 4.6. Upon being provided the Principal shall ensure that the record is secured in a locked file cabinet/room and will be available for review only by the Principal, Vice-Principal, and Superintendent or designate.
- 4.7. The Principal will provide details of any approved waivers to the school employee responsible for school fee administration.
- 4.8. The Principal will notify the applicant in writing if the waiver request was approved or not approved.

## 5. Calculation Process

- 5.1. Students who are new to the Division, or who enroll subsequent to the commencement of the school year/semester, shall be charged school fees using the following process:
  - 5.1.1. For non-semester schools, fees shall be charged on a prorated basis over a 10-month period.
  - 5.1.2. For semester schools, fees shall be charged on a prorated basis over a five-month period.
  - 5.1.3. On or before the 15th of the month, students shall be charged as if they had registered at the beginning of the month. After the 15th of the month, students shall be charged fees for one-half of the month.
- 5.2. Students who leave school prior to the end of the school year or semester shall be refunded school fees using the following process:
  - 5.2.1. For non-semester schools, refunds shall be calculated on a prorated basis over a 10-month period.
  - 5.2.2. For semester schools, refunds shall be calculated on a prorated basis over a five-month period.
  - 5.2.3. On or before the 15th of the month, students shall be charged as if they had left at the beginning of the month. After the 15th of the month, students shall be refunded fees for one half of the month.
  - 5.2.4. Refunds on non-instructional fees and non-core educational fees shall be based on the unused portion of resources or materials where applicable.
  - 5.2.5. All refunds for students leaving the school shall be paid within 30 days.

**6. Unacceptable Fees and Uses**

- 6.1. Fees shall not be charged for school-generated workbooks.
- 6.2. Fees shall not be charged for materials or equipment related to core courses, other than field trip fees.
- 6.3. Gifts and donations and fundraising may not be used for classroom instruction.
- 6.4. Fees shall not be charged in lieu of fundraising.