

Procedure Title	Fees for Learning Materials and Activities		
Date of Issue	August 29, 2011	Related Policy	
Revision Dates	September 6, 2011	Related Forms	
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
References			
Ministry of Education – Fees for Learning Materials and Activities Guideline, March 2011; Education Act; Avon Maitland District School Board Administrative Procedure No. 285 “Student Fees”; Toronto District School Board Operational Procedure PR579 “Student Activity Fees and Course Cost Fees, including French”; Ministry of Education “Frequently Asked Questions – Guidelines for Fees for Learning Materials and Activities”.			

Procedure:

1.0 RATIONALE

Bluewater District School Board will ensure that, through the appropriate allocation of funds provided by the Ministry of Education, all students in the District are able to benefit from day school programming without payment of a fee.

Bluewater District School Board acknowledges that the financial support of parents/guardian(s) and various school community resources may be necessary in order to offer enhanced and/or optional programming to students.

In accordance with the Education Act, the Ministry of Education will ensure that all exceptional children in Ontario have available to them appropriate special education programs and special education services without payment of fees by parents or guardians.

2.0 DEFINITIONS (as provided by Ministry of Education – Fees for Learning Materials and Activities Guideline, March 2011)

Student Activity Fees – voluntary amounts collected from students that are used to supplement a student’s school experience through activities and materials such as, but not limited to, dances, spirit days or extra curricular activities.

Enhanced and/or Optional Programming – course or activity that a student chooses to attend that is beyond the expectations of the provincially mandated curriculum.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Fee Charges

- I) When determining whether fee collection 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:
 - a) Voluntary with alternatives being offered;
 - b) Not required as part of the regular day school program (enhanced/ optional programming);
 - c) A voluntary upgrade or substitute of a more costly material than the material provided for a course; or
 - d) Extracurricular or non essential and is not required by student to graduate.

- II) Any monies collected or materials provided by parents/guardians are meant to complement and/or enhance, and not replace, public funding for education.

- III) Successful completion of a required grade or course leading to graduation **will not** be dependent on the payment of any course fees.

- IV) Fee amounts will reflect the actual cost of the materials or service being provided to a student.

- V) Upon request, receipts will be provided to students/families upon payment of a student fee.

- VI) The following are some examples of program, activities or materials that are **ELIGIBLE** for fee collection. Please refer to Appendices A & B for additional information:
 - a) Student agendas
 - b) Yearbooks
 - c) Extra-curricular activities
 - d) Optional field trips
 - e) School dances
 - f) Supplies not curricular in nature

- VII) The following are some examples of programs, activities or materials that are **INELIGIBLE** for fee collection. Please refer to Appendix A – Guidelines for Establishment of a Student Fee Schedule for additional information:
 - a) A textbook fee or deposit (please refer to section 3.4 regarding recovery fees for damaged or lost materials/goods)
 - b) Administration/registration fee for a day school program
 - c) Learning materials required to complete a course (i.e. science supplies, safety goggles)

3.2 Equity and Inclusive Education

- I) Schools will make every effort to ensure all students can participate in student activities regardless of an inability to pay.
- II) When students/parents choose not to participate in a voluntary activity or program or not to purchase voluntary material(s), alternative assignments should be provided to them to ensure that they meet course expectations.
- III) Student fee collection methods are expected to honour the dignity of every student and parent with discreet identification of students/parents who may be experiencing financial hardships.

3.3 Accountability

- I) Schools will consult with their staff, student councils, School Community Council, Parent Involvement Committee, and other advisory committees where applicable in the development of a school fee schedule.
- II) A Fee Schedule will include how the school will address financial hardship in a confidential manner and an itemized list of fees, explaining the purpose for each.
- III) A Fee Schedule will be made widely available to the school community. This can be done through the use of fall school newsletters, school websites or student planners.

3.4 Fees for Damaged or Lost Materials/Goods

- I) The principal may charge fees for the replacement or repair of textbooks or other loaned material if the loaned material is not returned or is returned damaged.
- II) The fee charged will reflect the actual cost to repair or replace, where appropriate.

3.5 Continuing Education (Secondary School Credit Courses) Textbook

- I) The Education Act requires students enrolled in a continuing education course or a class that is eligible for credit towards a secondary school diploma to pay a deposit fee to Bluewater District School Board for textbook(s).
- II) This deposit fee will be forfeited to the board if the textbook is not returned or is returned in a damaged condition (1993, c. 11, s. 31 (3)).

APPENDIX A
GUIDELINE FOR FEES AND LEARNING MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES
GENERAL CONCEPTS

Definition of Voluntary/Non voluntary

Field trips, co-curricular activities, special events, program enhancements (admission fees, travel, etc) will be eligible for fee charges if alternative programming and assignments are offered to students (voluntary) who do not participate. All field trips for which there is a cost must be optional to the course. If no alternatives are offered for students (non voluntary), no fee is applicable.

Student activity fees may be requested to subsidize the cost of student agendas, yearbooks, extra-curricular activities, optional field trips or school dances. These fees are voluntary and may vary from school to school.

Fees may be charged for the replacement or repair of textbooks, workbooks, library material and other materials and equipment if such material is not returned or is returned in a damaged condition.

Parents 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.

What is considered basic/non basic?

No fees will be charged to a student to participate in the regular day school program. Learning materials that are essential to the curriculum expectations of the course but are consumed by the student and cannot be used again will be provided by the school (e.g. workbooks, arts supplies, science supplies, lab material kits, safety goggles).³

Fees will be charged where the student chooses voluntary enrichments or upgrades to the material or where purchasing the material is optional (e.g. higher quality wood, design or tech materials).

Optional programming is a course or activity that students choose to attend that is beyond the provincially mandated curriculum. A fee is allowed for optional programming.

Access/equity

No fee may be charged for learning resources that are essential to the delivery of a core course or program. In situations where fees may be charged to students, every effort shall be made to assist students with limited financial means.

No student will be denied access to any course based on an inability to pay a course/program fee, nor will report cards or transcripts be withheld for the same reason.

Fees may not be charged for a textbook deposit fee.

APPENDIX B
GUIDELINE FOR FEES AND LEARNING MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES
SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Student Activity Fee

Schools should consider the school community culture and any economic limitations when setting fees. School Boards may consider setting limits for families with more than two (2) children attending schools in the board.

Student Planners

Schools may charge a fee for student planners. There will be no charge if student planners are used for curriculum delivery.

Printing/Photocopying

Fees cannot be charged for printing or photocopying of materials that are required to meet curriculum expectations.

Field Trips

Field trips may be eligible for fees as long as alternative programming/assignments are offered to students who do not participate or where the field trip does not apply to curriculum expectations.

Musical Instruments

Optional and/or enhanced musical instrument options may be charged a fee providing that there is a no-fee option available for students who wish to enrol in these courses. Schools will provide a student with one reed for an assigned wind instrument (that requires a reed) and replacement reeds required due to normal usage. Schools may choose to charge cost recovery fees for any additional reeds required.

Gym Uniforms

Fees may be charged for gym uniforms. Fees should be minimized to support student participation regardless of economic circumstances.

Locks for Lockers

Schools may choose to collect reimbursement /cost recovery fees for locks.

What supplies are parents/guardians expected to supply?

Fees cannot be charged for materials that are required to meet curriculum expectations.

Schools/ teachers may provide supply lists with suggested items of a non-curricular nature to parents/guardians. Examples would be clothing, footwear, pencil cases, pens, pencils, paper, rulers, binders etc.

Schools should ensure that each student has the supplies required to complete an activity or assignment.