



Interim Student Fees Policy

Policy No. 13.1

Date Approved: June 2011

Projected Review Date: TBD

Purpose:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School believes that students are entitled to an education that ensures they achieve their full potential and that all students must be able to participate in all aspects of their school experience regardless of personal economic barriers that exist.

Intended Outcomes:

- Every student has the right to attend a school, where they are a qualified resident pupil, without payment of a fee.
- Each student should have an equal opportunity to benefit from the education system without being required to pay a fee.
- Successful completion of a required grade or course leading to graduation cannot be dependent on the payment of any course fee.
- Fees may be appropriate in cases where school boards or schools choose to offer enhancements or supplementary learning materials beyond the core curriculum.
- Where fees are appropriate, they should be minimized as much as possible, with the goal of supporting student participation in programs and activities regardless of personal financial barriers.
- Students must be able to participate in school activities and access resources regardless of personal financial barriers.
- School staff will honour the dignity of every student and parent/guardian in the school fee collection process.
- School staff will implement collection methods that afford reasonable expectations of privacy for students and parents/guardians and will clearly communicate a respectful practice for discreet identification of students/parents/guardians who may be experiencing financial hardship.
- Principals will develop and implement an inclusive consultation process regarding the establishment of fees
- Principals will communicate information regarding student fees to their communities

Responsibility:

Superintendents of Student Achievement

Definitions:

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. The Student Activity Fee will be set annually at a maximum of \$20 and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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. For example, in some performance and production courses (for example, music, woodworking), students may wish to use a superior product or consumable than that provided by the school, in which case they may be asked 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

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, International Baccalaureate and Hockey Canada Skills Academy programs.

Yearbook Fee – an optional fee charged to a student who wishes to purchase a yearbook – this fee will be waived or subsidized for students who are experiencing financial hardship

Agenda/Planner Fee – an optional fee charged to a student who wishes to purchase an agenda/planner - this fee will be waived or subsidized for students who are experiencing financial hardship

Basic Athletic Fee – paid once by students prior to playing their first sport and will be used to fund uniform maintenance, equipment repair and replacement and any school based athletic celebrations or awards. The fee will be waived or subsidized for students who are experiencing financial hardship.

Tryout Fee – sports-specific fee required to cover the cost of rental facilities not covered by the HWDSB Athletics Department, i.e., ice rental; pool rental; etc.

Team Fee – a specific fee for each sport played based on the needs of the team and used to fund tournaments/exhibition games, uniform deposit and/or upgrades, travel, first aid (non-funded sports), referees (non-funded sports) and athletic supplies (tape, wrap, etc.) The fee will be waived or subsidized for students who are experiencing financial hardship.

Action Required:

The school principal shall consult with staff, the school council, the home and school association where one exists in the school, other parent/guardian groups where they exist in the school and student councils about the Student Activity, Yearbook, Agenda/Planner, Optional Programming, Enhanced Programming/Materials and Athletic Fees for the upcoming school year.

The school principal shall develop timelines for decision-making that will allow input to be obtained from staff, parent/guardian groups and student councils.

The school principal shall develop a communication no later than the first week in June to communicate the Student Activity, Yearbook, Agenda/Planner, Optional Programming, Enhanced Programming/Materials and Athletic Fees to the school community for the upcoming school year.

The communication shall include, but not be limited to:

- an itemized breakdown of each school fee and the rationale for each fee.
- an outline of the activities for which a school will charge a Student Activity Fee
- a confidential process by which a parent/guardian or student can communicate his or her personal financial circumstance
- reference to subsidies available and contact information as to how those subsidies can be accessed confidentially
- reference to Student Activity, Yearbook, Agenda/Planner, Optional Programming, Enhanced Programming/Materials and Athletic Fees in the last newsletter of the school year
- reference to the Student Activity, Yearbook, Agenda/Planner, Optional Programming, Enhanced Programming/Materials and Athletic Fees in the first newsletter of the school year

The school principal shall honour the dignity of every student and parent/guardian in the fee collection process, develop collection methods that afford reasonable expectations of privacy for students and parents/guardians and develop and clearly communicate a practice for discrete identification of students/parents/guardians that are experiencing financial hardship.

The school principal shall develop and offer a “variable fee structure” for families with more than two children attending the same school. The variable fee structure applies to Basic Athletic Fees and to Student Activity Fees when more than two children from the same family participate in the same activity.

The school principal shall ensure that no student is denied a timetable, textbook, option sheet, report card, graduation diploma or other school service for failure to pay any fee.

The school principal shall publish and communicate a budget summary to parent/guardian groups, student council and the school community annually including revenues and costs associated with the collection and disbursement of Student Activity, Yearbook, Agenda/Planner, Optional Programming, Enhanced Programming/Materials and Athletic Fees

The school principal shall submit to the Manager of School Support/Compliance, in accordance with the School Generated Funds Procedures, a financial statement of all school financial activity which includes student fees collected and related disbursements. These records are being subject to the Board’s financial audit process. Therefore, it is important that schools properly maintain their financial records by following the recommended accounting practices.

Progress Indicators:

- Students will be able to participate in school experiences regardless of personal financial barriers that exist
- Members of each school community will be included in the development of the school’s student fees schedule
- Members of each school community will be aware of student fees and their disbursement

References:

Government Documents

Education Act

Ministry Guideline on Fees for Learning Materials and Activities

HWDSB Strategic Directions

Achievement Matters

Engagement Matters

Equity Matters

HWDSB Policies

Equity

School Generated Funds