

# Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual

Title: POLICY REGARDING WAIVER OF SCHOOL FEES

Section: 408.1

Board Report: 94-1026-PO2

Date Adopted: October 26, 1994

Policy:

## A. DEFINITION OF SCHOOL FEES

- 1 School fees or fees mean any monetary charge collected by the school from a student or the parents or guardian of a student as a prerequisite for the student's participation in any curricular or extracurricular program of the school. A school does not impose a "fee" when it requires that a student provide his or her own ordinary supplies or materials (e.g., pencil, paper, notebooks), which are necessary to participate in any curricular or extracurricular program.
- 2 "School fees" include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a) All charges for required textbooks and instructional materials.
  - b) All charges and deposits collected by a school for use of school property (e.g., locks, towels, laboratory equipment).
  - c) Charges for field trips made during school hours, or made after school hours if the field trip is a required or customary part of a class or extracurricular activity (e.g., annually scheduled trips to museums, concerts, places of business and industry or field trips related to instruction in social studies, the fine arts, career/vocational education or the sciences).
  - d) Charges or deposits for uniforms or equipment related to varsity and intramural sports, or to fine arts programs.
  - e) Charges to participate in extracurricular activity
  - f) Charges for supplies required for a particular class (e.g., shop or home economics materials, laboratory or art supplies).
  - g) Graduation fees (e.g., caps, gowns)
  - h) School records fees
  - i) School health services fees.
  - j) Driver's education fees assessed pursuant to Section 27-23 of The School Code
3. "School fees" do not include:
  - a. Library fines and other charges made for the loss, misuse, or destruction of school property.
  - b. Charges for the purchase of class rings, yearbooks, pictures, diploma covers or similar items
  - c. Charges for optional travel undertaken by a school club or group of students outside of school hours
  - d. Charges for admission to school dances, athletic events or other social events.
  - e. Charges for optional community service or recreational

## B. STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR WAIVER

### 1 Participants in Community School Lunch Program.

Students who qualify for free lunches or breakfasts under an Act authorizing school boards and welfare centers to sponsor community school lunch programs and free breakfast and lunch programs and an act authorizing and requiring free school lunch programs, providing for State reimbursement (the Community School Lunch Program), are eligible for waiver of school fees.

### 2 Students under extenuating circumstances.

Students who suffer extenuating circumstances are eligible for waiver of school fees. Extenuating circumstances include: students who are eligible to receive reduced price lunch or breakfast; very significant loss of income due to severe illness or injury in the family; or unusual expenses incurred because of a natural catastrophe. The principal shall decide waivers under extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis in a non-discriminatory fashion and shall rely upon documentation submitted by the applicant. The principal's decision is appealable to

the District Superintendent.

**C NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIAN**

A notification of the Policy for Waiver of School Fees and Procedure For Waiver of School Fees shall be sent to the parent or guardian of all students enrolled at the start of the school year with the first bill or fee notice sent and thereafter to the parent/guardian of all students enrolling in the school for the first time.

An "Application For Waiver of School Fees" form may be included with the first bill or fee notice. [optional] The notification shall describe the Policy For Waiver of School Fees, the criteria and other circumstances under which school fees are waived, the fees subject to waiver, the procedure for applying for a waiver and the procedure for resolving disputes concerning the request for waiver.

The notification shall be in English or the home language of the parents if it is needed to ensure their understanding of the Policy.

Parents or guardians may apply for waiver of fees by following the Procedures For Waiver of Fees.

**D RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES**

If an application for waiver is denied, then the principal shall mail a copy of the decision, stating the reason for the denial, to the parents or guardian within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the request.

The decision shall inform the parents or guardian of their right to appeal, within the time provided, to the District Superintendent.

The denial notice shall inform the parents or guardian that they may reapply for a waiver during the school year if their circumstances change or if the basis of the decision or reason for which they were denied a waiver changes.

**E CONFIDENTIALITY**

School records and information from School Records that identify individual students as applicants for or recipients of fee waiver are confidential and may not be disclosed except as provided under the Illinois School Student Records Act.

**F INTERNAL AUDIT**

All waivers of student fees are subject to audit by Internal Audit.

**G PROHIBITION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION OR PUNISHMENT**

No discrimination or punishment of any kind, including the lowering of grades or exclusion from classes, may be exercised against a student whose parents or guardians are unable to purchase required textbooks or instructional materials or to pay required fees.

The principal shall be responsible for implementing and following the provisions of this Policy in accord with provision II (a) of the Uniform Principal Performance Contract.

**Amends/Rescinds:**

**Cross References:** 79-154-3

**Legal References:** This Policy was written by the Law Department to ensure compliance with the Illinois School Code and the Illinois Administrative Code.

“Application For Waiver of School Fees” forms are available in the school office.