

December 7, 2022

AMEND BOARD REPORT 21-0922-PO1
POLICY REGARDING WAIVER OF SCHOOL FEES

THE ~~INTERIM~~ CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Chicago Board of Education ("Board") amend Board Report ~~94-1026-PO2~~ 21-0922-PO1 Policy Regarding Waiver of School Fees. The policy was amended to ~~update program names, procedural practice, and address~~ relevant statutes. The policy was posted for public comment from October 17, 2022 to November 17, 2022.

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 requirement 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 their 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, the following examples:
 - a) All charges for required textbooks and instructional materials.
 - b) All charges and deposits collected by a school for use of school property (for example, 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 (for example, 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
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 activities

B. STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR WAIVER

1. Participants in National School Lunch Program

Students who qualify for Free or Reduced Priced Meals (FRM) 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 National School Lunch Program), are eligible for waiver of school fees.

2. Students under extenuating circumstances

a. Students who suffer extenuating circumstances are eligible for waiver of school fees.

b. Extenuating circumstances include:

- i. very significant loss of income due to severe illness or injury in the family; or
- ii. unusual expenses incurred because of a natural catastrophe.

c. The principal will decide waivers under extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis in a non-discriminatory fashion and must rely upon documentation submitted by the applicant. The principal's decision is appealable to the Department of Education Policy and Procedure under the procedures in subsection D below.

3. Students whose parents are veterans or active duty military personnel with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty line.

C. NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

1. A notification of the Policy for Waiver of School Fees and the Procedure For Waiver of School Fees must 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. Students who enroll after the first day of school must receive the Policy for Waiver of School Fees and the Procedure for Waiver of School Fees upon their enrollment.

2. An "Application For Waiver of School Fees" form may be included with the first bill or fee notice. The notification must describe:
- a. the Policy For Waiver of School Fees;
 - b. the criteria and other circumstances under which school fees are waived;
 - c. the fees that may be waived;
 - d. the procedure for applying for a waiver; and
 - e. the procedure for resolving disputes concerning the request for waiver.

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

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

D. RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

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

2. The decision must inform the parents or guardian of their right to appeal, within the time provided, to the Network Office.

3. The denial notice must 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 must 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 is responsible for implementing and following the requirements of this Policy in compliance with Section II (a) of the Uniform Principal Performance Contract.

Approved for Consideration:

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Bogdana Chkoumbova
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