

## Operational Services

### Waiver of School Fees

Students shall not be denied educational services or academic credit due to the inability of parent(s)/guardian(s) to pay fees and charges.

All school fees assessed by School District 20 shall be waived for children eligible for free lunches or breakfasts under the School Free Lunch Program Act (105 ILCS 125/1, et seq.) and children whose parents or guardians are able to establish to the reasonable satisfaction of the District that, because of other extenuating circumstances (i.e. 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 such as fire, flood, or storm damage), are unable to afford such fees. Every child shall, however, be required to provide his or her own ordinary supplies or materials (e.g. pencil, paper, notebooks) that are necessary to participate in any curricular or extracurricular program.

For purposes of this Policy, the term "School Fees" shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (A) All charges for required textbooks and instructional materials;
- (B) All charges and deposits collected by the District for use of school property (e.g. locks, laboratory equipment);
- (C) Charges for field trips made during school hours, or made after school hours if the field trip is required;
- (D) Charges to participate in extracurricular activities;
- (E) Charges for supplies required for a particular class (e.g. shop or home economics materials, laboratory or art supplies);
- (F) Graduation fees (e.g. caps, gowns);
- (G) School records fees;
- (H) School health services fees; and

For purposes of this Policy, the term "School Fees" shall not include:

- (A) Library fines and other charges made for the loss, misuse, or destruction of school property (e.g. musical instruments);
- (B) Charges for the purchase of 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) Optional community service programs for which fees are charged (e.g. preschool, before- and after-school child care, recreation programs); and,
- (F) Gym clothes

This policy providing for the waiver of school fees shall be communicated in writing to the parents or guardians of all students enrolled in the District at the start of each school year and to the parents or guardians of all students enrolling in the District for the first time.

The first bill or notice sent to parents or guardians who owe fees shall state:

- (A) That the District waives fees for persons unable to afford them in accordance with this policy; and
- (B) The procedure for applying for a fee waiver.

Application for waiver of school fees shall be submitted, in writing, during the annual registration process of the district. A student shall be eligible for a fee waiver when:

1. The student is currently eligible for free lunches or breakfasts (105 ILCS 125/1 et seq.)
2. The student or student's family is currently receiving aid under Article IV of The Illinois Public Aid Code (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

Additional consideration will be given by the Superintendent or administrative designee where one or more of the following factors are present:

- illness in the family;
- unusual expenses such as fire, flood, storm damage, etc.;
- unemployment;
- emergency situations;

- when one or more of the parent(s)/guardian(s) are involved in a work stoppage;  
The parent(s)/guardian(s) shall submit written evidence of eligibility for waiver of the student's fee.

If the request for a fee waiver is denied, the District designee shall mail a copy of his or her decision to the requesting parents or guardians within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the request. The decision shall state the reason for the denial and shall inform the parents of their right to appeal, including the process and timelines for that action. The denial notice shall also include a statement informing the parents that they may reapply for a waiver any time during the school year, if circumstances change.

An adverse decision of the District designee may be appealed to the District Superintendent by written letter delivered within seven (7) days of receipt of the District designee's decision. The Superintendent shall provide a response to the parent's or guardian's letter within thirty (30) days of the District's receipt of that letter.

Parents or guardians shall have the right to meet with the District Superintendent in order to explain why the fee waiver should be granted. If the appeal is denied, then the District shall mail a copy of its decision to the parents or guardians. The decision shall state the reason for the denial.

No fee shall be collected from any parent or guardian who is seeking a fee waiver in accordance with this policy until the District has acted on the initial request or appeal (if any is made), and the parents or guardians have been notified of its decision.

If this policy or the fee waiver procedure is substantively amended, parents or guardians of students enrolled in the District shall be notified in writing within thirty (30) calendar days following the adoption of the amendments.

School records that identify individual students as applicants for or recipients of fee waivers are subject to the Illinois School Student Records Act (105 ILCS 10/1 et seq.). Information from such records is confidential and may be disclosed only as provided in that Act.

NO DISCRIMINATION OR PUNISHMENT OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING THE LOWERING OF GRADES OR EXCLUSION FROM CLASSES, SHALL BE EXERCISED AGAINST A STUDENT WHOSE PARENTS OR GUARDIANS ARE UNABLE TO PURCHASE REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS OR TO PAY REQUIRED FEES.

LEGAL REF: Illinois School Code, Sec. 10-20.13 and 10-22.25 (105 ILCS 5/10- 20.13 and 5/10- 22.25); 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.245.

Adopted: May 22, 1997  
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