

SCHOOL FEES IN THE CALGARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 2015-2016

A. Introduction

The district assembled an annual committee of principals, accounting department personnel and superintendents to review school fees and district principles for school-based fees. Principals on the committee represented all divisions (I to IV).

The committee collected fee schedules from all schools in the district. The committee reviewed all fee schedules, considered all the issues and explored options. Guidelines and recommendations for the handling of fee monies were developed.

B. The Fee Committee Reviewed and Revised the Following Fee Principles in 2015

Calgary Catholic School District Fee Principles for 2015-2016

1. Schools should strive to have the lowest fees possible.
2. There will be no fees for basic instructional resources for core courses (Math, Social Studies, English, Science, Religion) excluding high school textbooks and software, where these are rented. Schools must ensure fees for core courses are for enhancements only.
3. There must be provisions at each school to waive fees for students who cannot pay. These provisions must be communicated clearly and explicitly to parents and students.
4. All fees must be justified and have the endorsement of the school community (a signature of school council Chair is required annually).
5. School fees must only be used for the purpose for which they were collected. No profit from school fees is allowed. Fees should be spent in the year in which they are collected. Schools shall specify to the school council, in the event of an unanticipated surplus, appropriate measures for disbursement of these funds. This should be recorded in School Council minutes.
6. In 2014-2015, the traditional fee sheet was replaced by a Parent Information Letter and an Acorn School Fee Form.
7. Schools shall distribute to parents, at the same time as the Parent Information Letter, an indication of any additional fees that may be collected during the year. This should include fees that are collected subsequently, for such activities as field trips, and be as accurate as possible. The listing should detail what each fee is for and the approximate fee amount. As much as possible, schools should specify when the fee would be collected and total fees to be collected.
8. Schools will be reviewed annually through ACORN to report on subsequent fees collected after initial fee schedules.
9. Field trips must be planned well in advance and parents given appropriate notice. Additionally, the number of field trips each student is involved in must be of a reasonable number and have a strong curriculum fit. Field trips should be analysed for cost/benefit related to improved student achievement and must comply with the district's field trip regulation.

10. Fees for student selected courses should be consistent for all similar type course offerings for schools in the same division in the district (i.e., CTF, PE, Art, etc.). Principals will collaborate in meeting this recommendation in their Family of Schools. Schools that provide CTF instruction to students from a different school must ensure CTF fees are the same between schools.
11. Schools should be sensitive to, and monitor carefully, the number of school activities that would involve requesting funds from parents (i.e., pizza days, book clubs, fundraisers, field trips, school supplies, etc.).

C. The Fee Committee Revised Guidelines for the Handling of Fee Monies in 2015

Guidelines and Recommendations for Handling Fee Monies from Parents/Students:

1. Schools shall not use the term “mandatory” or “compulsory” for fees.
2. The Acorn School Fee form must be used to set and show approval of fees by the principal and school council Chair.
3. Fee items that are included in the General Fee category shall not be included in any other fee category i.e., agendas must be included in the General Fee category and cannot be charged as an extended fee.
4. Fees collected for materials and resources must be used for “the students’ personal use or consumption, and to enhance the quality and relevance of education for learners”. Fees must be used for consumable materials and resources, NOT equipment. Fees MUST NOT be used to purchase equipment and non-consumables. Schools are expected to use a portion of their scale of issue budget to cover costs of instructional resources.
5. Schools must ensure that noon supervision fees DO NOT exceed district maximums (\$80/yr.) The family maximum per school is \$160/yr. Families are defined as two or more children.
6. Under the *School Act*, schools cannot charge fees for “instructional services”. Therefore, under the Noon Hour Supervision Fee, schools must not refer to “classroom assistant time” or “student support in the classrooms”. Schools must remove any perception that parents are paying for a teacher’s assistant rather than for lunch supervision. Recommended commentary could be: “for assistants to be on duty to assist with the continued safety and security of all students.”
7. The district’s fee module, ACORN, is used to track and summarize the collection of fees. Invoices for each student will be produced from Acorn by each school, detailing the fees charged, as well as additional items.
8. A feature of ACORN is the option for parents to pay fees online, using MasterCard, Visa and Debit cards. The district and schools should encourage this method of payment as a convenience for parents, as well as reducing administrative burden for school staff, especially at key times during the year.
9. All general fees, curricular and extra-curricular fees and optional charges will be held at the district level. The fees collected through the online payment process and by in-school payments will be accessible to schools through their scale of issue budget. This practice allows the district to fully utilize the ACORN Fee Module system and will provide better district and government reporting.

10. Fees paid by cheque or cash are to be recorded in ACORN and deposited into the school bank account (exception transportation - see below) and subsequently be remitted, along with documentation, to Central Office on a timely basis. These fees should be recorded in a Due to Central Office account, not a fee account.
11. The registration process for 2015-2016 transportation will start in May 2015. Further information will be included in the 2015-2016 Transportation package.
12. Fees cannot be made payable to a school council or to a society. A society or school council cannot collect or deposit to their bank account any district fees.
13. All monies collected at the school shall not leave the school except for the sole purpose of depositing them in the bank account. Monies cannot be removed from the premises for the purpose of counting. For the protection of staff and volunteers, and for double verification of funds, monies should be counted with a minimum of two individuals present.
14. All monies shall be deposited regularly. The duties of preparing and making the deposit must be separated, so that the same person does not undertake both tasks. Monies shall be deposited when funds in the school equal \$500 or, if there is less than \$500, deposits shall be made at least once a week.
15. Fees are expected to be collected on a cost recovery basis. Surpluses exceeding 3% of fees collected require prior written approval from the secretary-treasurer, as per regulation DIF. Plans for use of fee surpluses should be documented with school council and should meet all other fee guidelines.
16. Schools cannot issue tax receipts for "fees for service". A fee shall not be treated as a donation, nor shall a tax receipt be issued under the guise of a fee being a donation. Requests for donations shall not appear on school fee invoices. Donations must be given with no expectation of anything in return.

D. Calgary Catholic School District Fee Guidelines 2015-2016

General Fee

Kindergarten General Fee - (To a Maximum - \$20.00)

Elementary Schools - (To a Maximum - \$20.00)

The following items may be included:

- Agenda
- Newsletters
- Activities/Presentations
- Materials/Resources
- Other miscellaneous items

Junior High Schools - (To a Maximum - \$35.00)

The following items may be included:

- Agenda
- Activities/Presentations/Celebrations
- Newsletters/Materials/Resources
- Other miscellaneous items

Senior High Schools - (To a Maximum - \$35.00)

The following items may be included:

- Agenda
- Locks
- Postage/Newsletters
- Student ID
- Activities/Presentations/Celebrations/Student Council
- Materials/Resources
- Other miscellaneous items

Note: Textbook/Software Rental - High Schools - Textbook rental is an additional service provided to students.

E. Instructional Resource Fees

- Resources and materials for enhanced programs
- Includes CTF Fee in Junior High
- Must be reasonable within the context of all fees collected

F. Activity Fees

- Field trips and presentations for enhanced programs
- Must be reasonable within the context of all fees collected
- Includes core subjects and student selected courses in Junior High

PLEASE NOTE: Annual total of General Fees, Instructional Resource Fees, Activity Fees and monies collected subsequently for curricular field trips are not to exceed \$90 for Kindergarten, \$95 for Elementary and \$150 for Junior High.

G. Noon Supervision Fee

- To a maximum of \$8.00/student/month, family maximum per school of \$16/month
- School communities may establish lunchroom fees that address their local needs within this maximum

H. District Music Fee

- The district has currently in place a common "Music Fee" for both junior and senior high schools set at:
 \$100: Instrument rental

I. Textbook/Software Rental Fee - \$120.00

- Effective September 2010, this fee includes textbooks and compulsory work books

Reference:

District School Fees Principles for the current year are posted at:

<http://www.cssd.ab.ca/parents/fees/>

District Regulations Section D:

[DIF](#) [School Generated Funds \(Including Fees\)](#)

Parent Information Letter

<http://www.cssd.ab.ca/parents/fees/>

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