

## **Guidelines for Secondary Course-related Fees**

### **General Guidelines Regarding Course-related Fees**

- Every school provides without charge the textbooks, supplementary readers, audio/visual aids, stationery, and materials of instruction necessary to teach the curriculum or needed by the students to demonstrate mastery of the curriculum.
- A definition of these terms has been established and used to determine whether or not a fee may be charged. These terms were drawn from legal, policy, and regulatory mandates.
- A waiver is available for any student fee.
- Each principal will determine, in collaboration with the school leadership, if allowable fees will be charged and set the amount of the fee at that school (up to the allowable maximum). No school is required to charge students allowable fees nor are school required to charge a set amount, as long as the identified fee is below the allowable maximum.
- Any allowable fee must be for the cost of the item (rounded to the nearest dollar for ease of accounting)—no overcharge may be assessed to paying students to offset the costs absorbed by the school for students who are unable to pay.
- If a student damages or loses an assigned item, the student incurs a financial obligation for repair or replacement costs.
- Students may be charged transportation and associated fees for a field trip but not in advance as a course fee. The amount charged should be the expense (bus, admission, chaperones, substitutes—if required, etc.) divided by the number of students expected to attend. Although the final student cost may be rounded to the nearest dollar for ease of collection, no overcharge may be assessed to paying students to offset the costs absorbed by the school for students who are unable to pay. Please note the following for music students:
  - A music festival is considered a field trip and students may be charged transportation and other associated fees but not in advance as a course fee.
  - Students cannot be required to go to festivals.
  - If a performance before an audience is needed to assess mastery, a concert should be held at the school.
- Fees may be charged by outside organizations for their services. Examples of these are as follows:
  - International Baccalaureate
  - Advanced Placement
  - Academy and industry certifications

### **Textbooks and Supplementary Readers**

- Textbooks and supplementary readers are defined as the primary or secondary source or sources directly used in instruction.
- It is the school's responsibility to provide textbooks and/or supplementary readers without cost to the student.
  - Examples of supplementary readers are as follows:
    - Atlas if required for instruction and mastery
    - Anthology
    - Core novel
    - Dictionary
- Workbooks that are necessary to teach the curriculum and/or which students need to master the curriculum are considered as textbooks. (See Policy IIB, *Evaluation and Selection*, and Regulation IIB-RA, *Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials and Library Books*.)
  - The approval process requires five signatures, including the program supervisor, on Form 365-25, *Record of Evaluation for Instructional Materials*.
  - Schools deciding to require the use of an allowable workbook may not charge a fee for the workbook.
  - Students may choose to purchase suggested workbooks that are not used for classwork, homework, or practice tests in school. If a purchase option is available, teachers must emphasize that purchasing the workbook is an option, not an expectation or requirement. Examples include the following:
    - AP Prep Workbook (in the AP course)
    - SAT Prep Workbook (in SAT prep course)

### **Audio/Visual Aids**

- Audio/visual aids are defined as equipment used by a teacher to deliver the curriculum.
- It is the school's responsibility to provide audio/visual aids without cost to the student.
  - An example of an audio/visual aid is head phones

### **Stationery**

- Stationery is defined as paper and writing utensils not commonly found in the home and required for the student to demonstrate mastery of course objectives.
- It is the school's responsibility to provide stationery not commonly found in the home and required for the student to demonstrate mastery of course objectives without cost to the student.
  - Examples of stationery are as follows:
    - Highlighters
    - Pencils, colored
    - Post-it notes
- Students may be asked to bring paper and writing utensils commonly found in the home to school as personal supplies.

## School Supplies

- School supplies are defined as building or office materials needed to operate schools.
- It is the school's responsibility to provide school supplies.
  - Examples of school supplies are as follows:
    - Dry erase markers
    - Facial tissue
    - Paper towels
    - Pencil sharpener
    - Three-hole punch
    - Toilet paper

## Materials of Instruction

- Materials of instruction are defined as items needed by the educator to teach the course content and/or items needed by the student to demonstrate mastery of the course content
- Students may not be charged for materials of instruction unless, as noted below:
  - The materials are used to create a product eaten by the student
  - The materials are used to create a product that becomes the property of the student
  - The materials become the personal property of the student for reasons of personal hygiene or industry requirements
- Examples of materials of instruction for which a fee **may not be charged** are as follows:
  - Cooking utensils
  - General art supplies
  - Hammers, saws
  - Jump drive/ memory stick
  - Photography chemicals
  - Science lab materials
  - Sheet music
- Examples of materials of instruction for which a fee **may be charged** are as follows:
  - Art frames and canvas
  - Balsa wood kit
  - Cooking ingredients
  - Sculpting clay
  - Textiles and textile kits
  - Trades kit
- Some items may be materials of instruction for in-class work but also provided by the parent for homework or individual use. These items are commonly found at home or available in many stores. For example, if students are using scissors or a simple compass or protractor for an in-class lesson, the items are materials of instruction and must be provided by the school for in-class use. If a student is using scissors or a simple compass or protractor to complete a homework assignment—those are personal supplies provided by the parent to support his/her child's learning.
- Specific materials of instruction for which fees were previously allowed have been examined according to the current definitions and changes to standard operating procedures may be required.
  - Graphing Calculators—Students should be encouraged to purchase their own graphing calculator for their academic career.
    - If a student cannot purchase a graphing calculator, one will be loaned to the student for the duration of the course.
    - Students may be required to make a 50 percent deposit fee on a graphing calculator for use during the course.

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- The deposit will be returned to the student at the end of the course as long as the calculator is returned in proper working condition.
- As an alternative, schools may loan the calculator without charge, but assess an obligation (for the cost of the calculator only) if the calculator is lost or damaged.
- Music Groups' Clothing—Band uniforms and/or show choir robes/outfits will be loaned to students.
  - A fee for dry cleaning may be charged in advance.
  - A charge for repairs may be assessed after review of the condition of the item when it is returned.
  - Whenever possible, schools should be encouraged to require informal concert attire that individual students have or can easily acquire, such as black pants or skirts and white shirts or blouses.
  - Schools will be provided money on a cycle for purchase of band uniforms.
- Musical Instruments—Schools should have a reasonable selection of musical instruments on hand for student use free of charge.
  - If a student's preferred instrument is unavailable, a student has the option of renting the preferred instrument from a music store.
- Physical Education Locker Room Locks—Physical education locker room locks are provided by MCPS for security reasons.
  - Students will be assigned a lock for use during the school year. If a student does not return the lock at the end of the course, the student incurs a financial obligation.
- Physical Education Towel Fee—A towel fee may not be charged.
  - Schools are not required to provide towels.
  - A student may bring a towel if desired.

### **Individual Student Organizational Tools and Personal Supplies**

Parents remain the most important partner a classroom teacher has for preparing a student to learn. Parents equip students with important organizational tools for success in class.

- Students may be expected to bring individual organizational tools and personal supplies from home.
- Each school may decide the items recommended for students to bring from home.
  - Examples of individual organizational tools and personal supplies that may be supplied by the parents are as follows:
    - Eraser tops of #2 pencils
    - Hole punch, for notebook
    - Jump drive/ memory stick
    - Notebook dividers
    - Pencil pouch, zippered
    - Pencils, #2
    - Pens, ballpoint
    - Personal binders/notebooks
    - Personal Spiral/ Composition Book
    - Pocket folders
- Some items may be provided by the parent for homework or individual use but also provided in class sets by the school for in-class work. These items are commonly found at home or available in many stores.

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- Student Planners—If a planner is used in the school’s procedures as a hall pass, it must be provided without charge. Grades may not be given for student planner checks.

### **Waiver of Fees Form**

Students and parents are not required to provide documentation to justify a waiver.

- Teachers have a role and responsibility to advocate for a student through the waiver process.