

## **Purpose**

Fees for certain options and activities may be levied by schools to parent(s) or guardian(s) of students, subject to this procedure being followed.

## **Background**

RVS recognizes cashless methods as the preferred fee payment method for parents/guardians. Fees may be charged in accordance with the Education Act and Fee Regulation, and in accordance with RVS' Board Policy 26.

## **Definitions**

**SchoolCash:** RVS' online payment portal for school fees.

**School Engage:** Personal Information Bank and data collection system for transportation and student registration. Also used as an online payment portal for Transportation Fees.

## **Procedures and/or Principles**

### **1. Requirements**

- 1.1. All fees charged by RVS shall be directly related to the cost of resources provided to students and not used to fund other services or supplies.
- 1.2. On an annual basis, prior to setting, increasing or decreasing fees, the school principals must consult with parents, the school staff, and the area director. The school or division (for divisional fees) must demonstrate the need and reason to charge the fee with all stakeholders.
- 1.3. Proposed fees are to be submitted through a proposed draft list to the Finance branch. Submission due dates will be set annually as part of the budgeting process.
  - 1.3.1. The Board Budget Committee sets the schedule and timelines within the budgeting process.
- 1.4. Declaration AF5105-C is to be completed by the Principal, and School Council chair. This form is evidence of the required consultation with parents. The form is to be submitted to the finance branch in conjunction with 1.2 and in accordance with the annual timelines outlined in 1.3.
- 1.5. Schools are not permitted to charge a fee for:
  - Textbooks;
  - Workbooks;
  - Photocopying;
  - Printing;
  - Paper supplies; or
  - Fees specifically mentioned in Board Policy 26
- 1.6. The following information must be made available to school staff and parents through, at a minimum, being posted to school websites:

- 1.6.1. how to pay fees online;
- 1.6.2. the dispute resolution process for resolving disputes between a parent and the Board regarding fees and costs; and
- 1.6.3. the circumstances under which fees may be waived or re-funded.

## 2. Processing

- 2.1. School staff will promote fee payments through SchoolCash over any other form of payment. Cheque or cash payments for fees will only be accepted by front office staff.
- 2.2. Divisional fees are to be paid online through School Engage (transportation fees) or through the Community Use process (outlined when booking use in SchoolDude).
- 2.3. School principals are responsible to administer refunds when applicable for prorated student enrolment.
- 2.4. Transaction costs related to processing online payments will be funded centrally.
- 2.5. All fees paid online using a debit or credit card will be directly credited to each school's accounts by the Finance Department on a weekly basis.
- 2.6. Fees shall be applied to the specific account for which the payment was made.
- 2.7. Applicable revenues and expenses are to be tracked for each course/activity/good or service for which a fee has been established.
- 2.8. At the end of each school year, if revenues exceed expenses by more than \$25 per student enrolled in the course/activity/good or service, the school shall initiate a refund of the surplus funds to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each applicable student.
- 2.9. If surplus funds are less than \$25 per student enrolled in the course/activity/good or service, then the surplus will be carried over for future resources for that course.
- 2.10. If that course/activity/good or service is not offered in the future, surplus funds can be utilized by the school for resources for other optional courses or activities after appropriate consultation with school staff and parent council (if related to school generated funds).
- 2.11. Waiver of Fees requires form AF5105-C or Form AF5105-A to be completed. Parents of students who provide a copy of Goods and Services Tax (GST) credit notice with the names of dependent children listed shall qualify to have their fees waived.
- 2.12. The deadline for submission of the waiver form is June 30th of the current school year. The Waiver Applications are available on the Rocky View Schools website.
  - 2.12.1. Schools are responsible to administer the waiver process for school specific fees or musical instrument rentals only.
  - 2.12.2. The Transportation department is responsible for the waiver process for transportation fees.

### 3. Fees for Optional Courses

- 3.1. The purpose of Fees for Optional Courses is to recover the cost of course materials consumed by students, except for those items outlined in 1.5 above. The school must clearly communicate to parents that the courses are optional for the students to take.
- 3.2. For grade K-9 students, school principals in consultation with school staff and parents through the school council, may only propose a Fee for Optional Courses for:
  - Band/Music Materials (grades 5-9);
  - Career and Technology Foundations (CTF); or
  - Environmental and Outdoor Education (grades 7-9); and
  - Art (grades 7-9)
- 3.3. For grade 10 -12 students, school principals in consultation with school staff and parents through the school council, may only propose a Fee for Optional Courses for courses in the following subject areas:
  - Band/Music Materials (grades 10-12);
  - Fine Arts;
  - Modern Languages;
  - Career and Technology Studies (CTS);
  - Wildlife;
  - P.E. 20/30;
  - Advanced Placement Courses; or
  - Locally Approved Courses.

### 4. Alternative Program Fees

- 4.1. The purpose of the Alternative Program Fees is to recover the cost of offering the optional program, except for those items outlined in 1.5 above. Alternative Programs are completely optional. The school must communicate this clearly to parents.
- 4.2. School programs differ from school courses in that they may be delivered by third parties, involve participation outside of school hours, and generally occur at the high school level where course content is integrated into the program. Schools may propose Alternative Program Fees for:
  - Sports Academy
  - WILD
  - Hockey Program
  - Specialized Athletic Programs (Sports Performance)
  - Outdoor Leadership
  - Others as approved by the Superintendent
- 4.3 The school may deny access to Alternative Programs if any or all school fees are not paid. These Alternative Program fees are not eligible for waiver.

## 5. Lunchroom Supervision & Noon Hour Activity Fee

- 5.1. Schools cannot charge a general fee for supervision of students over the lunch hour.
- 5.2. School may organize clubs or activities that take place over the lunch hour for which the cost of consumable supplies or material may be charged. These are considered Noon Hour Activity Fees. The school must clearly communicate to parents that the activity is optional for the students to take.

## 6. Activity Fees/Extra-curricular fees/Non-curricular goods & services/Non-curricular travel/Other fees to enhance education.

- 6.1. If approved the school must clearly communicate to parents/guardians that the services and activities are **optional** to purchase.
- 6.2. The following are potential activity fees for all grades: Field trips, in-school events, extra-curricular teams or clubs, recorders, computer headsets, gym strip. **Please note that RVS does not allow schools to charge for rental of locks or lockers.**
  - 6.2.1. Grades 5-9 may charge for farewell ceremonies.
  - 6.2.2. Grades 10 – 12 may also charge for:
    - Student parking fees (maximum of \$50.00/stall per year);
    - Student Council;
    - Graduation fees; and
    - Fitness Center Access (before and/or after school)

6.3 The school may deny access to these activities if any or all school fees are not paid.

## 7. Other Sales and Services

- 7.1. Other Sales and Service charges do not represent fees and so do not need to be approved by the Board. Other Sales and Services can be charged for optional services undertaken by the school for the purpose of fundraising or to enhance school culture. These fundraising opportunities and services implemented to enhance school culture, must be authorized and operated in accordance with RVS Policies and Procedures. Transparency in the purpose and scope of any Other Sales and Services must be provided on an annual basis through, at a minimum, being included in the SchoolCash Catalogue. Other Sales and Services may include:
  - Cafeteria Sales;
  - Milk sales programs;
  - Hot lunch programs;
  - Special Events – for tickets sold to the public for graduation or drama event;
  - Optional purchase of locks;
  - Optional school spirit clothing; or
  - Yearbooks/school pictures.

## 8. Division Established Optional Fees

8.1. These fees may not be set by individual schools. There is consistent application and rates across the School Division. These fees may include:

8.1.1. A band instrument rental fee applicable to students registered in a band program from September to June.

8.1.1.1. Form AF5212-D is required for all instrument rentals.

8.1.1.2. Band instruments may be rented from the Board over the summer, if such rentals are authorized by the school principal.

8.1.1.3. These fees may incorporate a caution fee component, which will be returned to parents/guardians upon return of the band instrument in good condition. Any damage beyond normal wear and tear, may result in the caution fee portion not to be returned. In addition, parents/guardian's will be charged the actual cost of replacement or repair.

8.1.2. Community use rental fees.

8.1.3. International Student fees.

## 9. Transportation fees

9.1. Will be in accordance with the requirements for Student Transportation set out in Board Policy 17 and Administrative Procedure AP5500.

9.2. Students who only utilize service(s) during the first semester (approximately September 1 to January 31) or during the second semester (approximately February 1 to June 30) shall pay one-half (1/2) of the applicable annual rate.

9.3. Fees are not applicable to students who are new to Rocky View Schools and who only utilize the Board's services during the months of May or June.

9.4. A full refund shall be provided to parent(s)/guardian(s) of students if requested prior to October 31 of the current School Year.

9.5. The Transportation branch is responsible for the waiver process of any transportation fees.

## 10. Charge to Replace Damaged or Lost Textbooks or Other Learning Resources

10.1. The charge for damaged textbooks or other learning resources shall be the cost of repair or replacement, whichever is the least.

10.2. The charge for lost textbooks or other learning resources is the cost of replacement.

10.3. A textbook or other learning resources caution fee of not more than \$150 may be established by the Community Learning Centre school principal for students registered in a Community Learning Centre. The caution fee is fully refundable at the end of each school year if school supplied textbooks or other learning resources are returned in the same condition as when they were rented, except normal wear and tear.

## 11. Collection Process for Fees and Other Outstanding Amounts

- 11.1. School principals are responsible to ensure that invoices/statements (electronic statements and invoices are preferred) are sent to parents/guardians.
- 11.2. Invoices/statements must reflect the date fees are due.
- 11.3. The deadlines for fee invoices/statement reminders are outlined below. Note that the last follow-up action outlined below are completed by the Finance branch.
  - October 31: K-9 and Term 1 high school fees are due.
  - February 28: All Term 2 high school fees are due.
  - April 15: Ensure follow up including statements/reminders sent to parents/guardians for all past due invoices.
  - May 15: Follow-up communication with the parents/guardians (either by phone or in-person) must have occurred by this date. If amounts are still outstanding, payment arrangements can be made (i.e. installment payments).
  - June 15: Finance Branch will follow up with a final “demand letter”.

**Date Issued:** August 2017

**Version:** II

### References

- i. External Legislation:
  - Education Act Sections 13, 19, 21, 23, 32, 33, 52, 53, 59, 68, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225, 257
  - School Fee Regulation 2019/095
- ii. RVS Policies and Procedures:
  - BP17 Student Transportation
  - BP22 Community Use of School Facilities and Equipment
  - BP26 School Fees
  - AP5014 – Community Use of Outdoor Spaces
  - AP5025 – Community Use of Schools and Facilities
  - AP5500 Student Transportation Services
- iii. RVS Forms:
  - AF5105-A Optional Course Fee Waiver Application Form
  - AF5105-B Student Optional Course Fees Submission
  - AF5105-C Template for School Events or Activity Fee
  - AF5105-D Fee Consultation Declaration
  - AF5105-E Request for Secondary Stop
  - AF5105-F Transportation Waiver Application
  - AF5212-G Instrument Rental Agreement
- iv. RVS Handbooks and Manuals
  - School Fee Waiver Process

- [School Cash.net Manual](#)
- v. Contact/Branch
  - Finance branch ([financehelp@rockyview.ab.ca](mailto:financehelp@rockyview.ab.ca))