

## **SCHOOL FEES**

### **Background**

The Board believes that all students should have access to the education prescribed by the Minister at the lowest possible cost to the students. The Board has the power to levy fees under Section 60(2)(j) of the School Act. Fees should reflect the needs of the school and the school community and thus may vary from school to school. Fees recover some of the costs for consumable materials and supplies.

### **Definitions**

#### Mandatory Fees:

1. Resource Fees: These are established annually by the Board and the rates for elementary, junior high and high school are consistent throughout the school division. The Resource fee includes use of text books.
2. Transportation Fees: These are established annually by the Board. They may be based on the category of rider or they may apply to all transported students. Refer to the Transportation Policy for descriptions of categories.
3. Supply Fees: These are set by the school and reflect costs for course materials and activities which may vary from school to school.

#### Voluntary Fees:

1. These are alternative fees set by the school and reflect costs for additional services and supplies such as a school year book, agenda, photographs, hot lunch programs.

### **Guidelines**

1. All students in Golden Hills School Division will be assessed a Resource Fee and a Transportation Fee as determined during the board's budgeting processes.
2. Payment of the Resource Fee will entitle a student to receive all the basic instructional materials required for the program and courses in which he/she is enrolled. Basic instructional materials include those nonconsumable materials that are used to teach the program of studies in all core courses. Transportation Fees will entitle a student to receive transportation to and from school subject to the restrictions defined in each category of rider.
3. The Board will authorize the schools to collect a Supply Fee for student actions or activities that are course related but consumed by the student. Materials for various CTS and Physical Education off campus activities are examples. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to identify any such additional fees and to grant permission to the schools to assess and collect such fees. Cost recovery is the basis for all school generated fees.
4. The Board will authorize the collection of additional, voluntary fees for student actions or activities that are not course related but only when the student has the ability to opt out of the action or activity. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to identify any such fee categories and to grant permission to schools to assess such fees. Cost recovery is the basis for all fees.
5. Proper accounting for all school fees will be followed and any fees collected will be used only for the purposes for which they were collected.

6. Schools will diligently pursue the collection of fees.
7. When fees pose a hardship for the family and reduce the programming choices available to a student, a full or partial fee waiver may apply. The principal is responsible to advise parents/guardians of the fee waiver program. Please refer to Form 505-3.

### Procedures

1. The Board shall set the Resource and Transportation Fees for the following year during the annual budget process.
  - a) When a student who has paid the Resource and Transportation Fees transfers to another school jurisdiction during the school year, a pro-rated refund shall be paid upon application for the refund. Full fees less ten per cent for each month or to the nearest full month shall be refundable. No refunds shall be made after March first of any year. For semestered courses, full fees, less twenty per cent for each month or to the nearest full month shall be refundable. No refunds shall be made after four months have elapsed in a semestered course.
  - b) When a student who has paid the Mandatory School Supply Fees transfers to another school jurisdiction during the school year, the school shall reimburse any unused portion upon request.
  - c) Students entering the school jurisdiction after the school commencement date shall pay full fees if they enter in the months of September or October. For students entering after November 1<sup>st</sup>, Resource Fees will be prorated on a monthly basis to the nearest full month.
  - d) School Supply Fees:
    - i. are not refundable where a service has been performed or a product has been received; and
    - ii. shall be refunded upon request on a pro-rated basis, to a student who transfers to another school jurisdiction during the school year, where the activity covered by the fee extends over a period of time and where the student is present only for a portion of that time.

The school principal shall ensure that Resource, Adult, and Transportation Fees are remitted to Central office on a monthly basis, and should be received by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of each month. Please note: Supply, voluntary and optional fees are not to be remitted to Central office.

2. Books not returned, or those not returned in a condition similar to when they were signed out, will be paid for by the student. These costs will be assessed based upon the condition of the book and the cost of rebinding or replacement.
3. Schools may assess Optional fees for the following:
  - a) lock/locker rental;
  - b) gym strip;
  - c) student union fees;
  - d) student club fees;
  - e) purchase of yearbook;
  - f) purchase of school pictures;
  - g) fees for sports teams;
  - h) CTS fees; and
  - i) other fees as authorized by the superintendent.
4. All money collected as Resource Fees, shall be spent only on textbooks and related instructional materials. Transportation Fees will only be spent on transportation of students to and from school.

5. Funds shall be spent on the purpose for which they were collected. Surplus funds resulting from the payment of school determined fees, i.e., supply and various optional fees are to be returned or retained in the same budget category for the following year. The principal may use his/her discretion in determining whether to return or retain fees but the guiding principle is to exemplify fairness and reasonableness. If the budget category will no longer exist, then at the principal's discretion the surplus funds may be refunded on a pro-rated basis to the parents or transferred to a similar budget category.
6. At the beginning of the school term, parents shall be provided with a Notice of Fees assessed in each category (**Form 505-1**). Upon request parents/guardians will be provided with a list of all materials, supplies, texts, resources that would be included in the Resource, Transportation or Supply Fees and given notice of the option to purchase all items privately should they wish to decline the fees. Individuals who choose to provide the items assessed by Resource, Transportation and Supply Fees are responsible to ensure students have necessary materials for full participation in the educational program of the school.
7. The Board believes costs should not be a barrier to public education. A fee waiver program to assist families is available or partial financial assistance is available with resource fees (Form 505-3). Resource, Transportation and Supply Fees may be waived in part or in whole by the School Division when requested by parents. The Division will establish a process for determining a full or partial waiver.



## **School Fees – Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

Many of the programs and opportunities that students enjoy necessitate school fees. Comments, suggestions and questions about school fees are welcomed. Contact information is noted at the bottom of this form.

### **1. Why do schools charge fees to parents/guardians?**

Fees help pay for supplies/materials/resources that students use and consume usually in a single school year. Some items, like textbooks, may be used by several students over two-three years so users each contribute to a portion of the total cost. Fees pay only part of the costs for consumable resources.

### **2. How much are school fees?**

When the board approves the annual operating budget, it sets Resource Fees. Schools, in turn, determine Supply Fees which vary considerably from school to school and depend on the courses your child takes. Schools use the funds to purchase materials for specific courses and student projects as well as to pay fees for the use of activity centers like the swimming pool. Resource and Supply Fees are mandatory. Schools may also assess "other fees" for items like school photos, field trips, social events, yearbooks, and services like hot lunch programs. These other fees are voluntary. Most fees are assessed at the beginning of the school year or semester. As opportunities arise, schools may notify parents and request a fee for an activity. Parents often purchase new clothing, running shoes, back packs and personal supplies like pens/pencils around the beginning of a school year. While these items are associated with school attendance, they are not school fees.

### **3. What if I can't afford the fees?**

Schools work diligently to keep fees as low as possible and to provide a reasonable balance between limiting costs and limiting opportunities. As well, payment plans such as monthly contributions are available to provide flexibility to parents. Family rates may also apply. Please inquire at the school. In cases of undue hardship, fees in part or whole may be waived. Please fill out Form 505-3 and submit to the Finance Department.

### **4. Is the school division aware of the total costs to parents?**

The school division regularly monitors the amount and types of school fees to ensure affordability for parents as well as to consider the effect on student programming opportunities. Schools consult with School Councils on fee issues. If you have concerns about fees, please contact your school principal and/or superintendent at 404-934-5121 or your local trustee (contact information is available through the division office or the web site at [www.ghsd75.ca](http://www.ghsd75.ca))