

Revised: **August 2023**

### Background

Section 57(2) of the Alberta Education Act indicates that, “The Minister may make regulations respecting school fees”. Specifically, school fee and transportation regulations are delineated in the School Fees Regulation (Alberta Regulation 95/2019) and the School Transportation Regulation (Alberta Regulation 96/2019). Christ The Redeemer (CTR) Catholic Schools’ Board Policy, [Financial Guidelines](#), delegates to the Superintendent the responsibility to, “Comply with government requirements and contractual obligations”.

Further, CTR Catholic Schools will abide by some general philosophical mandates: (a) In all cases, it is the responsibility of the school and its administration to make efforts to mitigate financial hardships for families; (b) waiving fees and providing alternatives such as fundraising should always be options; (c) affordability should be a serious consideration when considering the necessity of an event as a valuable complement to education, as opposed to a nicety; and (d) although all field trips and activities can be desirable supplements to the classroom experience, time on task in the classroom is always a priority.

Some programs of choice, such as full-day kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs are not mandatory and are not supported by Alberta Education funds. Parents can elect to pay for these extra services. Because these are elective in nature, waiving fees will be accommodated only where there is a perception that the program will significantly affect the child’s academic potential, and there is identified financial need.

Therefore, the Superintendent directs all site-based administrators to abide by the following procedures.

### Procedures

1. Schools shall not charge:
  - 1.1. Fees for the use of textbooks, workbooks, photocopying, printing, or printing supplies.
  - 1.2. Fees for the use of technology.
  - 1.3. A fee at the beginning of a term for registration in compulsory or complementary courses.
2. CTR Catholic may charge a transportation fee, which will be reviewed annually. For students who reside outside of CTR boundaries, parents will be required to sign the **Transfer of Transportation Funding Parent Declaration Form**, which will allow CTR to access transportation funds from the province. Failure to sign this form may result in transportation fees being charged to the parents.
3. The Fee Schedule Template must be submitted for approval annually by Corporate Services. Proposed changes are accepted for review on a quarterly basis throughout the year. Site based administrators shall consult with parents via the School Council, the Ward Committee, and the Superintendent, or designate, before any fee is increased, decreased, or newly established, and shall abide by the following conditions in doing so:
  - 3.1. A principal shall communicate an annual Fee Schedule via the school handbook, the newsletter, the website, or a mass parent email.
  - 3.2. No school shall charge a fee or cost that is not set out in the Fee Schedule, nor shall the school charge any fee or cost that exceeds the amount set out in the Fee Schedule.
  - 3.3. A maximum of two curricular and co-curricular day events requiring the collection of fees should be scheduled per year per grade.

- 3.4. Fees shall be collected prior to the event. Fees cannot be charged for a cohort at the beginning of the year.
  - 3.5. A principal may establish school fees for non-instructional program enhancements such as co-curricular expenses, extra-curricular expenses, graduation expenses, and field trips. Examples of acceptable fees include, but are not limited to the following:
    - 3.5.1. Optional supplies or materials, which are not essential to the delivery of the curriculum such as study guides for provincial exams, gym strip, and yearbooks. These items will often fit under the category of "Sales".
    - 3.5.2. Extra-curricular charges to cover the cost of tournaments, exhibition games, team jerseys, travel, accommodations, or training supplies.
    - 3.5.3. Materials that are beyond those supplied in the core curriculum, such as larger quantities or superior quality of wood for construction class.
    - 3.5.4. Non-instructional costs such as transportation and examinations associated with alternative programming.
    - 3.5.5. Activities for which there is a facility rental charge, service provider charge, or a transportation charge such as swimming, skiing, or curling.
    - 3.5.6. Instructional resources that a student elects to keep, such as a book.
  - 3.6. The school must be able to demonstrate that all fees or costs collected are used only for the purpose for which they were collected.
  - 3.7. Schools must account to parents for all fees collected, particularly for fees and charges for optional items, activities, and programs.
  - 3.8. For any surplus funds, the principal must share with parents the intention and process for re-distribution, which may include refunding a portion of the costs to parents, or allocating the surplus funds to a different, but acceptable cause (e.g. playground equipment, technology, charity).
  - 3.9. Schools are obligated to pursue the extent to which the cost of an event can be subsidized through the local site-based budget.
  - 3.10. School Councils are encouraged to dedicate part of existing fundraising programs to supplement curricular and co-curricular events and/or subsidize students in need.
  - 3.11. The school will absorb the cost of substitute teachers when they are required. The principal has discretion to determine how many substitute teachers are necessary.
  - 3.12. The school will ensure reasonable expenses for staff members are covered when they are required to travel from the school: mileage, meals, and hotel. A portion of the staff expenses can be included in the student fees costing that is provided prior to a season or event.
  - 3.13. The school shall refund or partially refund families for school fees and charges for students that leave, transfer, or withdraw from the school.
4. Access to Education:
- 4.1 A resident student shall not be denied access to required instructional resources, classes, report cards, student records, graduation, or any other component of the curriculum because of unpaid student fees or charges.
  - 4.2 Students shall be able to complete the basic requirements of all courses without additional fees or charges.
  - 4.3 A parent is responsible for providing basic school supplies, such as calculators, geometry sets, scissors, binders, paper, pens, etc.
  - 4.4 Resident students shall not be denied access to an education because of the inability to purchase non-expendable items critical to the provision of a basic education, and these items shall be made available for in class use for resident students who cannot afford to purchase them.
- 5 Central Fee Waivers:
- 5.1 Students in CTR schools should not be denied educational experiences due to an inability to pay. Some programs of choice, such as full-day kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs are not mandatory and are not financially supported by Alberta Education. Parents can elect to pay for these extra services. Because these are elective in nature, waiving fees will be accommodated only where there is a perception that the program will significantly affect the child's academic potential and there is identified financial need.
  - 5.2 Principals of schools are left with the task of determining whether a family has educational and financial needs to support a waiver request. While a principal will not ask for specific verifying documentation, qualifying families might be those that:

- receive the Alberta Child Health Benefit. This benefit is based upon a family's maximum qualifying income as per the [Alberta Child Health Benefit Guide](#), or
  - receive assistance from Provincial Social Supports, or
  - are experiencing low income due to sudden loss of income or employment, or
  - are otherwise experiencing financial hardship, or
  - are independent CTR students who are not financially supported by a parent/guardian.
- 5.3 A parent/guardian may apply to the principal for a waiver of any allowable fees and charges. Parents/guardians have an option to submit a Fee Waiver Application Form.
- 5.4 Principals have authority to waive fees upon specific requests from parents or guardians.
- 5.5 The parent/guardian will need to contact the student's designated school and ask for a Fee Waiver Application Form. If approved, the **Fee Waiver Application Form will be accessible through the School Cash Online platform.**
- 5.6 The principal shall maintain strict confidence and security regarding any information shared that is of a sensitive nature. Only information that is critical to processing the request will be shared with administrative assistants and finance, such as name, program, and the fee to be waived.
- 5.7 If the fee waiver application is not approved by the school principal, the parent/guardian will be required to pay for the optional fees if there is a choice to continue in the program.
- 5.8 Principals shall provide written notification of Sections 5.1 to 5.4 of this administrative procedure to parents or guardians as early as applicable, including during the registration process in the previous year, and in their September newsletter.
- 5.9 In the event that the parent is not satisfied with the resolution proposed by the principal, the parent may appeal to the Superintendent, or designate.