

Parameters for Student Charges

Overview

Every year, most schools in BCPS publish a supply list for parents/guardians to purchase for their child's/children's school that remain property of the student or become property of the classroom community (collected and used for all students in the class). Schools also collect funds for items used by the student during the year, for field trips, special projects, and courses throughout the school year. According to the Maryland Attorney General, "...anything directly related to a school's curriculum must be available to all without charge." (72 Op. Attorney General 262, 267 [1987]). This was also reiterated by the Principal Counsel to the Maryland State Department of Education when it was addressed in August 2008.

This document on the parameters for student charges is intended to assist school administrators and parents/guardians in interpreting the legal requirements for items to be provided without charge, while clarifying which items are considered to be property of the student or consumed by the student.

Parameters for Student Charges

- I. **REQUIRED COURSES:** Required courses are those courses available to all students and required for graduation
 - A. Required courses must be provided to students *free of charge*
 - B. Schools may not charge an activity fee
 - C. Schools may charge students for specific materials of instruction (see below)

- II. **ELECTIVE COURSES:** Elective courses are those courses not required for graduation and/or may be connected with magnet and/or Career and Technology Education programs
 - A. Elective courses must be provided to students *free of charge*
 - B. Schools may charge students for specific materials of instruction (see below)

- III. **MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION:** Materials of instruction are those items needed in the instructional process
 - A. In general, materials of instruction must be provided to students *free of charge*
 1. Reference materials, workbooks, and other consumable books that are necessary for a student to demonstrate mastery of curriculum must be provided by the school *free of charge*
 2. Examples of items to be supplied by the school include:
 - a. School-owned calculators and batteries
 - b. Science activity materials
 - c. Science equipment
 - d. Safety goggles used in science class
 - e. General art supplies
 - f. General safety equipment
 - g. General cooking utensils and food
 - h. Graph paper
 - i. Primary lined writing paper
 - j. Sketch paper for art classes

 - B. Under specific circumstances, schools may charge students for materials of instruction
 1. Schools may charge students for materials and equipment that become the personal property of the student, often for reasons of personal hygiene or industry requirements
 2. Schools may charge students for specific items related to a specialized program of study at a magnet school and/or Career and Technology Education programs
 3. Schools may assess a repair or replacement charge for specific items damaged or lost by the student

Parameters for Student Charges

4. Students have the option of purchasing calculators or other materials (e.g., AP and SAT review books, and instrumental music method books) for personal use if the student wishes to keep the item permanently and does not intend to return it to the school
5. Examples of items that are, or become, the personal property of the student, and, therefore, students may be asked to pay for, include:
 - a. Physical education uniforms
 - b. Dance apparel/costumes
 - c. Recorders, musical instruments, and other related supplies for musical instruments
 - d. Canvas and framing for a piece of artwork
 - e. Student agendas/planners
 - f. Student-created project materials (e.g. science fair materials)
 - g. Personal portfolio
 - h. Personal items related to magnet/elective programs and/or Career and Technology Education programs (e.g. culinary supplies, industry training materials, family and consumer sciences lab equipment)
 - i. Personal items related to career and technology uniforms (e.g. steel-toed shoes, personal goggles, scrubs, cosmetology equipment)
 - j. Floral supplies and/or small materials for middle school take-home projects
 - k. Flash drives
 - l. Personal items for acting, music (concert clothing), visual arts, and dance programs
 - m. Personal copies in the media center

Parents/guardians requesting waivers for the cost of any material of instruction items should contact the school principal.

IV. **SCHOOL SUPPLIES:**

- A. General school supplies are defined as building or office materials needed to operate schools, and are provided by the school. General school supplies must be provided ***free of charge***
 1. Examples of general school supplies that are to be provided ***free of charge*** include:
 - a. Paper and writing utensils that are specialty items
 - b. School dry erase boards, pens, and erasers
 - c. Chalk boards and chalk
 - d. Copy paper for school copiers
 - e. Trash bags and paper towels
 - f. Specialized carpentry pencils

Parameters for Student Charges

B. Parents and families may donate school supplies to their local schools

1. Examples of supplies that may be donated include:

- a. Facial tissues
- b. Baby/hand wipes
- c. Hand sanitizer/soaps
- d. Paper plates
- e. Plastic and paper bags
- f. Paper towels

C. Donations may not be required

V. **PERSONAL STUDENT SUPPLIES:** Personal student supplies are defined as items purchased or provided by the student for routine use and often taken home or kept upon completion of school work. Principals should work with their staff and school community to determine a reasonable list of personal supplies needed per student.

A. Examples of personal student supplies which may be purchased by the student include:

- a. Basic personal paper for everyday use
- b. Pencils, pens, crayons, and highlighters
- c. Small personal pencil sharpeners
- d. Glue and glue sticks
- e. Personal dry erase boards, pens, and erasers
- f. Binders, folders, and notebooks
- g. Locks for lockers

B. Schools may charge students for breakfast and lunch programs in compliance with the procedures of the Food and Nutrition program.

Parents/guardians requesting waivers for any student supplies items should contact the school principal.

VI. **TEXTBOOKS:** Textbooks are books in a variety of formats, such as print, e-books, and audio books, which are designated as the primary source of instruction for students in a course or unit of instruction within a course.

A. All textbooks must be made available to a student for use ***free of charge***

B. Schools may assess a repair or replacement charge for damaged or lost textbooks

C. Students have the option of purchasing textbooks if the student wishes to keep the item(s) permanently and does not intend to return it to the school

VII. **OTHER CHARGES AND FEES:**

A. Schools may charge fees for extra-curricular activities like team sports, marching bands, and other after-school activities

Parameters for Student Charges

- B. Schools may charge wardrobe maintenance fees for student participants in band or choral ensemble
- C. Middle and high schools may charge a fine for library materials not returned by the due date; no fines are to be charged in elementary schools
- D. Schools may assess a repair or replacement charge for damaged or lost library materials
- E. Schools may charge parking fees
- F. Schools may charge a fee for each official transcript
- G. Schools may charge a per-page copy fee for copies of students' records
- H. Schools may collect funds to cover ONLY the student's actual cost to attend a field trip
- I. Outside organizations may charge students for their services, including advanced placement examinations, SAT exams, PSAT tests, IB examinations, CPR or First Responder certification, national honor societies, and academic and industry certification
- J. Schools or an outside organization may charge students for miscellaneous items related to graduation – cap and gown, yearbooks, extra tickets, school rings, prom, etc.

Parents/guardians requesting waivers for any charges or fees should contact the school principal.

VIII. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- A. Course Registration Guide
- B. Superintendent's Rule 2373 – Public Information Act Requests – Schedule of Fees
- C. Superintendent's Rule 5230 – Student Records (Release of Information)