

School Fees Parent FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions



The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) wants to ensure that EVERY student has access to all school classes and activities regardless of their family's financial circumstances. USBE has legal authority to create rules that schools must follow when collecting money for classes and activities from students and parents to make sure access is available to everyone.

What is a School Fee?

A fee is defined as something of monetary value that is requested or required by a school in order for a student to be able to participate in an activity, class, or program. This can be implied pressure or request to participate as part of a team. This means that if something is not required for participation, but there is still an expectation for the student to have that item, it becomes a school fee. Payments to third parties such as admission fees or instrument rentals may also be fees.

Examples:

 \$10 for an Art class	 \$70 for the Swim Team	 \$5 for Safety Goggles	 \$30 for a Prom Ticket
 \$150 for Sports Summer Clinic	 \$20 for truancy or misbehavior	 \$300 for a Choir trip out-of-state, with meals	 \$30/month for after-school program

How do parents know what school fees are in their school?

Each school is required to list all fees on a **fee schedule**, or they cannot charge the fee.

Fee schedules must also be provided to parents and students during registration and posted on each schools' public website.

Elementary Schools: No fees can be charged except for a before-school, after-school or extended kindergarten program.

Fee Waivers are available for: Students whose family resources are limited, they may apply to have some or all these fees waived.

Can a school withhold or exclude a student from an activity, class or program sponsored by the school?

-----> **No** <-----

The school may not refuse to issue a course grade or withhold official student records such as class schedules because fees have not been paid.

A school can try to collect student fees if a student has not applied for a fee waiver or their application has been denied but they may not impact student participation during the school day due to unpaid fees.

What is a Fee Waiver?

A fee waiver is a full release from the requirement to pay a fee. This means that those students who are eligible for a fee waiver can participate in any school class or activity free of charge.

Example:



A high school student participates on the football team and part of the travel requests each team member wear a certain uniform that is not required for play. Since each participant is expected to wear a specific uniform (can be a T-shirt, hoodie, shoes, etc.) the fee for that uniform must now be waived for those who are eligible because it was requested or required in order to participate as part of the team.

How are the Civil Rights of parents' language needs met?

1

USBE has required that if a school has a population of students and families that speak a language other than English and 20% or more of those families speak the same language, then the school is required to provide a notice to those families in the language they speak.

2

If the school has not published a notice in a family's primary language, then the school is required to personally meet with the family, with an interpreter, so that the family is fully aware of all the rules the school has regarding school fees and understands their rights regarding fee waivers.

How does a student's family apply for a fee waiver?

1. The application must be provided by the school to the student's family at the time of registration and available anytime a school fee payment is required to participate in an activity or program.
2. The process for applying for fee waivers must be **confidential**. Only those involved in the fee waiver process may be allowed to know who has been approved for a fee waiver.
3. The process to obtain a fee waiver must be fair, objective, and avoid any embarrassment, undue attention, and not place an unreasonable burden on the student or parent.
4. Any student who is on a fee waiver may not be treated differently from other students.

USBE has set these rules to ensure that every student has access to all school classes and activities.

Example:

A drill team has the chance to go to a national competition in California and most of the team pays out of pocket for the trip. Would a team member on fee waivers be allowed to go if the trip is voluntary and not a part of the grade?

YES

Fee waivers apply to any course, program, or activity sponsored or supported by or through the public schools. This type of trip is subject to fee waivers. If the team decides to raise money for the trip by fundraising, all participants of the trip, not the fundraiser, share equally in the money raised. If additional money is needed for fee waiver eligible students, that money must be provided by the school.

Fee Waivers - *continued*

What makes a student eligible for a fee waiver?

- 1** Family income matches the levels set of those that make a family eligible for free lunch. This means that if a student qualifies for free lunch, they qualify for fee waivers. Families may be asked to submit additional information to verify their income when applying for fee waivers.
- 2** Students who receive social security income. A school may accept a benefit verification document from the Social Security Administration in place of income verification.
- 3** Students or families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), part of the State's Family Employment Program (FEP) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Verification of decision from the Utah Department of Workforce Services covering the period for which a fee waiver is requested may be considered as alternate verification.
- 4** Students are in state custody or foster care. A youth in care intake form and school enrollment letter provided by a case work from the Utah Division of Child and Family Services or the Utah Juvenile Justice Department may be submitted to the school in place of income verification.
- 5** Students who are designated as McKinney-Vento by the district or charters McKinney-Vento Liaison. Designation of the student by the liaison will be the only verification required for students meeting this eligibility criteria.
- 6** A school may also grant a fee waiver to a student, on a case by case basis, who does not qualify under these conditions but who is not reasonably capable of paying the fee. Each school is required to consider each student's circumstance and provide a way for every student to fully participate in Utah's public education system regardless of financial circumstances.

What happens when a school denies a student a fee waiver?



If a school denies a student a fee waiver because they do not meet the required criteria, a student can submit an appeal to the school requesting that their information be reviewed and reconsidered based on their situation.

During this time, the school must place all fees on hold until a final decision has been made.

Parents must be provided with additional options to fee waivers so that if their child is denied a fee waiver, they have other ways to ensure they can fully participate in school classes and activities.

How can Parents be involved?

Schools are now required to have two public meetings, in which parents are notified, and encouraged to attend before the fees for the year are approved. These public meetings provide an opportunity for parents to be involved and voice their opinions on the fees that are being charged at their school.

Fee schedules and policies must be approved by April 1st before the year for which the fees apply.

USB E recommends that parents look for notifications of these meetings from their school prior to April 1st, so that they can participate.



More Info, Questions, or Concerns

Contact us at: schoolfees@schools.utah.gov
or Visit: <https://schools.utah.gov/schoolfees>