



English Parents' Committee Association
Association des comités de parents anglophones

Expectations Regarding School Fees - What the school is required to provide and what you are responsible for buying: A manual for parents:

As the new school year begins, expect to receive an invoice outlining the items needed for the year, along with a letter from the school. It's important to understand the responsibilities that fall on both you as a parent and the school.

As per the Education Act, EPCA offers a clear explanation of the sections below.

"Materials that are used for personal use and personal organization," such as pens, pencils, paper, pencil cases, backpacks, binders, school uniforms (if applicable, specific conditions apply), and physical education clothing, can be broadly classified as items for which parents are responsible. In essence, parents are responsible for non-reusable items that cannot be returned to the school. See below for more information on the grey areas of parental responsibility.

Items that can be used by multiple students and must be returned to the school at the end of the school year cannot be charged to parents. For instance, if a textbook is required for a class, the school must provide it, either in full or through printed pages, along with technology supplies, safety goggles, sports equipment, and other materials.

Be aware there are some exceptions!

While schools may request that parents provide personal supplies and suggest specific colors for duo-tangs, pencil styles, or binders with pockets, they cannot require parents to purchase a specific brand or buy from a particular supplier.

This rule also applies to **school uniforms**.

When a single company supplies or manufactures the uniforms, alternative options must be offered. For instance, the school can set standards for the uniform's style and color (e.g., long-sleeved shirts, shorts, blue skirts, pants, etc.) and offer a crest with the school logo that parents

can affix to the garment at a reasonable cost.

In all cases, if parents are required to pay a fee, it must only reflect the actual cost of the item, **schools are not allowed to profit from the sale of crests.**

Are you familiar with the Regulation regarding free instructional materials and who it applies to?

According to Article [10 of the Education Act: Regulations governing free use of teaching materials and certain financial contributions that may be required](#), items specified in the Minister's budget, such as tissue paper and health and hygiene products, must be supplied by the school.

ALSO!!!

Any educational materials, such as teaching aids, required for activity programs or curriculum instruction must be provided free of charge.

This includes:

- Protective gear like helmets, safety glasses, and hairnets.
- Art supplies such as paint, pastels, clay, and modeling materials.
- Technological devices, including headphones, laptops, and graphing calculators.

"Any financial contribution required for a service, activity, material not covered by the right of free use, or student supervision during lunchtime must be clearly itemized on a detailed invoice." This means the school must provide a clear invoice specifying the purpose of each item and its exact cost. Additionally, "If a voluntary contribution or donation is requested, no amount related to it may appear on the total invoice." The school's governing board is responsible for reviewing and approving the school supply list and informing the school of the approved items.

What about padlocks? It varies. If the school does not provide combination locks, you will likely need to purchase your own. However, if the school supplies the lock (already installed on the locker), there will be no charge to the parent. In many cases, high schools sell the lock, which is convenient as they will have a key to access it if your child forgets the combination. A security deposit may be required if the lock isn't returned by the end of the year.

If you choose to purchase your own combination lock, request that the associated fee be removed from your bill when you return the school's borrowed padlock.

Printing and Photocopying: Important Considerations

It's essential to double-check the invoice to ensure you are being charged the correct amount, as schools are only permitted to bill for the actual cost of goods or services. Pay particular attention to charges related to printing and photocopying, especially in high school. Fees may apply for photocopies of materials such as student assignments, drawings, or cutouts, but these costs should be clearly outlined and subject specific.

Example: Secondary 4 - Printing Fees

- \$8 for French
- \$5 for Math
- \$3 for English
- \$4 for History

Parents can only be charged for documents that replace an activity or exercise book.

Important Reminder!

Invoices must not mention any possibility of, or suggest an amount for, personal donations. Asking for donations is never allowed! Any contributions must be entirely voluntary, and parents should never feel pressured to donate.

To clarify what is and isn't applicable, the Ministry of Education has provided the following guide:

MEMORY AID

Free education and certain financial contributions that may be required

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

For students entitled to free education up to the age of 18, or the age of 21 in the case of handicapped students,* **THE RIGHT TO FREE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES APPLIES TO:**

- **Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Education**
 - Preschool education services
 - Instructional services
 - Complementary educational services
 - Special services (welcoming services, French-language instructional services and schooling in a hospital setting or at home)
- **Vocational Training**
 - Training services (teaching and orientation services)
 - Complementary educational services
- **Adult Education**
 - Training services (teaching and orientation services)
- **Administrative services, such as:**
 - Admission
 - Opening of a file
 - Administration of examinations
 - Training of staff

THE RIGHT TO FREE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DOES NOT APPLY TO:

- **Services provided within the scope of special school projects (Sports-Study, Arts-Study, international education, or concentration- or profile-type projects):**
 - certification by an outside body in order to carry out the project
 - the issuing to the student of a certificate by an outside body within the scope of the project
 - the school coordination required to allow the carrying out of the project
 - the participation of a coach or other specialist not acting as a teacher in a study program
 - the renting of a sports facility or of premises required for the carrying out of a project
- **Activities conducted outside the premises of the educational institution**
- **Activities conducted with the participation of a person who is not a member of the school board staff and that are similar to activities conducted outside the educational institution**

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

For students entitled to free education up to the age of 18, or the age of 21 in the case of handicapped students, enrolled in the youth sector or vocational training, **THE RIGHT TO FREE TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS APPLIES TO:**

- **Textbooks required for the teaching of programs of study**
- **Instructional materials required within the framework of activity programs and the teaching of programs of study, such as:**
 - tools, machine tools, instruments, chemical products and other scientific and technological material
 - balls, rackets, helmets and other physical education equipment
 - paint, pastels, clay and other art supplies
 - reeds for musical wind instruments, flutes and other musical instruments
 - novels and picture books, and reference material such as dictionaries, grammar guides, atlases, guides and encyclopedias, whatever the media
 - photocopied texts, reproductions of copyrighted material such as sheet music and any other reprographic material that replaces or supplements a textbook
 - solid and geometric form kits, counters, base 10 kits, dice, card games and other manipulatives
 - modelling clay, wood, plaster and other similar materials
 - computers, laptops, tablets, technological applications, graphing calculators, earphones and other technological tools
 - protective helmets, safety glasses, helmets and other protective items
 - sensory stimulation material intended in particular for students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities
- **Maintenance of instructional materials**
- **The following materials:**
 - Materials for the organization of the class or the school, such as:
 - bins
 - locker shelves
 - storage boxes
 - tennis balls to be attached to the legs of chairs
 - Items to be supplied for health or hygiene reasons, such as:
 - paper tissues
 - wipes
 - cleaning products and disinfecting products for music instruments

THE RIGHT TO FREE MATERIALS DOES NOT APPLY TO:

- **Documents in which students write, draw or cut out**
- **Materials for personal use, such as:**
 - school supplies (e.g. pencils, erasers, day planners)
 - material for personal organization (e.g. pencil cases, school bags)
 - clothing items (e.g. school uniforms, physical education clothing)
- **The following materials:**
 - activity or exercise books or reprographic material replacing or supplementing an activity or exercise book, including those on a medium based on information technology
 - notebooks, pads of paper, pocket folders, binders and separators
 - standard calculators and scientific calculators
 - memory sticks
 - rulers, protractors, squares, compasses and other geometry tools
 - highlighter pens, markers, pens, coloured pencils, pencil sharpeners, scissors and glue
 - running shoes, dancewear and shoes, lab coats, aprons or shirts to protect clothing
 - uniforms, boots and other clothing required for vocational training
 - towels and blankets for rest periods
 - locks
- **Specialized material specifically required for the carrying out of a special school project, or for the maintenance of the material**

* Conditions for students 18 years of age or older are specified in the applicable basic regulation.

MEMORY AID

Free education and certain financial contributions that may be required

STANDARDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNING BOARDS RELATING TO CERTAIN FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS THAT MAY BE REQUIRED

- The governing board is responsible for approving the financial contributions proposed by the principal (for services provided within the scope of special school projects, school activities, materials and supervision at lunch time), some of which are developed in collaboration with teachers.
- The governing board must implement measures to facilitate access by each student to all services, activities or materials for which a financial contribution is required.
- Before approving a contribution, the governing board must take into account any other contributions it has approved or that are being proposed.
- The financial contributions required must not exceed the real expenses incurred by the school, and must not be subject to financing already provided for in the budget rules.
- Every financial contribution required for services provided within the scope of a special school project, for any school activities or for materials must be the subject of a clear and detailed invoice, explicitly indicating what the contribution is to be used for.
- The total indicated on the invoice must not include any amount for a request for a voluntary contribution or a donation.
- No specific supplier or brand may be imposed with respect to materials, other than activity or exercise books.

This memory aid is a tool that summarizes the rules governing free education and certain financial contributions that may be required. For more information, consult the *Education Act* and the applicable regulations.