



A Review of Guidelines for Student Fees within the San Diego Unified School District

**A review of guidelines, policies, and procedures for
student fees, donations and fundraising**



San Diego Unified
SCHOOL DISTRICT



Welcome and Purpose

The subject of student fees, charges, deposits, donations, and fundraising related to courses and activities has been at the forefront of public attention locally and nationally.

The purpose of this presentation is to review our district's guidelines, policies, and procedures for student fees, donations and fundraising.



Free Public Education

- California Constitution requires that we provide a free public education, unless a charge is specifically authorized by law.
- Since 1874, the California Supreme Court has interpreted “free school system” to mean that students are entitled to be educated at the public’s expense.





Non-Permissible Fees: Part I

- California public schools—including charter schools—cannot charge fees in order for students to participate in any required or elective class.
- This includes: **security deposits** (e.g., locks, lockers, uniforms, instruments), **participation fees** (e.g., curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular), **supplies** (both necessary and supplemental).





Non-Permissible Fees: Part II

- California public schools—including charter schools—cannot charge fees for gym or physical education clothes.

Education Code 49066: “No grade of a pupil participating in a physical education class may be adversely affected due to the fact that the pupil does not wear standardized physical education apparel where the failure to wear such apparel arises from circumstances beyond the control of the pupil,” such as lack of sufficient funds.





Permissible Fees: Part I

California public schools—including charter schools—may charge fees for as outlined in the Education Code. These include:

- Transportation to and from school
- Transportation to places of summer employment
- Charges for food (limited by the free and reduced price meal program)
- Insurance for field trips
- Lost or damaged books or district supplies
- Direct cost of materials for property the student has made in class for their own use





Permissible Fees: Part II

California public schools—including charter schools—may charge fees for as outlined in the Education Code. These include:

- Fees for school camp programs (e.g., outdoor science camp)
- Fees for field trips and excursions in connection with courses of instruction or school-related social, educational, cultural, athletic, or school band activities
- Optional fingerprinting program for kindergarten or newly enrolled students
- Actual cost of duplication of public records or student records
- Charges for medical and accident insurance for athletic team members.





FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

QUESTION 1: May a school still receive donations from parents and guardians?

RESPONSE: Yes. School districts, schools, programs, and classes can and do seek and accept donations of funds and property, and this practice is permissible as long as the donation is truly voluntary and in no way a prerequisite to participation in the program or activity... Donations cannot be made for a specific student; instead, they are made to a school or program. For example, if a person wishes to donate to their school's cheerleading program, they can donate to the cheer program or to the cost of cheer camp but not for cheerleader, Lili Carter. See website for more information (www.sandi.net/staff/studentfees).



FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

QUESTION 2: May a school still fundraise?

RESPONSE: Yes. School districts, schools, programs and classes can and do engage in fundraising activities and programs, and this practice is also permissible as long as the raising of funds is voluntary. You may require students to attend a fundraising event; however, if they are unable to raise funds for the event, you cannot prevent them from participating in an educational activity. Also, attendance at a fundraiser can be required if it is a team or club event. Penalties for non-attendance would be similar to those imposed for failure to attend any other team or club event (e.g., sitting out a game, etc.). See website for more information (www.sandi.net/staff/studentfees).





FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

QUESTION 3: May a school charge fees for uniforms for teams sports?

RESPONSE: **No.** A school must provide a free uniform to any student who is a member of the school team in question. You can allow students to purchase their own uniforms if they want to purchase uniforms; however, buying a uniform cannot be a requirement to participate in a sport. See website for more information (www.sandi.net/staff/studentfees).





FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

QUESTION 4: May a school require team members to purchase Spirit Packs?

RESPONSE: No. Spirit packs may be sold; however, a school cannot require a student to purchase a spirit pack as a prerequisite to participate in a sport. If there are practice uniforms, etc., which are required, they must be provided free of charge to any student who is a member of the school team in question. See website for more information (www.sandi.net/staff/studentfees).



FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

QUESTION 5: What if a school only charges fees to those students who can afford them; and has a waiver process for those who can't?

RESPONSE: No. A waiver process based on financial need or inability to pay does not make an otherwise non-permissible fee permissible. See website for more information (www.sandi.net/staff/studentfees).





Steps We Are Taking

SDUSD is providing faculty, staff, parents, guardians, students, and administrators with guidance and essential resources with the twin goals of school-community cooperation to support programs and legal compliance while providing that support.

- Hosting meetings/presentations with faculty, staff, parents, guardians, sports teams, school foundation representatives
- Providing faculty and staff with course syllabus and school supplies language
- Launching a website for district staff with key resources and Frequently Asked Questions (www.sandi.net/staff/studentfees)





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