

Descriptor Term: STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND OTHER CHARGES

Descriptor Code: JQO

Rescinds: N/A

Board Approved: 8/13/2007

Previously Approved: N/A

1. The school board of any school district shall be authorized to charge reasonable fees, but not more than the actual cost, for the following:
 - a. Supplemental instructional materials and supplies, excluding textbooks;
 - b. Any other fees designated by the local school board as fees related to a valid curriculum educational objective, including transportation; and
 - c. Extracurricular activities and any other educational activities of the school district that are not designated by the local school board as valid curriculum educational objectives, such as band trips and athletic events.

2.
 - a. All fees authorized to be charged under this section, except those fees authorized under subsection (1) (c) of this section, shall be charged only upon the condition that the school board of each school district shall adopt a financial hardship waiver policy that shall be kept in the strictest of confidence with all files and personal disclosures restricted from review by the general public. The financial hardship waiver policy must be distributed in writing to pupils at the time of enrollment. Any family who qualifies for the National School Lunch Program, as created by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 USCS Section 1751 et seq.), shall receive a financial hardship waiver.

The board shall insure that a pupil eligible to have any such fees waived as a result of an inability to pay for those fees, shall not be discriminated against nor shall there be any overt identification of any pupil who has received a financial hardship waiver by use of special tokens or tickets, announcements, posting or publication of names, physical separation, choice of materials or by any other means. In no case shall the procedures of any school district expose any pupil receiving a hardship waiver to any type of stigma or ridicule by other pupils or school district personnel.
 - b. The confidentiality of the financial hardship waiver policy adopted by the school board shall apply to any students who have an inability to pay any fees authorized under subsection (1) of this section.

3. In no case shall the inability to pay the assessment of fees authorized under the provisions

of this section result in a pupil being denied or deprived of any academic awards or standards, any class selection, trade, diploma, transcript or the right to participate in any activity related to educational enhancement.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP WAIVER OF FEES CHARGED BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1. Any family who qualifies for the National School Lunch Program, as created by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Program Act (42 USCS Section 1751 et seq.), shall receive a financial hardship waiver pursuant to Section 37-7-335 of the Mississippi Code.
2. Within one week of enrollment, each parent or guardian applying for a financial hardship (full or reduced) waiver of fees must provide documentation of proof of income that would qualify the student for a free or reduced lunch pursuant to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) annual free and reduced lunch eligibility income guidelines by submitting a copy of the Family Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals (which has the effect of an original) to the school principal that includes the following required information:
 - a. To receive a financial hardship (full or reduced) waiver of fees for households applying for free and reduced lunches on the basis of income and household size, the parent/guardian applying for the waiver of fees must provide names of all household members; income received by each household member; identified by source of the income (such as earnings, wages, welfare, pensions, support payments, unemployment compensation and social security and other cash income); the signature of an adult household member; and the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application or an indication that he/she does not possess a social security number; or
 - b. To receive a financial hardship (full or reduced) waiver of fees for a child who is a member of a food stamp or TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) household, the parent/guardian applying for the waiver of fees must provide the child's name and appropriate food stamp or TANF case number; and the name and signature of an adult household member; and
 - c. To receive a financial hardship (full or reduced) waiver of fees in lieu of completion of the free and reduced price application, information obtained from the State or local agency responsible for the Food Stamp Program or TANF program which includes the name of the child; a statement certifying that the child is a member of a currently certified food stamp or TANF household; information in sufficient detail to match the child attending school in the school food authority with the name of the child certified as a member of a food stamp or TANF household; the signature or a copy of the signature of the individual authorized to provide the certification on behalf of the Food Stamp or TANF office, as appropriate; and the date. When the signature is impracticable to obtain,

such as in a computer match, other arrangements may be made to ensure that a responsible official can attest to the data.

3. The parent/guardian requesting a financial hardship waiver of fees must sign the certification attached to this policy certifying (promising) that all information furnished to the school district is true and correct and providing a social security number for each adult household member or an indication that such a member does not have a social security number. Information provided for a waiver of fees may be verified at any time during the school year to determine if the student qualifies for a waiver of fees. Written evidence/documentation shall be used as the primary source of information for verification. Written evidence/documentation to verify the financial information and written confirmation of the household circumstances must be provided at the time application is made for a waiver of fees and includes such documentation as the following:
 - a. wage stubs,
 - b. award letters, and
 - c. letters from employers.

A request for a waiver of fees cannot be approved unless it contains the information required by this policy.

4. Whenever written evidence is insufficient to confirm income information or current eligibility, the school may require collateral contacts, verbal confirmation of the household circumstances by a person outside the household. The collateral contact may be made by person or by phone. The verifying school official may select a collateral contact if the household fails to designate one or designates one that is unacceptable to the verifying school official. If the verifying school official designates collateral contact, the contact shall not be made without providing written or oral notice to the household. At the time of this notice, the household shall be informed that it may consent to the contact or provide acceptable verification in another form. If the household refuses to choose one of these options, its eligibility for a waiver of fees shall be terminated.
5. Information concerning income, household size or food stamp or TANF eligibility maintained by other governmental agencies to which the school can legally gain access may be used to confirm the household income, size or receipt of benefits. If a food stamp or TANF case number is provided for a child, verification for such child shall only include confirmation that the child is included in a currently certified food stamp or TANF program.
6. Households receiving a waiver of fees must notify school officials during the school year of any decrease in household size and any increases in income of over \$50 per month or \$600 per year, or in the households that provided a food stamp or TANF case number to establish eligibility for free or reduced meals of any termination of benefits for such children under the Food Stamp or TANF programs.

7. Students who qualify for the free lunch program pursuant to the USDA annual free lunch income eligibility guidelines shall receive a complete/full waiver of the fees allowed pursuant to Section 37-7-335 of the Mississippi Code.
8. Students who qualify for the reduced lunch program pursuant to the USDA annual reduced lunch income eligibility guidelines shall receive a reduced or adjusted cost waiver of the fees allowed pursuant to Section 37-7-335 of the Mississippi Code. The reduced waiver shall be equal to the percentage of the most current federal reimbursement rate for a reduced price meal to that of a free meal. The student will only be required to pay a fee amount that has been reduced by the waiver percentage. For example, in the 2006-2007 fiscal year the federal reimbursement rate for a reduced meal is \$2.02 and for a free meal is \$2.42. The percentage of the reduced lunch rate to the free lunch rate equals $\$2.02/\2.42 or 83.48%. Therefore, the reduced waiver of Section 37-7-335 fees for 2006-2007 would equal 83.48% and students qualifying for a reduced waiver would be required to pay only 16.52% of the required fee (100% fee - 83.48% waiver = 16.5% reduced fee amount).
9. The information provided in compliance with this financial hardship waiver policy shall be kept in the strictest of confidence with all files and personal disclosures restricted from review by the general public and shall be used solely for the purpose of determining the child's eligibility for the financial hardship waiver of fees charged by the school district.
10. This financial hardship waiver policy will be distributed in writing to pupils at the time of enrollment.

NOTE: PLEASE SEE THE FEE WAIVER CERTIFICATION FORM ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

FEE WAIVER CERTIFICATION FORM

The social security number for each household member is as follows:

Print Name _____

Social Security Number ____ - ____ - ____ No Social Security Number

Print Name _____

Social Security Number ____ - ____ - ____ No Social Security Number

Print Name _____

Social Security Number ____ - ____ - ____ No Social Security Number

I certify (promise) that all information provided to the school district to obtain a financial hardship waiver of fees is true and that all income is reported. I understand that I must provide a social security number of each adult household member or an indication that such member does not have a social security number. I understand that the school district funds will be used to provide fees that are being waived for my child/children. I understand that if I purposely give false information, my child/children may lose the waiver of fees charged by the school district.

Sign here: _____

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

Social Security Number ____ - ____ - ____ I do not have a Social Security Number

FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES

Family Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals 2007-2008

<http://www.cn.mde.k12.ms.us/cnprogs/nslp/Documents/2007-08FamilyMealApplication.pdf>

LEGAL REF.: MS CODE as cited