

## Frequently Asked Questions about School Fees

ORC § 3313.642 states that “[N]o board of education of a school district shall charge a fee to a pupil who is eligible for free lunch... for any materials needed... to participate fully in a course of instruction.”

### **What are school fees?**

Examples of school fees include: technology fee or technology insurance, classroom dues, requested school supplies, textbook fees, the cost of any material or item that is required to allow the child to *participate fully* in a course of instruction including career-tech, vocational and electives.

### **Can schools charge fees for *extracurricular* activities?**

Yes, schools can still charge for *extracurricular* activities like sports or band, AND for tools, equipment and materials needed for a workforce-readiness training program in a career-tech program if the student will keep them after the course is over.

### **Who does this law apply to?**

Public schools, vocational schools and educational service centers must follow this law. However, community (aka charter) schools and private schools do not have to comply.

### **How do schools verify eligibility for free lunch?**

A school may check your child’s eligibility for free lunch in two different ways:

1. By direct certification, where the school compares their list of students with the Ohio Department of Education’s list of children who receive public benefits through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP or “food stamps”) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF or “cash assistance”). In this case, the school might request that you fill out a “Sharing Information with Other Programs” form in order to consent to sharing information about your child’s eligibility with other agencies.
2. By application to waive school fees and instructional costs, which the school should send home at the beginning of every year. The application will ask questions about household income, which the school will use to determine if child is eligible for free lunch.

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### **What if I have additional questions about my district?**

No school district operates the same way – call your local school superintendent and ask how to determine if the District is prohibited from charging your child school fees.

### **What if my child's eligibility status changes?**

Districts have discretion to waive fees or reinstate fees if your child's eligibility status has changed.

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