

Fee paying parents

Can schools charge registration fees? Can they charge for activities?

No registration fees can be charged. Schools must include anything in relation to the attendance or participation by a learner in any programme of a public school in the school fees.

Can school fees be increased during the year?

The governing body of a school may call a general meeting of parents where a majority of the parents can approve a new budget and new school fees – so it is in order if school fees are increased through a legally constituted meeting and parents are duly notified (and of their right to exemption).

Are schools allowed to raise extra funds? Are there limits to what they are allowed to do?

Schools can ask for voluntary donations from the parents/community and have other fund raising activities.

Could a school request parents to make voluntary contributions?

Any ordinary school can request voluntary contributions. These contributions must benefit the school's educational and/or sporting programmes. These school contributions are voluntary and payment is a matter for decision by parents. Nothing prevents a parent who has been granted any type of exemption, or whose children are attending a no fee school from making a voluntary contribution to the school fund. Principals must ensure that no learner or their family suffer any discrimination or embarrassment for not making voluntary school contributions.

Which laws apply to school fees?

- The South African Schools Act 1996, as amended;
- The Regulations Relating to the Exemption of Parents from the Payment of schools fees 2006;
- The amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding; and
- Admission Policy of Ordinary Public Schools, 1998.

Call Centre: 0800 202 933

Website: www.education.gov.za



GUIDE FOR PARENTS

School Fees in Public Schools

Read this



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Department of Basic Education is working tirelessly to improve the chances for every South African child to access a quality education.

The Department is committed to ensuring that no child is prevented from accessing a public school based on poverty or is in anyway discriminated against or has to face punitive measures imposed by a school in the case of non payment of fees.

If learners meet certain criteria, they should not have to pay school fees in any public school and the Department has a number of initiatives and programmes in place to make it easier for learners to access quality education. These include No Fee Schools; Partial Fee Exemptions and Automatic Fee Exemptions.

When is a school a “no fee” school?

The Minister determines a school as a no fee school by publishing its name in the Government Gazette – currently all schools ranked in quintiles 1, 2 and 3 should be no fee schools.

How can parents find out if their children’s school is a no-fee school?

- Ask the school principal;
- Ask the District or Provincial Office; or
- Look up on the internet. The no fee schools lists are published on the Department of Basic Education’s website (www.education.gov.za) annually.

What can someone do if they are still being charged fees by a no-fee school?

It is a violation of the law for a no-fee school to charge school fees. You must inform the District or Provincial office as soon as possible.

What if your children are attending a “fee charging” school but you can’t afford school fees?

Such parents can apply to the school for total, partial or conditional exemption from paying school fees.

Exemptions

Who write How are school fees set? s ANA?

School fees are determined by the parents at “a general meeting of parents” at schools which are allowed to charge school fees (currently quintile 4 and 5 schools). A majority of parents must approve a resolution in this regard. This resolution will take into account the school budget, the trend in payment of school fees and exemptions which have to be granted.

How do parents apply for exemption from the payment of school fees?

Parents should apply every year in writing to the Chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB). The regulations provide an application form that needs to be filled out. This must be provided to parents by the principal. This application form and the regulations must be available from schools.

What are the criteria?

Exemption depends on the income of the parents in relation to school fees. If the school fees equal 10% or more of the joint income, parents qualify for full exemption. There is partial exemption if fees are between 2.5% and 10% of income, also depending on the number of children the parents have attending a public school.

Are parents entitled to get help in applying for exemption?

The principal, an educator or any other person can be requested by a parent to assist him/her with the application process. Someone cannot be disqualified on the basis that their application is incomplete or incorrect.

What is the difference between full and partial exemption?

- With a full exemption, you do not pay any school fees.
- With partial exemption, you still pay you pay less than the full fees (you get a discount).

Are there certain categories of learners that are automatically exempt from school fees?

Yes. This applies to persons who have the responsibility of a parent with respect to a child placed in:

- A foster home;
- A youth care centre;
- A place of safety; OR
- An orphanage.

It also applies to a person who is a caregiver of an orphan or a child who has been abandoned by his or her parents and is without any visible means of support;

In addition it applies to person who receives a social grant (such as a child support grant and care dependency grant) on behalf of a child; OR

It applies to a child who heads a household.

How can a parent/caregiver be granted automatic exemption?

Parents or caregivers must obtain one of the following documents:

- A sworn statement or affidavit confirmed by the South African Police Service, a social worker or other competent authority; or
- A court order.

The document must be handed to the principal of the school or a member of the School Governing Body.