

20 August 2024

Education Bureau Circular No. 26/2024

Collection of Other Fees by Private Schools Offering Non-Local Curriculum

[Note: This circular should be read by:

- (a) Supervisors and Principals of International Schools, Kindergartens/ Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres (hereafter collectively refer to KGs) Offering Non-Local Curriculum and Not Joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme, Private Independent Schools and Private Primary and Secondary Schools Offering Non-Local Curriculum and Schools under the English Schools Foundation – for necessary action; and
- (b) Heads of Sections – for information]

Purpose

This circular provides the latest guidelines on collection of fees other than inclusive fees, such as late notice levies, withdrawal fees, tuition deposits and various kinds of miscellaneous fees (hereafter referred to as “other fees”) by private schools offering non-local curriculum (hereafter referred to as “schools”) for schools’ reference.

Background

2. Collection of fees or payments other than inclusive fees from schools is governed by regulations 61 to 64 and regulation 66 of the Education Regulations (Cap. 279A). According to regulation 61(1), without prior approval of the Permanent Secretary for Education, no management authority, school manager or teacher shall charge or accept payment of any money or any school fees whatsoever other than the inclusive fees as printed on the fees certificate issued under regulation 60A(1)(ii).

3. As a general rule, charges of mandatory items and/or services in relation to students’ education in schools should be subsumed into the annual inclusive fees according to the needs of each specific level/ grade of students. For school items

and paid services (including trading operations and business activities in schools) that are to be accepted by parents/ students on an optional and voluntary basis (school items such as textbooks, exercise books, school uniforms, stationery, equipment needed by students to pursue their course of study; paid services such as extra-curricular activities, school bus services, etc.), private schools should closely observe the stipulations set out in Education Bureau (EDB) Circular No. 17/2003 titled “*Guidelines on Sale of School Items and Provision of Paid Services in Private Schools*” and refer to EDB Circular No. 10/2016 titled “*Trading Operations in Schools*” to ensure that trading activities in schools are properly conducted. KGs should observe the stipulations set out in EDB Circular No. 6/2017 titled “*Collection of Application Fee and Registration Fee, Admission of Students and Provision of Information by Kindergartens*” and EDB Circular No. 16/2013 titled “*Collection of Fees, Sale of School Items and Provision of Paid Services in Kindergartens*”.

4. If schools, after prudent consideration, find it not feasible to subsume the other fees into the annual inclusive fees, they can apply to EDB for collection of these fees. Prior approval from EDB is also required for the revision of previously approved fees. Applications should be submitted to EDB at least four months before the start date of the proposed collection. Applications from international schools and schools under the English Schools Foundation (ESF) should be submitted to the responsible officers of the Infrastructure and International School Section of EDB. Applications from Private Independent Schools (PIS), KGs and other private schools offering non-local curriculum should be submitted to the respective District School Development Section or Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres.

Details

Guiding Principles

5. In principle, the inclusive fees along with other fees ***should not be excessive*** vis-a-vis the cost of maintaining and operating the school and the standard of education to be provided. Schools are not allowed to collect multiple fees of a similar nature. Applications will only be approved by EDB if the proposed fees could not be covered by inclusive fees and/or do not overlap with the purposes/ justifications of inclusive fees increase and other approved fees. In handling an application from a school, EDB would take into consideration the following factors:

- (a) nature, justifications and level of collection;
- (b) prior notice to and/or consent from parents about the details of collection; and
- (c) school’s actual circumstances and track records.

Provision of Details for Applications

Late Notice Levies/ Withdrawal fees/ Tuition Deposits

6. While EDB may ask schools to provide additional information depending on the actual circumstances and applications of individual schools, schools are required to provide the following in their applications for EDB's consideration:

- (a) details of the proposed collection of other fees, including the purpose, nature, rate of collection, calculation of the proposed fee(s), time of collection and period covered (if any);
- (b) justifications and supporting documents for the collection;
- (c) information on prior notice to parents, parents' views and/or consent solicited from parents/ parent representatives;
- (d) measures taken to address parents' concerns over the proposed collection;
- (e) endorsement by the School Management Committee;
- (f) accounting arrangement for the fees collected (including an acknowledgement in writing by the supervisor, school manager or teacher on a proper form of receipt); and
- (g) other relevant information.

Miscellaneous Fees

7. Schools which intend to collect various kinds of miscellaneous fees other than those in paragraph 6 above should set out their proposed fees by completing the "Application for Collection of Miscellaneous Fees", attached to this circular in Annex.

Relief Measures

8. Schools should put in place an exemption mechanism to grant partial or full waiver of payment for parents with genuine difficulties and reasonable justifications as appropriate.

Accounting and Auditing Arrangement

9. Schools should keep proper accounts to record the approved collections for accounting and auditing purposes.

Revision of Approved Fees

10. A school should submit a new application if there is any change in the amount or rate of collection. Such application will be subject to the prevailing approval mechanism effective on the date of submission and processed as a fresh application.

Enquiries

11. For international schools and schools under the ESF, please contact the responsible officers of the Infrastructure and International School Section of EDB. For PIS, KGs and other private schools offering non-local curriculum, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officers or Senior Services Officers.

Dr Verena LAU
for Permanent Secretary for Education

To: *AS(IISS)1 / CSDO() / CServO(JOKC) (*please delete as appropriate)

Application for Collection of Miscellaneous Fees

My school would like to apply for collection of the following miscellaneous fees with effect from (date) _____. I confirm that the school has notified parents about the collection of the following fees, explained to the parents the reasons for the collection, and properly addressed parents' views and concerns. Endorsement from the school management committee (SMC) has also been sought and I undertake that my school has complied with the Education Ordinance, the Education Regulations, other relevant legislation, EDB Circulars, Service Agreements signed between the Government and the schools (where applicable), and such other requirements as specified from time to time by EDB.

Please tick as appropriate	No.	Types of Miscellaneous Fees	Amount Per Student (HK\$) and/or Collection Mechanism (e.g. 1% of Monthly Tuition Fee)	Details and Justifications of Collection (If more space is needed for the required information, please add separate sheets.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Fees charged for late payment of tuition fees without reasonable justifications		
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Deposit for loan of school stuff (please provide a breakdown of loaned items separately)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Replacement of a student card		
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	Student's cheque of tuition fee not honoured		
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	Re-issuance of school refund cheque		
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Re-issuance of graduation certificate		
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	Re-issuance of school transcript		
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	Others (please specify)		

(Signature of Supervisor)

(Name of Supervisor)

(Name of School)

(Date)

