

# **Mountain West Montessori Academy Fee Waiver Policy**

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## **PURPOSE**

Mountain West Montessori Academy (the “School”) must abide by the Utah State Board of Education rules which direct the School’s Board of Directors (the “Board”) to implement a policy regarding student fees. The purpose of this policy is to provide educational opportunities for all students. This allows the School to establish a reasonable system of fees, while prohibiting practices that would exclude those unable to pay from participation in School-sponsored activities.

## **POLICY**

Under the direction of the Board, the School’s Director (the “Director”) is authorized to administer this policy and is directed to do so fairly, objectively, and without delay, and in a manner that avoids stigma and unreasonable burdens on students or parents/guardians.

### **Definitions**

"Co-curricular activity" means an activity, course, or program that:

- (a) is an extension of a curricular activity;
- (b) is included in an instructional plan and supervised or conducted by a teacher or educational professional;
- (c) is conducted outside of regular School hours;
- (d) is provided, sponsored, or supported by the School; and
- (e) includes a required regular School day activity, course, or program.

“Curricular activity” means an activity, course, or program that is:

- (a) intended to deliver instruction;
- (b) provided, sponsored, or supported by the School; and
- (c) conducted only during School hours.

"Extracurricular activity"

- (a) means an activity, a course, or a program that is:
  - (i) not directly related to delivering required instruction;
  - (ii) not a curricular activity or co-curricular activity; and
  - (iii) provided, sponsored, or supported by the School.
- (b) does not include a noncurricular club as defined in Section 53G-7-701.

"Fee" means a charge, expense, deposit, rental, or payment:

- (a) regardless of how the charge, expense, deposit, rental, or payment is termed, described, requested, or required directly or indirectly;
- (b) in the form of money, goods, or services; and
- (c) that is a condition to a student's full participation in an activity, course, or program that is provided, sponsored, or supported by an LEA.

"Fee" includes:

- (a) charges or expenditures for a School field trip or activity trip, including related transportation, food, lodging, and admission charges;
- (b) payments made to a third party that provides a part of a School activity, class, or program;
- (c) charges or expenditures for classroom instructional equipment or supplies;
- (d) charges or expenditures for School activity clothing; and
- (e) a fine other than a fine described below.

"Fee" does not include:

- (a) a student fine specifically approved by an LEA for:
  - (i) failing to return School property;
  - (ii) losing, wasting, or damaging private or School property through intentional, careless, or irresponsible behavior, or as described in Utah Code 53G-8-212; or
  - (iii) improper use of School property, including a parking violation;
- (b) a payment for School breakfast or lunch;
- (c) a deposit that is:
  - (i) a pledge securing the return of School property; and
  - (ii) refunded upon the return of School property;
- (d) a charge for insurance, unless the insurance is required for a student to participate in an activity, course, or program; or
- (e) money or another item of monetary value raised by a student or the student's family through fundraising.

"Instructional equipment or supplies"

- (a) means an activity-, course-, or program-related supply or tool that:
  - (i) a student is required to use as part of an activity, course, or program in a secondary school;
  - (ii) becomes the property of the student upon exiting the activity, course, or program, and
  - (iii) is subject to a fee waiver;
- (b) does not include School equipment.

"Non-waivable charge" means a cost, payment, or expenditure that:

- (a) is a personal discretionary charge or purchase, including:
  - (i) a charge for insurance, unless the insurance is required for a student to participate in an activity, class, or program;
  - (ii) a charge for college credit related to the successful completion of:
    - (A) a concurrent enrollment class; or
    - (B) an advanced placement examination; or
  - (iii) except when requested or required by the School, a charge for a personal consumable item such as a yearbook, class ring, letterman jacket or sweater, or other similar item;
- (b) is subject to sales tax as described in Utah State Tax Commission Publication 35, Sales Tax Information for Public and Private Elementary and Secondary Schools; or
- (c) by Utah Code, federal law, or State Board of Education rule is designated not to be a fee, including:
  - (i) a school uniform as provided in Utah Code § 53G-7-801;
  - (ii) a school lunch; or
  - (iii) a charge for a replacement for damaged or lost School equipment or supplies.

"Provided, sponsored, or supported by the School"

- (a) means an activity, class, program, club, camp, clinic, or other event that:
  - (i) is authorized by the School; or
  - (ii) satisfies at least one of the following conditions:
    - (A) the activity, class, program, club, camp, clinic, or other event is managed or supervised by the School, or a School employee in the employees School employment capacity;
    - (B) the activity, class, program, club, camp, clinic, or other event uses, more than inconsequentially, the School's facilities, equipment, or other School resources; or
    - (C) the activity, class, program, club, camp, clinic, or other event is supported or subsidized, more than inconsequentially, by public funds, including the School's activity funds or minimum school program dollars.
- (b) does not include an activity, class, or program that meets the criteria of a noncurricular club as described in Title 53G, Chapter 7, Part 7, Student Clubs.

"Provision in lieu of fee"

- (a) means an alternative to fee payment; and
- (b) may include a plan under which fees are paid in installments or under some other delayed payment arrangement or a service in lieu of fee payment agreement.

"Requested or required by the School as a condition to a student's participation" means something of monetary value that is impliedly or explicitly mandated or necessary for a student, parent, or family to provide so that a student may:

- (a) fully participate in school or in a School activity, class, or program;
- (b) successfully complete a School class for the highest grade; or

- (c) avoid a direct or indirect limitation on full participation in a School activity, class, or program, including limitations created by:
  - (i) peer pressure, shaming, stigmatizing, bullying, or the like; or
  - (ii) withholding or curtailing any privilege that is otherwise provided to any other student.

“School activity clothing” means special shoes or items of clothing:

- (a) that meets specific requirements, including requesting a specific brand, fabric, or imprint; that the School requires a student to provide; and that become the property of the student upon exiting the activity, course, or program; and
- (b) that are required to be worn by a student for an activity-, course-, or a program-related activity.

“School activity clothing” does not include:

- (a) a school uniform; or
- (b) clothing that is commonly found in students’ homes.

“School equipment” means a machine, equipment, facility, or tool that:

- (a) is durable;
- (b) is reusable;
- (c) is consumable;
- (d) is owned by a secondary school; and
- (e) a student uses as part of an activity, course, or program in a secondary school.

"Something of monetary value"

- (a) means a charge, expense, deposit, rental, fine, or payment, regardless of how the payment is termed, described, requested or required directly or indirectly, in the form of money, goods or services; and
- (b) includes:
  - (i) charges or expenditures for a School field trip or activity trip, including related transportation, food, lodging, and admission charges;
  - (ii) payments made to a third party that provide a part of a School activity, class, or program;
  - (iii) classroom textbooks, supplies or materials;
  - (iv) charges or expenditures for school activity clothing; and
  - (v) a fine, except for a student fine specifically approved the School for:
    - (A) failing to return School property;
    - (B) losing, wasting, or damaging private or School property through intentional, careless, or irresponsible behavior; or
    - (C) improper use of School property, including a parking violation.
- (c) does not include a payment or charge for damages, which may reasonably be attributed to normal wear and tear.

“Textbook”

- (a) means instructional material necessary for participation in an activity, course, or program, regardless of the format of the material;

- (b) includes:
  - (i) a hardcopy book or printed pages of instructional material, including a consumable workbook; or
  - (ii) computer hardware, software, or digital content; and
- (c) does not include instructional equipment or instructional supplies.

“Waiver” means a full release from the requirement of payment of a fee and from any provision in lieu of fee payment.

### **General School Fees Provisions**

The School may only collect a fee for an activity, class, or program provided, sponsored, or supported by the School consistent with School policies and state law.

If the School imposes a fee:

- (a) the fee shall be equal to or less than the expense incurred by the School in providing for a student the activity, course, or program for which the School imposes a fee; and
- (b) the School may not impose an additional fee or increase a fee to supplant or subsidize another fee, including a fee to supplant or subsidize an expense that the School incurs for:
  - (i) a curricular activity; or
  - (ii) an expense for the portion of a co-curricular activity that occurs during regular school hours.

Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, the School may not sell textbooks or otherwise charge a fee for textbooks as provided in Section 53G-7-506, except for a textbook used for a concurrent enrollment, International Baccalaureate, or Advanced Placement course.

All fees are subject to the fee waiver requirements of this policy.

The School shall not charge a fee that is general in nature and for a service or good that does not have a direct benefit to the student paying the fee. In addition, except as set forth in this policy with respect to fees for life-cycle replacement costs for School equipment, the School may not charge a fee for School equipment.

The School may not charge students in grades K-6 fees to participate in the School’s remediation programs.

### **Fees for Classes & Activities During the Regular School Day**

#### **Fees for Students in Kindergarten through Sixth Grade**

The School may not charge a fee in kindergarten through sixth grade for materials, textbooks, supplies (except as provided below), or for any class or regular school day activity, including assemblies and field trips.

Elementary students cannot be required to provide their own student supplies. However, the School or teacher may provide to a student's parent a suggested list of student supplies for use during the regular school day so that a parent or guardian may furnish, only on a voluntary basis, those supplies for student use. The list provided to a student's parent or guardian must include and be preceded by the following language:

"NOTICE: THE ITEMS ON THIS LIST WILL BE USED DURING THE REGULAR SCHOOL DAY. THEY MAY BE BROUGHT FROM HOME ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS, OTHERWISE, THEY WILL BE FURNISHED BY THE SCHOOL."

The School may charge a fee to a student in grade six if all of the following are true:

- (a) the School has students in any of the grades seven through twelve;
- (b) the School follows a secondary model of delivering instruction to the School's grade six students; and
- (c) The School annually provides notice to parents that the School will collect fees from grade six students and that the fees are subject to waiver.

#### Fees for Students in Seventh through Ninth Grade

Fees may be charged in grades 7-9 in connection with an activity, class, or program provided, sponsored, or supported by the School that takes place during the regular school day if the fee is noticed and approved as provided in R277-407 and is allowed to be charged by state law. All such fees are subject to waiver. In addition, if an established or approved class requires payment of fees or purchase of items in order for students to fully participate and to have the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge required for full credit and highest grades, the fees or costs for the class are subject to waiver.

In project related courses, projects required for course completion will be included in the course fee.

Secondary students may be required to provide their own student supplies, subject to the fee waiver requirements of this policy.

The School may charge students in grades 7-9 a fee for a curricular activity or a co-curricular activity that is not required for the instruction of established core standards as described in Utah Code § 53E-4-202 or § 53E-4-204 and that is an elective. However, beginning with the 2025-26 school year, the School may not charge students in grades 7-9 a fee for a curricular activity or a co-curricular activity that is required for the instruction of established core standards as described in Utah Code § 53E-4-202 or § 53E-4-204, and that is not an elective, unless the fee is for the following:

- (a) instructional equipment or supplies;
- (b) a driver education course described in Utah Code § 53G-10-503;
- (c) charter school application processing in accordance with Utah Code § 53G-6-503; or
- (d) competency remediation programs in accordance with Utah Code § 53G-9-803;
- (e) the life-cycle replacement costs for School equipment directly related to the co-curricular activity;

- (f) a music instrument rental; or
- (g) school activity clothing.

If the School charges a fee for a co-curricular activity as set forth above, a fee for the portion of the co-curricular activity that is during the regular school day is limited to the fees described in subsections (a)-(g) above.

#### Fees for Adult Education and Advanced Courses

The School may charge students in grades 7-9 fees for an adult education course or for tuition, college credit, an exam, or a textbook for an Advanced Placement course, an International Baccalaureate course, or a concurrent enrollment course, as described in Utah Code § 53G-7-503(4).

#### Fees for Remediation Programs

The School may charge students in grades 7-9 fees to participate in the School's remediation programs.

#### Fees for Optional Projects

The School may require students at any grade level to provide materials or pay for an additional discretionary project if the student chooses a project in lieu of, or in addition to a required classroom project. A student may not be required to select an additional project as a condition to enrolling, completing, or receiving the highest possible grade for a course. The School will avoid allowing high cost additional projects, particularly when authorizing an additional discretionary project results in pressure on a student by teachers or peers to also complete a similar high cost project.

#### **Fees for Activities Outside of the Regular School Day**

Fees may be charged in all grades for any School-sponsored activity that does not take place during the regular school day if the fee is approved as provided in this policy and is allowed by state law and if participation in the activity is voluntary and does not affect the student's grade or ability to participate fully in any course taught during the regular school day. Fee waivers are available for such fees.

A fee related to a co-curricular or extracurricular activity may not exceed the maximum fee amounts for the co-curricular or extracurricular activity adopted by the Board, as provided below.

Activities that use the School facilities outside the regular school day but are not provided, sponsored, or supported by the School (e.g., programs sponsored by the parent organization and/or an outside organization) may charge for participation, and fee waivers are not available for these charges.

An activity, class, or program that is provided, sponsored, or supported by the School outside of the regular School day or School year calendar is subject to this policy and state law regardless of the time or season of the activity, class, or program.

### **Fee Schedule**

The Board will approve a Fee Schedule at least once each year on or before April 1. The Fee Schedule will establish the maximum fee amount per student for each activity and the maximum total aggregate fee amount per student per school year. No fee may be charged or assessed related to an activity, class, or program provided, sponsored, or supported by the School, including for a curricular, co-curricular or extracurricular activity, unless the fee has been set and approved by the Board, is equal to or less than the established maximum fee amount for the activity, and is included in the approved Fee Schedule.

The School will encourage public participation in the development of the Fee Schedule and related policies.

Before approving the School's Fee Schedule, the School will provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed Fee Schedule during a minimum of two public Board meetings. In addition to the standard notice of Board meetings under the Open and Public Meetings Act, the School will provide notice of these Board meetings using the same form of communication regularly used by the administration to communicate with parents.

After the Fee Schedule is adopted, the Board may amend the Fee Schedule using the same process.

In connection with approving a fee schedule, the Board shall authorize each fee individually as required in Utah Code § 53G-7-503.

### **Maximum Fee Amounts**

In connection with establishing the Fee Schedule, the Board will establish a per student annual maximum fee amount that the School may charge a student for the student's participation in all courses, programs, and activities provided, sponsored, or supported by the School for the year. This is a maximum total aggregate fee amount per student per School year.

The Board may establish a reasonable number of activities, courses, or programs that will be covered by the annual maximum fee amount.

### **Notice to Parents**

The Director will annually provide written notice of the School's Fee Schedule and Fee Waiver Policy to the parent or guardian of each student in the School by ensuring that a written copy of the School's Fee Schedule and Fee Waiver Policy is included with all registration materials provided to potential or continuing students each year.

The School will also post the following on its website each school year:

- (a) The School's Fee Schedule, including maximum fee amounts, and Fee Waiver Policy;



- (b) The School's fee waiver application;
- (c) The School's fee waiver decision and appeals form; and
- (d) The School's fee notice(s) for families.

### **Donations**

The School may not request or accept a donation in lieu of a fee from a student or parent unless the activity, class, or program for which the donation is solicited will otherwise be fully funded by the School and receipt of the donation will not affect participation by an individual student.

A donation is a fee if a student or parent is required to make the donation as a condition to the student's participation in an activity, class, or program.

The School may solicit and accept a donation or contribution in accordance with the School's policies, including the Donation and Fundraising Policy, but such requests must clearly state that donations and contributions by a student or parent are voluntary.

If the School solicits donations, the School: (a) shall solicit and handle donations in accordance with policies and procedures established by the School; and (b) may not place any undue burden on a student or family in relation to a donation.

### **Fee Collection**

The School may pursue reasonable methods for obtaining payment for fees and for charges assessed in connection with a student losing or willfully damaging school property.

The School may not exclude students from school, an activity, a class, or a program that is provided, sponsored, or supported by the School during the regular school day; refuse to issue a course grade; or withhold official student records, including written or electronic grade reports, class schedules, diplomas, or transcripts, as a result of unpaid fees.

The School may withhold the official student records of a student responsible for lost or damaged School property consistent with Utah Code § 53G-8-212 until the student or the student's parent has paid for the damages, but may not withhold a student's records required for student enrollment or placement in a subsequent school.

A reasonable charge may be imposed by the School to cover the cost of duplicating, mailing, or transmitting transcripts and other school records. No charge may be imposed for duplicating, mailing, or transmitting copies of school records to an elementary or secondary school in which the student is enrolled or intends to enroll.

Consistent with Utah Code § 53G-6-604, the School will forward a certified copy of a transferring student's record to a new school within 30 days of the request, regardless of whether the student owes fees or fines to the School.

Students shall be given notice and an opportunity to pay fines prior to withholding issuance of official written grade reports, diplomas and transcripts. If the student and the student's parent or guardian are unable to pay for damages or if it is determined by the School in consultation with the student's parents that the student's interests would not be served if the parents were to pay for the damages, then the School may provide for a program of voluntary work for the student in lieu of the payment. A general breakage fee levied against all students in a class or school is not permitted.

### **Fee Refunds**

Student fees are non-refundable.

### **Budgeting and Spending Revenue Collected Through Fees**

The School will follow the general accounting standards described in Rule R277-113 for treatment of fee revenue.

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, the School will establish a spend plan for the revenue collected from each fee charged. The spend plan will (a) provide students, parents, and employees transparency by identifying a fee's funding uses; (b) identify the needs of the activity, course, or program for the fee being charged and include a list or description of the anticipated types of expenditures, for the current fiscal year or as carryover for use in a future fiscal year, funded by the fee charged.

### **School Fee Collections & Accounting Procedures**

It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure that all student fees collected are in compliance with the Fee Schedule and applicable financial policies and procedures.

Fees must be received and deposited in a timely manner.

Money may only be collected by staff authorized by the Director. Students may not collect fees.

Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, the School may not use revenue collected through fees to offset the cost of fee waivers by requiring students and families who do not qualify for fee waivers to pay an increased fee amount to cover the costs of students and families who qualify for fee waivers. However, the School may notify students and families that the students and families may voluntarily pay an increased fee amount or provide a donation to cover the costs of other students and families.

### **Fee Waiver Provisions**

To ensure that no student is denied the opportunity to participate in a class or activity that is provided, sponsored, or supported by the School because of an inability to pay a fee, the School provides fee waivers or other provisions in lieu of a fee. Fee waivers or other provisions in lieu of a fee payment will be available to any student whose parent cannot pay a fee.

All fees are subject to waiver.

Non-waivable charges are not subject to waiver.

### **Fee Waiver Administration**

The Director will administer this policy and will review and grant fee waiver requests. The process for obtaining waivers or pursuing alternatives will be administered in accordance with this policy, fairly, objectively, and without delay, and in a manner that avoids stigma, embarrassment, undue attention, and unreasonable burdens on students and parents.

The School will not treat a student receiving a fee waiver or provision in lieu of a fee waiver differently from other students. The process for obtaining waivers or pursuing alternatives will create no visible indicators that could lead to identification of fee waiver applicants.

The process for obtaining waivers or pursuing alternatives will comply with the privacy requirements of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1232g (FERPA). The School may not identify a student on fee waiver to students, staff members, or other persons who do not need to know. As a general rule, teachers and coaches do not need to know which students receive fee waivers. Students may not assist in the fee waiver approval process.

### **Fee Waiver Eligibility**

A student is eligible for a fee waiver if the School receives verification that:

- (a) In accordance with Utah Code § 53G-7-504(4), family income falls within levels established annually by the State Superintendent and published on the Utah State Board of Education website;
- (b) The student to whom the fee applies receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If a student receives SSI, the School may require a benefit verification letter from the Social Security Administration;
- (c) The family receives TANF or SNAP funding. If a student's family receives TANF or SNAP, the School may require the student's family to provide the School an electronic copy or screenshot of the student's family's eligibility determination or eligibility status covering the period for which the fee waiver is sought from the Utah Department of Workforce Services;
- (d) The student is in foster care through the Division of Child and Family Services or is in state care. If a student is in state care or foster care, the School may rely on the youth in care required intake form or school enrollment letter provided by a caseworker from the Utah Division of Child and Family Services or the Utah Juvenile Justice Department; or
- (e) The student qualifies for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act assistance. If a student qualifies for McKinney-Vento, verification is obtained through the School's McKinney-Vento liaison.

The School will not maintain copies of any documentation provided to verify eligibility for a fee waiver.

The School will not subject a family to unreasonable demands for re-qualification.

The School may grant a fee waiver to a student, on a case by case basis, who does not qualify for a fee waiver under the foregoing provisions but who, because of extenuating circumstances, is not reasonably capable of paying the fee.

The School may charge a proportional share of a fee or a reduced fee if circumstances change for a student or family so that fee waiver eligibility no longer exists.

The School may retroactively waive fees if eligibility can be determined to exist before the date of the fee waiver application.

### **Fee Waiver Approval Process**

The Director will inform patrons of the process for obtaining waivers and will provide a copy of the standard fee waiver application on the School's website and in registration materials each year.

The Director will review fee waiver applications within five (5) school days of receipt. If the School denies a request for a fee waiver, the School will provide the decision to deny a waiver in writing and will provide notice of the procedure for appeal in the form approved by the Utah State Board of Education.

Any requirement that a student pay a fee will be suspended during any period in which the student's eligibility for a waiver is being determined or during the time a denial of waiver is being appealed.

Each year the School will maintain documentation regarding the number of School students who were given fee waivers, the number of School students who worked in lieu of fee waivers, the number of School students who were denied fee waivers, the total dollar value of student fees waived by the School, and the total dollar amount of all fees charged to students at the School, as this information may be requested by the Utah State Board of Education as part of its monitoring of the School's school fees practices.

The School shall also submit school fee revenue information in the Utah Public Education Financial System as provided in R277-113.

### **Appeal Process**

Denial of eligibility for a waiver may be appealed in writing to the Director within ten (10) school days of receiving notice of denial. The School shall contact the parent within two (2) weeks after receiving the appeal and schedule a meeting with the Director to discuss the parent's concerns. If, after meeting with the Director, the waiver is still denied, the parent may appeal, in writing, within ten (10) school days of receiving notice of denial to the Board.

In order to protect privacy and confidentiality, the School will not retain information or documentation provided to verify eligibility for fee waivers.

### **Alternatives to Fees and Fee Waivers**

The School may allow a student to perform service or another approved task (as described in Utah Code § 53G-7-504(2)) in lieu of paying a fee or, in the case of an eligible student, in lieu receiving a fee waiver, but such alternatives may not be required. If the School allows an alternative to satisfy a fee requirement, the Director will explore with the interested student and his or her parent/guardian the alternatives available for satisfying the fee requirement, and parents will be given the opportunity to review proposed alternatives to fees and fee waivers. However, if a student is eligible for a waiver, textbook fees must be waived, and no alternative in lieu of a fee waiver is permissible for such fees.

The School may allow a student to perform service in lieu of paying a fee or receiving a fee waiver if: (a) the School establishes a service policy or procedure that ensure that a service assignment is appropriate to the age, physical condition, and maturity of the student; (b) the School's service policy or procedure is consistent with state and federal laws, including Section 53G-7-504 regarding the waiver of fees and the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 201; (c) the service can be performed within a reasonable period of time; and (d) the service is at least equal to the minimum wage for each hour or service.

A student who performs service may not be treated differently than other students who pay a fee.

The service may not create an unreasonable burden for a student or parent and may not be of such a nature as to demean or stigmatize the student.

The School will transfer the student's service credit to another LEA upon request of the student.

The School may make an installment payment plan available for the payment of a fee. Such a payment plan may not be required in lieu of a fee waiver.

The School may provide optional individual fundraising opportunities for students to raise money to offset the cost of the student's fees as provided in R277-408.

### **Annual Review, Approval, and Training**

The Board will review and approve this policy annually.

The School will develop a plan for at least annual training of School employees on fee-related policies specific to each employee's job functions.