

Standards for Home Education Reimbursement

These standards are provided by Alberta Education to school authorities that supervise a home education program as a resource tool for meeting their accountabilities regarding the use of home education funding. They are effective beginning September 1, 2017.

Reimbursement decisions must be consistent with Section 7(4) of the *Home Education Regulation*. These standards are intended to assist in interpreting the provision in the regulation but are not a replacement for consideration of the reimbursement rules set out at Section 7(4) in relation to any request for reimbursement.

Test for Reimbursement

To determine whether a cost or expense is reimbursable, an associate board or associate private school supervising a home education program must consider the following:

Determination #1 – Section 7(4)(a)(i) of the regulation

Determine if the expense being claimed is for something related to:

- the programs of study;
- instructional materials; or
- other resources related to the home education program.

Note: “Other resources” must be related to the home education **program**, not the home education **school**.

Determination #2 – Section 7(4)(a)(ii) of the regulation

Has the parent provided the school board or private school with detailed receipts for the expense?

Note: If the school board or private school is satisfied that the answers to both of these determinations authorize reimbursement, it must consider the third determination (below). If the above requirements are not met, there is no need to consider the third determination, as the cost is not reimbursable.

Determination #3 – Section 7(4)(b) of the regulation

The school board or private school must determine whether the expense being claimed is for something that is:

- a form of personal remuneration for the parent; or
- to pay for travel costs or other expenses usually required to be paid by a parent of a student who is enrolled in a school operated by a board or private school.

Note: If the expense being claimed fits within one of the above two categories, the school board or private school is not authorized to reimburse that cost.

The supervising school board or private school’s own policy about school fees is irrelevant when determining if the expenses are “usually required” to be paid by a parent in a school operated by a board or private school. What is relevant is “usually”

required to be paid by a parent of students enrolled in school board or private school operated in the province as a whole.

If the expense being claimed does **not** encompass either condition, the school is authorized to reimburse the parents for the expense.

Standards

Reimbursement is based on three conditions:

1. Necessary for and related to the student's program;
2. Paid for and supported by invoices; and
3. Not usually paid for by parents of students in a brick-and-mortar school or not a form of remuneration to the parent.

These standards apply with respect to parent-developed and parent-directed home education programs, as well as home education programs following the Alberta programs of study.

For many of the costs referred to below, consideration must be given to whether the cost is part of the cost of operating the home education school (e.g., school infrastructure or operating costs) versus the cost of providing the home educated student's program.

School authorities and home education families are encouraged to share school authority-owned resources where possible to offer the richest educational experience for home education students. Please see Section 7(6) of the *Home Education Regulation* for more information.

Alberta Education strongly encourages supervising school boards and private schools to emphasize to parents the importance of student program development. As reimbursement of funding is closely tied to the student program, the details of that program must be developed in compliance with the regulation. For those home education programs not following the Alberta programs of study, the written description of the program must include:

- Activities with an explanation of how those activities will enable the student to achieve the outcomes appropriate to the home education program;
- Instructional methods and resources;
- The means of evaluating student progress; and

- The name of the person instructing the home education program if not the parent.

Whether a particular cost may be reimbursed depends, in part, on whether it is required by each student's program. This means that what is reimbursable for one student may not necessarily be reimbursable for another.

Recommended for reimbursement (Section 7(4)(a) of the *Home Education Regulation*):

Determine if the expense being claimed is for something related to:

- the programs of study;
- instructional materials; or
- other resources related to the home education program.

- Consumables – paper, pencils, art supplies, general workbooks, ink

- Curriculum based – workbooks, textbooks, reading books

- Online curriculum programs – learning programs on CD

- Learning aids – manipulatives (supported in the program plan)

- Computers, technology equipment (i.e., printers), including repairs and upgrades – Supervising authorities may set dollar limits on the amount spent on these types of expenses annually

- Internet services – 50% of monthly fee from September to end of August

- Tutoring – Group or individual lessons necessary for the student's program delivered by a subject matter expert who is not an immediate family member

- Lessons – including, but not limited to, music, swimming, and language lessons taught by a

certified instructor and in relation to the student's program

- Tangible assets – e.g., cameras, telescopes, musical instruments, physical education equipment, sewing machines

- Home economic edibles

- Admissions/field trips (up to a maximum of 50% of the funding provided to parents) – Ensure reimbursements are for activities related to the student's program, which may include zoo admission, theatre tickets related to literature study, museum admissions, science centre entrance fees, and multiuse recreation centres.

Reimbursable amounts should be for the fees paid for the student only. The purchase of family admission is permissible in cases where it is more cost-effective than purchasing multiple individual student admissions. Multiple admissions or annual passes are acceptable for activities when directly related to the student's home education plan.

Reimbursement for parent admissions and travel costs are not acceptable.

- Postage/shipping and handling from vendors to the home education family

Not recommended for home education reimbursement:

Expenses that are considered a cost of operating a home school and not associated with the program and/or usually required to be paid for by a parent of a student enrolled in a school operated by a board or private school.

- Furniture

- Warranties/insurance

- Competitions – including, but not limited to, swim meets and tournament costs

- Registration fees – including, but not limited to, sports teams, community leagues, and summer camps

- Postage, fax costs and long-distance charges to an associate school board or private school and its teachers

- Per Section 7(4)(b)(ii) of the *Home Education Regulation*, reimbursements to parents are not acceptable for personal remuneration and payment for travel costs or other expenses usually required to be paid by a parent of a student who is enrolled in a school operated by a board or private school.