

Ref. No. St.CPS/2020/21/SP/14

Dated: 29.07.2020

FEE CHARGES - ISSUES

1. Many parents seem to have doubt about the correctness of the fee circular reference no. St. CPS/2020/21/SP/11 dated 30.06.2020. They believe during the Covid – 19 pandemic only tuition fee is to be charged. The other charges – such as Annual Charges / Development Fund are not permitted by the Govt. to be charged during the school closure period, since school expenditure has reduced as teachers imparting online education to the students from home. Moreover, the school is also not permitted to charge other charges for the months of April to June 2020 and thereafter.

2. FEE CHARGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULES

Please note Fees and other charges are levied by the school are in compliance to the provisions of the Delhi School Education Act, 1973 (DSEA) and Delhi School Education Rules, 1973 (DSER) and order / regulations passed by the Directorate of Education (DOE) from time to time.

- Fees are payable for twelve months being mandated by Rule 164 of the DSER 1973 - which says – **All fees shall be charged for a full period of twelve months from the students at the rates specified in these rules.** Rule 55 of DSER says **the name of the students may be struck off by Head of the School on account of non-payment of fee and other dues from 20 days after the last day of payment.**
- The outbreak of Novel Corona Virus (Covid – 19) being declared as Pandemic by WHO being a threat to life, it has become a matter of concern for the country, which is to the knowledge of all of us. Being a social emergency by the Provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the Delhi Epidemic Diseases, the Covid-19 Regulations 2020, were enforced in Delhi for Lockdown period.
- In exercise of special powers, the Central Government declared the national lockdown from 18.03.2020 to 17.05.2020. From 18.05.2020 unlockdown is being gradually implemented.
- In exercise of the powers under the Covid – 19 Regulations, the Delhi Government, Director of Education issued an Order No. PS/DE/2020/54 dated 17.04.2020 whereby the Private Unaided Schools were directed that ‘no fee, except tuition fee, shall be charged from the parents till further notice’.
- But the DOE order dated 17.04.2020 was superceded by another DOE order dated 18.04.2020 which states ‘This order 18.04.2020 is issued in supersession of the earlier order No. PS/DE/2020/54 dated 17.04.2020. The relevant provisions of this DOE order 18.04.2020 are stated as follows:
 - I. **“No Fee, except tuition fee will be charged from parents during the Lockdown period”.**
 - II. **“Annual and Development Charges can be charged from the parents, on pro rata basis, only on monthly basis after completion of the lockdown period”.**

The study of these provisions leads to the following conclusions:

- A. Please note 18.04.2020 order very clearly states that during the Lockdown period (i.e. from 18.03.2020 to 17.05.2020) only tuition fee is to be charged.
- B. This restriction of charging only tuition fee will not be their during unlockdown period. That is with effect from 18.05.2020 when unlockdown started the school is permitted to charge Tuition Fee as well as other charges as approved by the School Management for 2019-20. No increase in fees is allowed for 2020-21 by the DOE.
- C. That “only Tuition Fee is to be charged till further orders” as per 17.04.2020 order is no longer operative being superseded by 18.04.2020” Order of DOE.
- D. As Lockdown period is over on 17.05.2020, the school is thus permitted to charge tuition fee along with other charges, which the school has rightly charged with effect from 01.07.2020 (for which relevant circular was issued vide ref. No. St. CPS/2020/21/SP/11 dated: 30.06.2020).
- E. The order dated 18.04.2020 lays down that after the Lockdown period being over that school can charge Annual Charges / Development Charges on pro-rata basis. The said pro-rata basis obviously refers to the lockdown period which was from 18.03.2020 to 17.05.2020.
- F. The payment of Annual Charges / Development Fee is not waived by the said order it only defers it to be charged after lockdown period is over on a pro-rata basis during the remaining months of the year. Thus, there is no waiver of Annual Charges and Development Charges pertaining to lockdown period. Moreover, the fee and other charges are mandated to be charged for twelve months as per Rule 164 of DSER, there is no option but to charge fee and other charges for whole year.
- G. Accordingly, to give effect to the order of 18.04.2020, the school decided to give option to the parents/students to pay the amount of other charges such as Annual Charges, etc., pertaining to the period from 01.04.2020 to 30.06.2020 in eight installments, commencing from 01.07.2020. Further option was given to parents, if they so desire, they can pay in more installments, that parents facing financial stress can request School by email or letter for further installment if so desired (please refer to School letter Ref. No. St. CPS/2020/21/Sch. letters/10 dated 21.07.2020). Accordingly Fee Bills for July were sent after making all adjustments and allowance and there is no violation of any provision/order/rule of the Govt. in any manner. Parents are requested to clear the Bill at the earliest and save the school from financial stress. The school is highly obliged to the parents who have cleared the fee bills.

3. **Lockdown in the context of School**

The Lockdown period has ended on 17.05.2020 thereafter unlockdown period has commenced. As a result gradually all economic activities have been allowed to open up may it be business, profession, services, industry and commerce. People have started generating income.

4. In the context of school it may be noted that after unlockdown being enforced the DOE has by its order No. DE.23 (03)/Sch.Br./2019-20/355 dated 06.05.2020 declared that the school will remain closed from 11.05.2020 to 30.06.2020 on account of Summer Vacation, please note wording used is **Summer Vacation** not the School lockdown. Thereafter, by its order No. DE 23/08/Sch.Br./2020-21/414 dated 30.06.2020 the DOE has directed that **the studies of the students will remain suspended from 01.07.2020 to 31.07.2020** whereas school offices are opened and staff can be called to school whenever needed to perform their duties. Accordingly, if the schools are closed for Summer Vacation and studies of the students are suspended till 31.07.2020 obviously it means as per orders of the DOE Lockdown period do not persist now. That suspension of studies of Student does not mean School Lockdown, accordingly, the school has rightly demanded full fee from parents w.e.f. 01.07.2020, as the same is permitted as per Rule 164 DSER.

5. **Financial Crisis of Parents**

Due to the Covid – 19 pandemic it is visualized that some parents/ students might have faced financial crisis so as not being able to pay school dues. The Management by its School letter Ref. No. St. CPS/2020/21/Sch. letters/10 dated 21.07.2020, has given option to those parents to make an application along with supporting documents for the fee concession so that they may not be treated as fee defaulters and the appropriate action against them may not be initiated such as removing the name from the school rolls. Further, you might have noted that school office is very accommodative, after listening to the parents fee problem they request them to pay as much as they can or atleast pay tuition fee rest of the fees can be paid little later.

6. **FEW INFERENCES**

- A. In the facts and peculiar unexpected circumstances Covid – 19 pandemic the school has taken a very accommodative approach for fee dues.
- B. Please note DOE has not passed any order, which says full fee is not be charged from students for whole year. The DOE will not pass any order contrary to the provisions of Rule 164 DSER (stated above) which requires fees and other charges to be charged for full period of twelve months.
- C. By its Order the DOE has only given concession to the extent of deferring the payment of other charges from students pertaining to the lockdown period.
- D. Once the lockdown period is over full fee for whole year has to be paid by the parents as well as the deferred payment of other charges pertaining to lockdown period which to be paid by parents on pro rata basis.
- E. By its order dated 18.04.2020 the DOE has directed the schools not to increase the fee and other charges over the preceeding year. That the same has been followed by the school.

7. **TRUST YOUR SCHOOL**

Dear parents, you have entrusted your ward to the school believing in the school philosophy of education for knowledge, character, courage and wisdom to develop holistic human personality, therefore, have trust and faith in the school. The school has never betrayed its trust amongst the parents/ students nor it will ever be done in future. Therefore, please do not tarnish the image of the school in the minds of your ward. Guide them to respect their teachers as well as the school so that they learn to reciprocate the same respect to you.

8. **SCHOOL LOCKDOWN – WHY TO PAY FEES**

Some parents feel why pay fees to the school, as because of lockdown of the school their expenditure have reduced. True some day to day expenditure has been reduced but not all. Please note fixed expenditure of staff, establishment, operation of system, continues as it is. Further, when the school will re-open, new types of expenditure will have to be incurred such as regular sanitization of the school building against Covid – 19 pandemic: Smart Boards restoration/ damage rectifications, damages to closed school building and so on. Further, there is going to be an added financial burden on the school on account of fee concession to parents in the financial crisis. Further DOE Order not to allow increase in fees during this year has further crippled the financial position of the school substantially. Make your school financially sound / healthy so that it may reciprocate you with its better services for the betterment of your wards. We look to you to strengthen our hands.

Therefore, it is requested that considering all facts and circumstances stated above, please do not doubt the integrity of the school and avoid the use and circulation of unparliamentary idioms against the school. Choice is yours. Think is it right to do so? Please note school does not appreciate the gift of unparliamentary idioms.

9. **FEE REFUND POLICY**

The school follows the policy of automatic fee refund / adjustment in case of excess collection of the fees from parents, the same will be followed in future as well.

Saroop S Bhumra
Director
St. Cecilia's Public School