

In 2007, the River East Transcona School Division board of trustees developed a new policy regarding user-pay lunch supervision programs. This policy recognizes that the care and supervision of a child during the midday break is a parental responsibility. However, non-profit, user-pay supervised lunch programs may be established and operated by parent groups to assist parents in securing a supervised environment for their children during the midday break.

Why was the policy regarding user-pay lunch supervision programs reviewed?

- Previous River East School Division and Transcona Springfield School Division policies needed to be harmonized into one policy.
- Differences in divisional support to programs needed to be equalized.

Do all students who stay for lunch have to pay a fee?

- In a school where there is a user-pay lunch supervision program, all students who stay over the midday break, except those whom the division is obligated to transport, will be charged a fee.

Who is the school division obligated to transport?

- According to The Public Schools Act, the school division is obligated to transport students in rural areas (East St. Paul and St. Clements municipalities) who live more than 1.6 km away from their designated school, and students with special needs.

How will the school division provide supervision for students whom it is obligated to transport?

- The school division will provide funds to the lunch supervision program to supervise those students. The amount paid will be the same amount charged to all other students who use the lunch supervision program in that school.

Why doesn't the school division cover all of the costs of lunch supervision?

- School divisions do not receive provincial support for any lunch supervision.
- Supervision of children over the midday break, except those whom the division is obligated to transport, is a parental responsibility.
- Therefore, parent groups organize and operate a lunch supervision program on a user-pay basis.

What time frame does the lunch supervision program cover?

- The program is responsible for supervising students as they eat lunch and during the outside break.

What sorts of costs are incurred to support students' lunch supervision?

- The most common costs include training (first aid, CPR) and wages for co-ordinators, supervisors and other personnel.

Why can't teachers or paraprofessional staff supervise students during the midday break?

- All staff, by their collective agreements, are entitled to an uninterrupted personal meal break during the work day.

Who sets the guidelines for how the user-pay lunch supervision program is to be run?

- The parent group organizing and operating the program establishes guidelines for how the program is to be run. These guidelines include, but are not limited to: fee structure; salary structure for co-ordinators, supervisors and other staff; behavioural expectations; and student/staff ratio.
- Guidelines are established in consultation with school administration to ensure operation of the program does not conflict with operation or policies of the school and/or division as a whole.
- The school division will hold meetings so the groups organizing programs can share information about their operation and guidelines.

What happens if there are surplus funds?

- The program cannot be used as a means to raise funds for the school. All monies collected are to cover the program's expenses.
- The program's guidelines will describe what happens with surplus funds. For example, some programs have used surplus funds to provide a free month of supervision at the end of the year.

Are the financial records of the program made available?

- Financial records must be audited annually at the cost of the program by an accredited practitioner. Information about how to obtain an audit can be requested from the secretary-treasurer.
- Copies of the audited statement must be forwarded to the secretary-treasurer and be made available to parents.

What if parents refuse to pay to have their child(ren) in the program?

- ➔ The care and supervision of a child during the mid-day break is a parental responsibility.
- ➔ If parents do not pay the user fee, they will need to make alternative supervision arrangements outside of the school.

How are students with special needs, whom the division is obligated to transport, supervised over the midday break?

- ➔ Schools will determine the appropriate level of care and support for students with special needs. This may involve supervision by paraprofessionals as part of their work day.

What if our school has a volunteer-run lunch supervision program?

- ➔ This structure can continue. In this case, the school division will provide some funding, based on the number of students it is obligated to transport. These funds can be used for operating expenses rather than supervisory salaries.

Is the lunch policy on your website?

- ➔ The RETSD lunch policy (JLIA) can be accessed at: www.retsd.mb.ca/site/about/policy/polmain.html. Select the "J (Students)" section of the policy manual and scroll to JLIA.

Lunch supervision programs in our schools

A guide for parents