

Starting a High School Club

Activities Office Guidelines

Background

The Club portion of the student activities program is an integral part of the educational process. It is an opportunity for students to explore interests or socialize with friends in supervised activities.

Clubs

A club is a meeting of a group of individuals for a specialized purpose. All clubs must have an FCPS-employed sponsor responsible for their management. Every club must have gone through the FCPS approval process and is subject to FCPS regulations regarding all affairs. Not all activities will need to go through the club application process. There can certainly be school initiatives outside the club arena. However, under current regulation, if money is involved, a club approval is necessary before financial services will authorize an account.

Creating a New Club

1. Check the Activities matrix to determine if the requested club already exists **at your school**.
 - If yes, stop here. All is well!
 - If no, follow the application process.
Activities officer personnel should discuss with the group their plans to ensure FCPS and local school policies and regulations are followed. *By regulation, all clubs must be student-initiated and student-run (under the supervision of the sponsor).*
2. A current FCPS employee (unless the local school requires local staff) must be the sponsor. It is necessary that a staff member sponsors each activity and be present at each club meeting/activity.
3. The application packet is comprised of the **cover sheet, application, a constitution, and a student interest form.**
4. The forms are to be reviewed and approved by the Director of Student Activities (DSA), Principal, and then forwarded to the FCPS Director of Student Activities and Athletics for review and approval.
5. All new club/activity applications for each school year must be submitted prior to the start of Winter Break
6. Application packets from high schools will be returned via email to the DSA of the school after review and action. The finance technician will also receive a copy via email when the club is approved.

All forms must be typed or computer-generated, except for the student interest form

Make sure the application is complete and includes the typed name of the sponsor. Use the most current forms (posted on the SAAP intranet site). The signature of the DSA *and* of the Principal are required on the application.

Fundraising or financial donation is allowed in the application or in the constitution. There must also be a statement to the effect that all fundraising activities are subject to local school administration approval.

It is not necessary to list specific fund-raising activities, field trips, performances, etc. on the application or in the constitution; **it is best to be generic**. If you choose to be specific, indicate on the application/constitution that any/all activities will comply with FCPS regulations and local school policies and approval processes. Additionally, if the planned activities of the club do not appear to be able to be accomplished during regular club meeting time, the same statement is needed. If said statement is not included, the application packet will be returned for edits.

There must be a constitution; it should include elements such as how students become members of the club, how officers are chosen, how officers can be removed from office, what the responsibilities of the officers are. For most clubs, there can be no restriction on which students may initially enter into membership (other than a student being in good standing - see the matrix included in R3866 for exceptions that allow restricted membership). Once students are involved, then locally clubs may include requirements to maintain membership. These operating procedures do not need to be included in the basic constitution. Activities offices should read constitutions carefully to make sure these are appropriate and meet local school expectations.

A club may NOT be the extension of an outside organization and no outside organization may have any authority or decision-making power over a FCPS club or students. Once a club has met the requirements and has been approved centrally, working with an outside agency is possible under the approval/supervision of the local school sponsor and administration (and any necessary FCPS offices).

The student interest form must have a list of *current* students (and their FCPS email addresses) interested in participating in the club; the minimum number of interested students necessary to start a club is determined by local schools.

Upon approval, a copy of the application and constitution should be filed in the local school Activities Office. Copies should also be returned to the sponsor and forwarded to the School Finance Office. The sponsor of the new club will need to contact the Finance Office to set up an account. To raise or spend funds, clubs must be approved at the central office level, which allows the creation of an active account with the finance office.

Fundraising and Purchases

All clubs are subject to FCPS fundraising, donation and purchasing regulations. All income and expenses from a fundraiser associated with a school club must be run through the school finance office. Refer to the appropriate regulations (1370, 1375, 3866, 5790, and 5810) for specific guidance.