

Downingtown Area School District



Activity Fee Parent Information 2021-2022

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Introduction:

The Downingtown Area School District (DASD) has a tradition of offering high-quality extra-curricular programs for its students. In this time of budget challenges, our goal is to continue that tradition. However, it is our belief that the growing costs associated with these activities should be offset to some extent by student participants and their families.

The District Activity Fees are designed to be as fair and equitable as possible. As a result, fees are set at levels that will not discourage participation, and are within a structure that considers underlying costs and the fee policies of surrounding districts.

Definitions:

Activity Fee.....a fee charged to supplement the expenses associated with providing extracurricular opportunities for students.

Funded Activities/Sports.....those extracurricular activities that are supported by paid coaches or advisors.

Family Fee Cap.....a maximum limit placed on the amount of Music and Sports fees a student and/or family has to pay to participate in extracurricular activities. DASD family cap is currently \$250.

Free and Reduced Lunch Students.....eligible children are those who qualify for free or reduced meal benefits by submitting an application or by automatically qualify in one of the following categories:

- ✓ A member of a household, as determined by the administering agency, receiving assistance under the Food Stamp Program, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program (TANF is the Federal designation; each State has its own name and acronym);
 - ✓ A homeless child as determined by the school district’s homeless liaison or by the director of a homeless shelter;
 - ✓ A migrant child as determined by the State or local Migrant Education Program (MEP) coordinator;
 - ✓ A runaway child who is receiving assistance from a program under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and is identified by the local educational liaison.
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Activity Fee Structure:

Elementary Students

- Funded Activities
 - Music - Families of elementary students participating in music activities will be assessed a \$25 activity fee per student, per year which allows the student to participate in **all** music programs (band, chorus and orchestra). *This fee is applied to the family max.*
 - Non-academic Clubs and Intramurals – Families of elementary students participating in non-academic clubs and intramurals that require a fee will be assessed a \$25 activity fee per student, per year which allows the student to participate in **all** clubs/intramurals. *This fee is **not** applied to the family max.*

Middle School Students / Sixth Grade Center Students

- Funded Activities/Sports
 - Music - Families of middle school and sixth grade center students participating in music activities will be assessed a \$25 activity fee per student, per year for **each** music program (band, chorus and orchestra) the student participates in. *These fees are applied to the family max.*
 - Spring Musical - Families of middle school students participating in the spring musical will be assessed a \$75 activity fee per student, per year. *This fee is applied to the family max.*
 - Sports - Families of middle school students participating in sports will be assessed a \$75 activity fee per student, per year to participate in **each** PIAA sport. PIAA Sports are only open to 7th & 8th grades. *These fees are applied to the family max.*
 - Non-academic Clubs and Intramurals - Families of middle school and sixth grade center students participating in non-academic clubs and intramurals that require a fee will be assessed a \$25 activity fee per student, per year which allows the student to participate in **all** clubs/intramurals. *This fee is **not** applied to the family max.*

High School Students

- Funded Activities/Sports
 - Families of high school students will be assessed a \$50 activity fee per student, per year to participate in chorus. *These fees are applied to the family max.*
 - Families of high school students will be assessed a \$50 activity fee per student, per year to participate in orchestra. *These fees are applied to the family max.*
 - Families of high school students will be assessed a \$100 activity fee per student, per year to participate in band. *This fee is applied to the family max.*
 - Families of high school students will be assessed a \$75 activity fee per student, per year to participate in the Spring Musical. *This fee is applied to the family max.*
 - Families of high school students will be assessed a \$75 activity fee per student, per year to participate in **each** of the following sports: baseball; cheerleading; cross country; field hockey; golf; indoor track; lacrosse; swimming/diving; tennis; track-Spring. *These fees are applied to the family max.*
 - Families of high school students will be assessed a \$100 activity fee per student, per year to participate in **each** of the following sports: football; soccer; volleyball; basketball; wrestling; softball. *These fees are applied to the family max.*
 - Non-academic Clubs and Intramurals - Families of high school students participating in non-academic clubs and intramurals that require a fee will be assessed a \$25 activity fee per student, per year which allows the student to participate in **all** clubs/intramurals. *This fee is **not** applied to the family max.*

Exceptions and Fee Limitations:

- ***Family Fee Cap*** – the maximum amount of cost a family may incur in Music and Sports activity fees is \$250 per year. Any fees in excess of the family fee cap will calculate as \$0 during the payment process.
- ***Student Fee Cap*** – the maximum amount of costs a student may incur in non-academic/intramural fees is \$25 per year. Any fee in excess of the student cap will calculate as \$0 during the payment process.
- ***Free and Reduced Lunch Students*** – fees for students who qualify for the National Free and Reduced Lunch Program will be waived. The fees will calculate as \$0 during the payment process, but **MUST** be processed in order to show on a paid roster report.
- ***Non-Academic/Intramural Activities*** – determination of what clubs/activities that charge a fee is the responsibility of the school Principal and the Assistant Superintendent. The list may vary from school to school and from year to year.

When to Pay the Fees:

Fees open for payment can be viewed and paid for on the PaySchools Central (PSC) website at any time. Fees must be paid by due dates that will be communicated to the students / parents through the coaches, directors, principals, and advisors responsible for each activity. If fees are not paid by the due dates, students will not be permitted to participate. Once students participate in the activity, there are no refunds. See further information on using PSC in the Payment Information section on page 7.

Summary of 2021-2022 Fees

ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE SCHOOL & 6th Grade Center NON-ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES	HIGH SCHOOL NON-ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES
Band/Chorus/Orchestra - \$25	Band - \$25	Band - \$100
* Non-academic clubs/intramurals \$25	Chorus - \$25	Chorus - \$50
	Orchestra - \$25	Orchestra - \$50
	Spring Musical - \$75	Spring Musical - \$75
	*Non-academic clubs/intramurals - \$25	*Non-academic clubs/intramurals - \$25

ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES 7th & 8th gr
Baseball - \$75
Basketball - \$75
Cheerleading - \$75
Cross Country - \$75
Football - \$75
Field Hockey - \$75
Lacrosse - \$75
Soccer - \$75
Softball - \$75
Track - Spring - \$75
Wrestling - \$75

ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES
Baseball - \$75
Basketball - \$100
Cheerleading - \$75
Cross Country - \$75
Football - \$100
Field Hockey - \$75
Golf - \$75
Indoor Track - \$75
Lacrosse - \$75
Soccer - \$100
Softball - \$100
Swimming/Diving - \$75
Tennis - \$75
Track - Spring - \$75
Volleyball - \$100
Wrestling - \$100

** Does not apply to the Family Cap. The \$25 fee covers all clubs and is not a per club fee.*

Payment Information:

The District uses PaySchools Central (PSC), an on-line payment website, for the collection of activity fees. This is the same website used to fund students' lunch accounts. **All student fee payments must be made online at <https://www.payschoolscentral.com/>**. Please use a web browser other than Internet Explorer for this website. For detailed instructions on how to make a payment using PSC, use the on-line 'Help' link on the PSC web-site.

Family Cap of \$250 – Payment information

The Family cap of \$250 is automatically calculated by the PSC system. It is important to note that even if you will meet, or have met the family cap, you still need to go online and select the activity for your student and process the payment so they are properly registered as paid. The system will calculate the payment as \$0, or whatever the remaining amount is left to reach the \$250 cap.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Is an activity fee really necessary in DASD?

Yes, an activity fee has become a necessary component of properly funding extra-curricular programs in our District. We have a tradition of offering high-quality extra-curricular programs for our students and in this time of ongoing budget challenges, our goal is to avoid eliminating some programs to keep others going. It is our belief that the growing costs associated with extra-curricular activities should be offset to some extent by participating students and their families.

What's been done to make sure the activity fee won't result in greatly reduced levels of participation?

All stakeholder interests have been taken into consideration in the application of an activity fee. It is designed to be as fair and equitable as possible. As a result, fees are set at reasonable levels that will not discourage participation, within a structure that represents underlying costs as well as fee policies in surrounding districts.

Does a family with multiple children participating in multiple activities have to pay an activity fee for each child?

A "Family fee cap" is in place, which is a maximum limit on the amount of fees a student and/or family has to pay to participate in music and sports programs. The maximum family cap is set at \$250 per school year for music and sports fees. No matter how many students from one family choose to participate and whatever the number of activities they're part of, the amount any one family pays in fees cannot exceed \$250 for music and sports programs. Any music or sports fee registered for after the family cap has been met will calculate as \$0, or whatever the remaining amount is left to reach the \$250 cap, during the payment process. This \$0 fee must be processed for the student to show on the paid roster.

A "student fee cap" of \$25 per student per year is also in place for non-academic/intramural fees. Any club fee registered for after the student cap has been met will calculate as \$0 during the payment process.

What about students from economically disadvantaged families, or those for whom an activity fee is simply too great a burden?

DASD has experience in making sure that all students, regardless of financial status, have access to everything from school materials to daily breakfasts and lunches. The activity fee program will be implemented in a similar way to ensure that any student facing economic hardship will be able to participate, with sensitivity to the respect and dignity each child deserves.

Who determines whether or not a student falls into the category of economically disadvantaged?

All students that are eligible for the Free & Reduced meal program will be considered economically disadvantaged and are eligible for waived participation fees. The PSC system can identify those students eligible for meal benefits and will automatically calculate the participation fee of a student eligible for the Free & Reduced meal program at \$0. Once a parent has processed the \$0 fee in PSC the student will show up as paid on the team/activity paid roster to ensure confidentiality of the student's meal status.

What if my student does not qualify for the Free & Reduced meal program but we are experiencing economic hardship?

Please contact your school Principal. Schools may have alternate methods available to you for paying for student fees.

Is DASD the only District in our area to charge an activity fee?

No, DASD activity fees actually follow many other Districts in Chester County, as well as surrounding counties, that adopted an activity charge last year or earlier.

How will an activity fee be collected?

PaySchools Central (PSC), an on-line payment website, will be utilized to collect all activity fees, which is the same website used to fund lunch accounts. **All student fee payments must be made online at <https://www.payschoolscentral.com/>.**

Is PSC safe?

Yes – The PSC website has passed PCI (Payment Card Industry) level 1 certification (greater than 6M Mastercard/Visa transactions processed annually), which is the highest level you can obtain. They are committed to protecting your personal information and providing a safe environment for your transactions. Your data is encrypted, which prevents hackers from accessing this data.

If my student qualifies for waived activity fees do I still need to go onto PSC and register them for the fee?

Yes. The student's fees will still need to be registered in PSC. The fee will calculate as \$0 due and once this fee is processed the student will show up as paid on the activity roster. This is to ensure the confidentiality of the student's eligibility in the Free and Reduced meal program.

If my family has met the family cap do I still need to go onto PSC and register my student for fees?

Yes, student's fees in excess of the family cap will still need to be registered in PSC in order for the student to show up as paid on the activity roster. All fees in excess of the cap will calculate as \$0 due.