

How To Start A Club or Activity

*A guide to meet during 8th period and to open financial accounts
for new clubs, activities, and organizations*

I. Background

The student activities program is an integral part of the school day at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST). It is an opportunity for students to explore new interests or socialize with friends in supervised activities. Many of the same activities and clubs that traditional schools offer are found at TJHSST, as well as some that can only be offered because of the unique technical laboratories and nature of the school.

In order to raise funds, or to receive funding from the Student Government Association (SGA), clubs must have an active account in the finance office.

II. Activities and Clubs

An activity or club is a meeting of a group of individuals for a specialized purpose. All activities and clubs must have an assigned sponsor responsible for their management and must be approved by FCPS. The organization is referred to as an activity if it does not have an account in the finance office. It is referred to as a club if it does have financial account, and is thus subject to FCPS regulations in regards to fundraising.

III. Creating a New Club or Activity

1. Check in the eighth period office or school activities office to determine if a club similar to the idea you have in mind has been previously approved.
2. Ask a current staff member to be a faculty/staff sponsor. It is preferred that a staff member sponsor each activity. Parent volunteers may serve in this capacity only if they have completed FCPS requirements for fingerprinting, TB Tine testing and have submitted letters of recommendation. Application forms for volunteer sponsors are available in the eighth period office or the Activities Office, and must be signed by a school official.
3. If no existing club fits your criteria, then request the appropriate registration forms from an eighth period office staff member or from the school activities office. The forms will be sent to you via e-mail.
4. Complete and print out the forms.
 - All forms must be typed.
 - All new club/activity applications must be submitted by the last day of the first academic quarter of the year.
 - Return the forms to the 8th period office if you only need activity status.
 - Return the forms to the ADSA for activities in the activities office if you are requesting to be a club. Additionally, you must submit a proposed constitution if your goal is to be a club. Write and have your sponsor sign a constitution for your club either by using a template included with the form or by creating your own format. Be sure to 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, and how money will be raised. Any questions about the content of the constitution should be directed to ADSA for activities.

5. The forms will be reviewed and approved by the School's Director of Student Activities, School Principal, and the FCPS Director of Student Activities. You will receive an e-mail once your club has been approved at the county level. This process will generally take 2-3 weeks.
6. Upon approval, a copy of your application and your constitution will be filed in the Activities Office, one will be returned to your sponsor, and one will be forwarded to the Finance Office. The sponsor of your group will need to contact the Finance Office to set up an account. If you are only seeking Activity status, a copy of your application will be kept in both the 8th period office and the Activities office.

IV. Fundraising and Purchases

All clubs are subject to FCPS fundraising regulations. All fundraisers must be approved at least thirty days in advance and all purchases must be approved beforehand by an official purchase order. All income and expenses from a fundraiser association with a school club must be run through the school finance office. Refer to the Fundraising Guidelines document for more information. In order to receive funding and grants from the SGA, clubs must meet at least once a month, have an active account in the finance office, and cannot be sponsored by any booster association. Refer to the SGA Fund Allocation Process Policies document for more information.

V. Glossary

Activities Office: also known as the Athletic Office, Supervises all student activities and athletics at the school level, including clubs and activities; located next to the main gymnasium.

Assistant Director of Student Activities (ADSA) for TJHSST in charge of clubs: Responsible for managing and coordinating all requests for new clubs and activities at the school level; a position currently held by Mr. Dave Gardziel.

Constitution: A document that clearly states the principles and mission of a club, as well as club policies in regards to membership, officers, and fundraising.

Director of Student Activities (DSA) for FCPS: Responsible for directing and coordinating student activities and athletics in Fairfax County, as well as providing financial oversight of all centrally funded student activities; the final step in the club approval process; a position currently held by Mr. Bill Curran.

Director of Student Activities (DSA) for TJHSST: Responsible for directing and coordinating student activities and athletics at TJHSST; a position currently held by Ms. Melody Modell.

Eighth Period Coordinator: Responsible for coordinating the eighth period program at TJHSST; a position currently held by Mrs. Jean Stevens.

Eighth Period Office: Supervises the logistics, including sign-up and attendance, of the eighth period program at TJHSST; staffed largely by volunteers under the direction of the eighth period coordinator.

Fundraising: Any attempt by a club or organization to raise money. All fundraisers must be approved at least thirty days in advance by the activities office.

Sponsor: A faculty/staff member or approved parent volunteer responsible for the activities of a given club or organization.

Student Government Association (SGA): The umbrella organization of student clubs, activities and organizations at TJHSST; provides fund allocations to qualifying clubs and organizations throughout the year.