



Student Organizations and Clubs Guidance

Student organizations/clubs allow students to meet like-minded fellow students who share their passions, develop and enhance various skills and interests, and can provide a sense of belonging and community. This document conveys DCPS guidance on student organizations and clubs, including approval processes for starting and maintaining student organizations, eligibility requirements, and best practices for schools.¹ All student organization/club activities must comply with DCPS policies and procedures.

Starting a Student Organization

- All student organizations must submit an application to the school principal or designee to form a student organization every school year, regardless of whether the organization was in existence the previous school year. The application should include:
 - A faculty sponsor from the school who signs off on the application.
 - The faculty sponsor reviews all organizational activities, shall attend all sanctioned meetings, and ensures that the student organization complies with all guidance and DCPS/school policies and procedures throughout the school year.
 - Where possible, faculty sponsors should be official employees of DCPS at the designated school. If a faculty sponsor is not an official employee of DCPS, they must complete the DCPS clearance process and be cleared to work with DCPS students.
 - A roster of student participants
 - A minimum of three students should sign the application as participants of the organization.
 - Each student organization must establish a lead student representative, to represent the student organization
 - The organization must maintain a 50:1 student-to-faculty sponsor ratio. Organizations with more than 50 students shall have additional faculty co-sponsors to fulfill all additional sponsor duties.
 - The mission statement that specifies the organization's purpose.
- The organization must be student initiated and led, under the supervision of the faculty sponsor(s).
- All applications for student organizations must be submitted by and reviewed by the end of November of that school year.
- Each school must establish an annual mandatory student organization training to review this guidance, and all accompanying school-based processes. This training is required for the lead student organization representative, and the faculty sponsor.
- Any denial of student organization application and the reason(s) for the denial must be documented and communicated to the respective Instructional Superintendent for their awareness before informing students and faculty sponsor of the denial.

¹ This guidance may be updated by DCPS Central Services from time to time.



Membership and Eligibility in a Student Organization

Student organizations may have membership eligibility requirements to join and serve in leadership positions in alignment with their mission statement. For instance, the national honors society may include a GPA requirement.

- All eligibility requirements must be listed in the application.
- Any eligibility requirements cannot be based on any of the following protected classes:
 - o Race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, or place of residence or business
- If no eligibility requirements are listed in the application, student organization membership and leadership positions should be open to any student interested in joining.

Approval of Events, Materials, and Other Media

- Any events, activities, fliers, and other materials must be reviewed by the faculty advisor and submitted for approval by an administrator as directed by the school principal before distributing or showcasing. This includes any materials posted on social media.
 - o Only school social media accounts should post items related to student organizations.
- Schools must develop a timeline of approval not to exceed the timelines below:
 - o Requests must be submitted at least 5 business days prior to the student organization's desired distribution, viewing date, or event.
 - o School's approval or denial of request must be made within 2 business days of receiving the request, where possible
- Any violations by student organizations of the approval process may result in loss of access to building space and/or other resources.
- All denials and reason(s) for denials of any events and materials by an administrator, must be documented and shared with the principal prior to notifying the faculty sponsor and/or the student organization. The principal will make the final determination.
- All documented denials and reason(s) for denial must be shared with the respective Instructional Superintendent upon request.

School Reporting

The following must be posted on the school's website and updated regularly:

- All approved organizations and their purpose/mission statement and eligibility requirements, if applicable
 - o Mission statements must be written in a manner that opens membership to all interested students and does not limit membership in any way:
 - Example of limited membership: "This student organization is for female students who are interested in STEAM fields."



- Example of open membership: “This student organization’s mission is to encourage students who as identify as female to enter STEAM fields.”
- Approval processes, including timelines, and guidance to student organizations the school has
- Any resources, including funding, given to organizations by the school and the process for accessing those resources
- School point of contact (POC) for each student organization/club