

West Chester Area School District



**Activity Fee
Informational Packet
2022-2023**

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INTRODUCTION

The West Chester Area School District 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 activity fee is designed to be as fair and equitable as possible. As a result, fees are set at levels that will not discourage participation, within a structure that represents underlying costs and the fee policies of surrounding districts, while also taking into account other support provided by booster organizations.

DEFINITIONS

Activity Fee:

A fee charged to supplement the expenses associated with providing extracurricular opportunities for students.

Funded Activities & Sports:

Extracurricular activities and interscholastic athletics that are supported by paid coaches or advisors.

Family Fee Cap:

A maximum limit placed on the amount of fees a family has to pay to participate in funded activities/sports in all district schools in a school year. In the WCASD, the family cap is **\$250**.

Service Activities:

Funded activities that involve students performing a service to the school or the student body. Examples of **service activities** include but are not limited to: Safety Patrol (elementary), Yearbook (middle and high school), Student Government (middle and high school), class officers (9-12) and National Honor Society.

ACTIVITY FEE GUIDELINES

The collection of a yearly activity fee is communicated to parents through summer mailings, and further reinforced by coaches, advisors and directors. Activity fees are collected each school year for funded activities/sports, or the fee for sports may be

collected after final cuts for teams are announced. Once a student has participated in a funded activity/sport, no refund of an activity fee is permitted. Participation in funded activities/sports is optional.

Tier One - Elementary School Students Grades 3-5

- Families of elementary students in **grades 3-5** are assessed a **\$27.00** activity fee per student, per year, which allows the student to participate in one or multiple elementary-funded activities.

Tier Two - Middle School Students

- Families of middle school students will be assessed an **\$82.00** activity fee per student, per year, which allows the student to participate in one or multiple funded activities and/or sports.

Tier Three - High School Students

- Families of high school students will be assessed a **\$109.00** activity fee per student, per year, which allows the student to participate in one or multiple funded activities and/or sports.

Exceptions and Fee Limitations:

- **Family Fee Cap** - The maximum amount a family may pay yearly in activity fees is **\$250.00**.
- **Free and Reduced Lunch Students** - Students who qualify for the national Free and Reduced Lunch Program are not required to pay activity fees.
- **Activity Fee Waiver Application** - Families experiencing financial hardships may apply for financial assistance through the Office of the Assistant Superintendent.
- **Service Activities** - Participation in a service activity does not require an activity fee.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

The activity fee is collected annually and, if you choose to participate in a funded activity, please pay by using the online payment method, **PaySchoolsCentral**. Be sure to select the Activity Fee option. Additional payment information is available on our Activity Fee website.

WCASD FUNDED ACTIVITIES

(that require activity fee)

ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
(Grades 3-5)	NON-ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES	NON-ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES
Band	District Honors Chorus	Academic Competition Team
Chorus	District Select Strings	Band, Marching
Orchestra	Dramatics	Debating Club
Intramurals, After School	School Jazz Band	DECA Club
	Math Counts	Fall Drama
	Science Olympiad	HS District Senior Strings
		Literary Magazine
	ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES:	Marching Band-Color Guard
	(Grade 7/8)	Musical
		Newspaper
	Baseball	Robotics Competition
	Basketball	Science Competition
	Football	Spring Drama
	Field Hockey	ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES
	Lacrosse	Baseball
	Soccer	Basketball
	Softball	Fall Cheerleading
	Girls Volleyball	Field Hockey
	Wrestling	Football
	X Country (Co-Ed)	Girls' Volleyball
	ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES:	Golf
	(Grade 6)	Intramurals
		Lacrosse
	Hockey (Girls)	Soccer
	Soccer (Co-Ed)	Softball
	Basketball (Boys)	Swimming
	Basketball (Girls)	Tennis
	Wrestling	Track
	Lacrosse (Co-Ed)	Track Winter
	Track (Co-Ed)	Winter Cheerleading
	Volleyball (Co-Ed)	Wrestling
		X-Country

Activity Fee Waiver

An activity fee waiver is offered by the district for families experiencing financial hardship. Families must apply for the waiver using the Waiver Application for Activity Fee (see page 10). Students who qualify for free benefits (Free and Reduced Lunch program) **do not** need to submit an activity fee waiver.

FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH STUDENTS

Students who meet one of the following criteria automatically qualify for free benefits and have their Activity Fee waived:

- ✓ 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 Children Program (TANF) {TANF is the Federal designation; each State has its own name and acronym}
- ✓ Enrollment in a Head Start or Even Start program on the basis of meeting that program's low-income criteria
- ✓ 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

If you have questions regarding your status in one of the programs listed above, or need additional assistance, please contact your school Caseworker or the WCASD Social Worker Coordinator at 484-266-1226 or PALSTON@wcasd.net.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following “*Frequently Asked Questions*” make up an initial list of questions we expect to be presented most often regarding a new funded activities fee for participation.

Is an activity fee really necessary in the WCASD at this time?

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 extreme, ongoing budget challenges, our goal is to avoid eliminating some programs to keep others going. It is our belief that the time has come for the growing costs associated with extra-curricular activities to 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. Fees also take into account the support being provided by booster organizations.

Who came up with the idea and who approved it?

As part of the Community Budget Task Force, a representative group of individuals that included parents, educators, administrators, local businesspeople, and even a student insight provided guidance in creating the concept and the implementation parameters. Recommended by the administration for consideration by the School Board, a Board committee and the full Board have voted to move forward in creating the necessary steps towards implementing an activity fee.

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

A “Family Cap” will be in place, which is a maximum limit on the amount of fees a family has to pay to participate in extracurricular activities. In the WCASD, the maximum family cap is set at **\$250** per school year. 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**.

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

The WCASD 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 a 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?

Activity fee scholarships will be offered by the District for families experiencing financial hardship.

A financial hardship case is primarily defined as including any student who is a categorically eligible child automatically qualifying for free benefits of the status as one of the following: 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 Children Program (TANF.) TANF is the Federal designation, and each state uses its own name and acronym.

Also eligible to avoid a participation activity fee are students enrolled in a Head Start or Even Start program on the basis of meeting that program's low-income criteria; 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; or 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.

My child participates in an extra-curricular activity that does not make use of a paid teacher or advisor so do I have to pay an activity fee for him/her?

No, an activity fee does not apply to extra-curricular programs in which a paid (supplemental contract) position is not involved in advising or coaching students.

How will the activity fee be applied based on the grade level of each student?

Elementary Students: Grades 3-5

Families of elementary students will be assessed a **\$27.00** activity fee per student, per year which allows the student to participate in one or multiple elementary-funded activities (orchestra, band, chorus, and intramurals).

Middle School Students:

Families of middle school students will be assessed an **\$82.00** activity fee per student, per year, which allows the student to participate in one or multiple funded activities and/or sports.

High School Students:

Families of high school students will be assessed a **\$109.00** activity fee per student, per year, which allows the student to participate in one or multiple funded activities and/or sports.

Are there any activities in which students participate that represent exceptions from having to pay a fee?

Yes, service activities – which are those activities that involve students performing a service to the school or student body – will be exempted from activity fees.

Examples of service activities include Bus Safety Patrol (elementary), Yearbook (middle and high school), Student Government (middle and high school), Class Officers 9th through 12th grade, and student members of the National Honor Society.

Is the WCASD the only District in our area to charge an activity fee and, if not, where does our fee rank compared to the others?

No, the WCASD activity fee actually follows many other Districts in Chester County, as well as surrounding counties, that adopted an activity or “pay-to-play” charge last year or earlier. Based on an evaluation of the costs and policies applied by other Districts, the WCASD activity fee ranks very low in the financial impact it will have on participants.

How will an activity fee be collected?

The activity fee is collected annually and, if you choose to participate in a funded activity, please pay by using the online payment method, [PaySchools Central](#). Additional payment information is available on our [Activity Fee website](#).

WAIVER APPLICATION FOR ACTIVITY FEE

Activity Fee Waivers are based on the availability of funding and are awarded to the families experiencing the greatest level of need. All approved requests are valid for one year only.

Applications must be submitted annually.

In order to request a waiver of the West Chester Area School District Activity Fee, please submit this form along with an explanation of hardship, status of employment, and anticipated duration of hardship) to:

Dr. Kalia Reynolds Assistant Superintendent
782 Springdale Drive, Exton, PA 19341
Email application to: activityfee@wcasd.net

Statement of Hardship:

I certify that the above information is truthful and accurate. I will notify the Assistant Superintendent if my circumstances change.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Student(s) Name(s) and School(s) _____

A waiver application does not need to be submitted for **Free and Reduced Lunch** students, these students are automatically eligible.