



Frequently Asked Questions for Students and Families

Students and families, as we launch into the 2025-26 school year, we are excited to share preliminary information about our ***new way of funding student activities, fostering belonging, and galvanizing community philanthropy.***

We're providing this for your awareness and reference, so please don't feel obligated to read everything right now. Drew staff training is ongoing, and room parents will receive training in mid to late August.

If you cannot find your question/answer below, please ask your principal or a Drew staff member. We will continue to update this document as needed throughout the year based on community input.

Essential Information

Q. What is cost equity?

A. It is a comprehensive approach to ensure that financial resources are not a barrier to student participation in school activities and that all students have access to the full Drew experience.

Q. What is Drew CARES?

A. It is our newly named annual fundraising campaign, which used to be called the Drew Opportunity Fund. It's also our new cost equity program. This one name—Drew CARES—represents both the mindset and the method by which we plan to fund the full Drew experience for all students.

Q. Why is Drew doing this?

- A. Because we want to cultivate a sense of belonging for all students by reducing the financial barriers to entry for students who have the interest and meet the criterion for participation in a field trip, activity, program and/or sport, but may face financial barriers to participation.

Our goal is to ensure every Drew student has access to the full Drew experience, regardless of financial background. We know that all students will receive an even richer experience and all staff will find their work more rewarding if all student participants have a more equitable opportunity to join their respective activities.

Instead of asking families to pay directly for each activity, club, sport, or trip, we're launching a community-wide giving campaign called Drew CARES (formerly the Drew Opportunity Fund) with options for one-time, monthly, and corporate-matched donations, alongside select event-based fundraisers. This campaign will seek to collectively raise the funding for student activities, particularly those activities that have required dues or fees for individual student participation.

Q. How are families included in this initiative? Do they need to apply?

- A. Families do not need to apply. Everyone is included automatically. Families are encouraged to donate what they're able and when they're able to Drew CARES, to help support the student community.

Q. What's the timeline for sharing more detailed information?

- A. Staff training is currently ongoing, and Room Parent training sessions will take place in mid to late August.

Q. Can students join everything now?

- A. Activity and participation fees won't be a consideration, but tryouts and qualifiers/requirements will still be in place. Students must still meet the criterion for participation in a field trip, activity, program, and/or sport.

Q. Is everything free for all students now?

- A. This program is a way to cover the expenses of the student experience in a different way, through community philanthropy. We are avoiding the term "free" because these activities still have real costs and Drew CARES is not all inclusive for every single expense.

As we develop this program together, scenarios will arise that need to be discussed and decided by Drew leadership in collaboration with families. Please reference the "What's Not Covered" section below for the initial list of non-covered expenses.

What's Not Covered

Q. What is not covered under this new funding program?

- A. Drew is developing more detailed guidelines regarding the supplies, equipment, and apparel related to an activity or sport, in order to address what's included versus what families need to supply. Each activity will have a "what's included" list* to be developed by the club or activity lead, or coach, working in conjunction with their supervisor.

The following are examples of costs associated with school that are NOT part of the Drew CARES program:

- Broken tech fees
- Broken/lost/stolen music instruments
- *Equipment, apparel and supplies defined as personal-use items by a coach, club leader, or activity leader
- Student uniforms, with the exception of 9th grade blazers (support for student uniforms is still available through our social workers)
- Nutrition (school breakfasts and lunches) which are already subsidized to keep the program sustainable
- RISE After School Program

Q. Is there a cap per student or family?

- A. There is not a cap, but tryouts and qualifiers/requirements will still be in place.

Fundraising & Donations

Q. Will teachers and staff still be raising money as club sponsors and activity leads?

A. Staff will no longer ask for money from caregivers, families, colleagues and community members to support trips, activities, clubs, etc. However, we encourage those who have been actively engaged in fundraising to help us spread the word about how anyone can give to Drew CARES to support our new funding model.

Q. If I contribute to Drew CARES, is it tax-deductible?

A. YES! Every donation to Drew CARES is tax-deductible. All donors will receive an acknowledgement for each donation as well as an itemized receipt with an annual total in January to use for tax purposes. For reference, our Federal Tax ID number is 58-2528098.

Q. How can I donate?

A. Every donation in any amount counts towards our participation rate. This statistic is important for so many reasons. We are hoping for 100% participation this year to showcase our collective commitment to community philanthropy. You can make a one-time gift in any amount by clicking [HERE](#).

Q. Do we have the capacity to fill in the gap if Drew CARES doesn't raise enough money to fund everything?

A. With the help of the whole Drew community, we will be able to meet our fundraising goals for Drew CARES. We will monitor and share ongoing progress reports to staff and families regarding these efforts.

It is our hope that families will give what they can, when they can in celebration of the savings of their time, effort, and money expended through a traditional model. We will rely on community members and corporations to help us ensure the success of this bold new program.

Q. Can people still make in-kind donations (e.g., buy ice cream for the entire 3rd grade)?

- A. Yes, they may do so once they receive approval from their principal. Once approved, the principal will acknowledge that this is an in-kind and non-reimbursable donation. We encourage caregivers and community members to consider donating towards the greater Drew CARES initiative in addition to donating in-kind gifts.

Regarding food donations, the approval process allows our Nutrition Department to review and ensure healthy options for children that are aligned with our nutritional standards. We acknowledge that new standards will require changes to snacks and other food items we provide, beginning this school year.

Q. Why should someone consider donating?

- A. Donating is quick and easy, and it makes an immeasurable impact for students who had to miss out in the past.

The activities also have real costs. In order to continue to provide the level of activities we have provided in the past, it will be important for us to meet our fundraising goals. Families can turn former fees into philanthropy because every donation to Drew CARES is tax-deductible.

All donors will receive an acknowledgement for each donation as well as an itemized receipt with an annual total in January to use for tax purposes. Pre-planned donations on a monthly basis are deeply encouraged and appreciated.

Q. How are we going to raise all of this funding?

- A. This approach dramatically simplifies the fundraising approach at Drew, making it simpler and more predictable for families.

The Drew CARES fundraising campaign will include outreach to staff, parents and caregivers, and local businesses, and will cultivate major gifts. Every donation and connection counts. If you know of a grant opportunity, are connected to a local business who would be interested in supporting Drew CARES, please reach out and let us know!

Q. What about other ways in which people give to teachers?

- A. Parents may still offer to provide donations of goods and services and this is still appropriate. There also may be scenarios where room parents or teachers request donations of goods and services from families. These requests should not include items that Drew provides directly (e.g. office, school or cleaning supplies, school-day snacks) or items that will be provided through Drew CARES (e.g. - activity uniforms, equipment, team meals, etc.)

Benefits of Drew CARES

Benefits to Students

- **Equity in Access:** Every student can participate in field trips, enrichment programs, clubs, performances, and special events, regardless of financial circumstances.
- **Increased Belonging:** Students feel included and valued when they're not excluded due to cost, leading to stronger peer relationships and a sense of community.
- **Enhanced Learning:** Full participation in experiential learning—STEAM projects, arts integration, athletics, and service-learning—deepens academic engagement and real-world understanding.
- **Confidence and Growth:** Students build confidence through performances, competitions, and leadership roles they might otherwise miss.
- **Improved Well-being:** Reduced stress about money allows students to focus on learning, creativity, and joy.

Benefits to Families

- **Reduced Financial Pressure:** Families don't have to worry about "extra" fees that can accumulate throughout the year.
- **Stronger School Connections:** When barriers are removed, families are more likely to participate in events, volunteer, and stay engaged.

- **Trust and Inclusion:** Families see the school as a partner that truly cares about their child’s success—academically, socially, and emotionally.
- **More Equitable Opportunities:** All families, regardless of income, can access the same quality experiences for their children.
- **Celebration Without Stress:** Families can enjoy milestones and special moments without the burden of affordability concerns.
- **Tax Deductible Donations:** Donations to Drew CARES that replace prior fees and dues are now tax deductible.
- **Streamlined Processes:** Families now have one single place where they can support the school, Drew CARES!

Benefits to Staff

- **Inclusive Planning:** Teachers and staff can design experiences knowing all students can participate.
- **Stronger Relationships:** Equitable experiences foster trust between staff, students, and families.
- **Positive School Culture:** A shared Drew experience enhances unity and pride among staff and students alike.
- **Improved Academic Outcomes:** Students who feel included and supported tend to perform better and stay more engaged in school.
- **Less Administrative Burden:** Reduced time spent managing waivers, exceptions, or alternative plans due to cost limitations.

Benefits for the Community

- When cost is no longer a barrier, the **Drew experience becomes truly transformative** for every student—not just some. That’s when the community thrives together.
- **Stronger Future Leaders:** Equitably enriched students grow into empowered, engaged citizens who give back to their community.

- **Greater Social Cohesion:** Inclusive access to Drew experiences fosters unity, understanding, and shared pride across neighborhoods.
- **Positive School-Community Relations:** A school that invests in all children builds trust and deeper partnerships with local organizations and stakeholders.
- **Most Competitive and Qualified Teams and Organizations:** Removing financial barriers to participation levels the playing field so that the most qualified students can participate in activities.