

Drake Day One

Tamalpais Union High School District
Sir Francis Drake High School

Kendall Galli and David Rice

Drake High School prides itself on students feeling connected to their school and their community. One of the key factors to helping create this positive and collaborative atmosphere is the culture that is created the first day of school.

The first day of school is designed to support the school wide character foundation – P.I.R.A.T.E.S. This stands for Passion – Integrity – Reflections – Attitude – Teamwork – Empathy – Scholarship. During the first day of school, all staff and students participate in activities tied to this vision and centered on a theme that differs each year. Freshman Orientation is held on Day One with expert guidance from upper class LINK leaders. In upper division classes, teachers do not go over their curricular syllabus, but rather lead student in activities attempting to create a positive culture.

The goal of Day One is to celebrate the beginning of a new year. Staff and the administrative team get the student excited about coming back, welcome the new students, and set a tone that contributes to a positive, student-focused school culture. Hundreds of parents are on campus volunteering with our activities and coordinating a school wide lunch enjoyed on our lawn.

Day one often includes guest speakers that inspire the theme, inclusive activities such as entire class drumming circles or singing, small group class activities, trust activities, and community art installations. A powerful moment each year is when the incoming freshmen walk through a path of the entire school (sophomores-seniors) clapping and cheering and welcoming the newest Class to our DHS family. Day One concludes with a Sea of Green assembly where students are given a free green Pirate t-shirt before they enter the gym. School spirit and pride are displayed at the assembly before students leave for the day.



Day One at Drake sets up the theme and culture for the rest of the year. It enriches the experience for all students and staff. In addition, it helps make freshmen feel welcome and connected the first time they come on campus.