

CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

The text below contains the National Constitution under which all NHS chapters operate. Local chapters of NHS are given authority to vary from some sections of this document; for example, they may set the Scholarship requirement at a level above the stated 3.0 national minimum cumulative average standard as long as this new standard is applied fairly and consistently. The limits of the chapter's authority are described in the national handbook, a copy of which has been provided to the chapter adviser of every duly affiliated chapter (fall 1997). Additional copies of the handbook can be obtained by contacting the NHS Sales office toll free at (866) 647-7253.

ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the National Honor Society of Secondary Schools (NHS).

Section 2. The purpose of this organization shall be to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote leadership, and to develop character in the students of secondary schools.

Section 3. The NHS shall be under the sponsorship and supervision of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1537.

ARTICLE II: THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

Section 1. The control of this organization shall be vested in the National Council.

Section 2. The National Council shall consist of eleven members appointed by the Board of Directors of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, one representative chosen from each of the NASSP administrative regions, two at-large principals or assistant principals (from any region), and the NJHS Representative, from a middle level school. Regional representatives shall alternate terms between principals and advisers according to the schedule developed by the national office. The executive director of NASSP shall be an ex-officio member of the National Council and shall serve as treasurer of NHS. The director of the NASSP Department of Student Activities shall be an ex-officio member and shall serve as secretary of the National Council.

Section 3. Members shall be appointed for a term of no more than three years.

Section 4. A simple majority of members shall constitute a quorum of the National Council. *[Structure amended December 2001.]*

ARTICLE III: STATE/REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. Local chapters may choose to organize state associations. The state principals' associations may form regional associations as defined by NASSP.

Section 2. Any state or regional association of National Honor Society chapters shall conform to this Constitution and shall work with the NASSP Student Activities office in furthering the purpose of this organization.

Section 3. All state and/or regional associations shall be affiliated with the National Honor Society.

Section 4. The state and/or regional affiliate shall not serve as an appeal board for local chapter nonselection or dismissal cases.

Section 5. Bylaws of the state or regional associations must be approved by the secretary of the National Honor Society (the NASSP Director of Student Activities) and must be consistent with this Constitution.

ARTICLE IV: LOCAL CHAPTERS

Section 1. Any secondary public school is eligible to apply for a charter for a local chapter. Nonpublic secondary schools accredited or approved by state departments of education or by accrediting agencies approved by the National Council are eligible to apply for a charter for a local chapter. Each school shall have its own chapter except in cases where a school's size precludes the formation of a full Faculty Council. In such cases, a chapter can be shared as long as all other constitutional requirements can be met. A middle level unit in the same building with a high school unit will be appropriate cause for two separate chapters (one for the National Junior Honor Society and the one for the National Honor Society). *[See page 24 of the 1997 national handbook for clarification of this last provision of Section 1. Ed.]*

Section 2. Each chapter shall pay a chartering fee determined by the National Council.

Section 3. Each school with a chapter shall pay an annual affiliation fee recommended by the National Council and approved by the NASSP Board of Directors.

Section 4. The annual individual member dues paid to a chapter or state affiliate, if any, shall not exceed ten dollars inclusively. The exact amount shall be determined by the executive committee of the chapter and shall be subject to the approval of the chapter membership.

Section 5. Duly chartered local chapters shall conform to this Constitution as set forth by the National Council. Failure to do so may result in the loss of the charter.

ARTICLE V: THE PRINCIPAL

Section 1. The principal shall reserve the right to approve all activities and decisions of the chapter.

Section 2. The principal shall annually appoint a member of the faculty as chapter adviser, who may serve consecutive terms.

Section 3. The principal shall annually appoint a Faculty Council composed of five members of the school's faculty who may serve consecutive terms.

Section 4. The principal shall receive appeals in cases of nonselection of candidates, and the disciplining or dismissal of members.

ARTICLE VI: THE CHAPTER ADVISER

Section 1. The chapter adviser shall be responsible for the direct, day-to-day supervision of the chapter and act as liaison between faculty, administration, students, and community.

Section 2. The chapter adviser shall maintain files on membership, chapter history, activities, and financial transactions. The chapter adviser shall send the annual report to the national office. *(Note: Here is the current version of the Annual Report Form [\[link\]](#).)*

Section 3. The chapter adviser shall regularly review each member for compliance with Society standards and obligations.

Section 4. The chapter adviser shall help the chapter officers understand and carry out their duties.

Section 5. The chapter adviser shall be an ex-officio, non-voting, sixth member of the Faculty Council.

Section 6. The chapter adviser shall be a member of the faculty, appointed annually by the principal, and may serve consecutive terms.

ARTICLE VII: THE FACULTY COUNCIL

Section 1. The Faculty Council shall consist of five voting faculty members appointed annually by the principal. The chapter adviser shall be an ex-officio, non-voting, sixth member of the Faculty Council. No principal or assistant principal may be included on the Faculty Council. *(See commentary on pages 18 and 19 of the 1997 national handbook regarding the functions of the Faculty Council.)*

Section 2. The term of the Faculty Council shall be one year. Members may be appointed to consecutive terms.

Section 3. The Faculty Council shall meet at least once a year to review the procedures of the chapter, select members, and to consider nonselection, dismissal, other disciplinary actions, and warning cases.

Section 4. The Faculty Council will develop and revise, when necessary, all chapter procedures for selection, discipline, and dismissal of members, all of which must remain in compliance with the national guidelines.

ARTICLE VIII: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in local chapters is an honor bestowed upon a student. Selection for membership is by a Faculty Council and is based on outstanding scholarship, character, leadership, and service. Once selected, members have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate these qualities.

Section 2. Membership shall be known as active, honorary, and graduate. Active members shall become graduate members at graduation. Graduate members shall have no voice or vote in chapter affairs.

Section 3. The Faculty Council shall reserve the right to award honorary membership to school officials, principals, teachers, NHS advisers, adults, students with disabilities, or foreign exchange students in recognition of achievement and/or outstanding service rendered to the school in keeping with the purposes of the National Honor Society. Honorary members shall have no voice or vote in chapter affairs.

Section 4. Candidates become members when inducted at a special ceremony.

Section 5. Members who are seniors in good standing are eligible to be nominated by their chapters to compete in the National Honor Society Scholarship Program.

Section 6. An NHS member who transfers to another school and brings a letter from the principal or chapter adviser to the new school adviser shall be accepted automatically as a member in the new school's chapter. Transfer members must meet the new chapter's standards within one semester in order to retain membership.

Section 7. Members who resign or are dismissed are never again eligible for membership or its benefits.

ARTICLE IX: SELECTION OF MEMBERS

Section 1. To be eligible for membership the candidate must be a member of those classes (sophomore, junior, senior) designated as eligible in the chapter bylaws. (Freshmen [*ninth graders*] are not eligible.) Candidates must have been in attendance at the school the equivalent of one semester. (*Note: Some candidates may be ineligible for induction because of the semester ruling. Many students, including students of military parents, are required to move with parents or guardians that have transferred in their work. The present school principal should seek a recommendation from the previous school principal pursuant to the candidate's selection. On the basis of the recommendation of the previous principal, the Faculty Council may waive the semester regulation.*)

Section 2. The national minimum standard for scholarship shall be a cumulative scholastic average of at least 85 percent, B, or 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or the equivalent standard of excellence. Candidates shall then be evaluated on the basis of service, leadership, and character. (*Note: Local chapters may raise the cumulative GPA standard above the national minimum, apply it fairly and consistently, and include this standard in their locally published selection procedures.* -Ed.)

Section 3. The selection of each member to the chapter shall be by a majority vote of the Faculty Council.

Section 4. A description of the selection procedure shall be published in an official school publication that is widely available in a timely fashion to all students and parents of the school. The selection procedure shall be determined by the Faculty Council and shall be consistent with the rules and regulations of NHS.

Section 5. The National Council and NASSP shall not review the judgment of the Faculty Council regarding selection of individual members to local chapters.

ARTICLE X: DISCIPLINE and DISMISSAL

Section 1. The Faculty Council in compliance with the rules and regulations of the National Honor Society shall determine the procedure for dismissal. A written description of the dismissal procedure shall be available to interested parties. (*Note: Faculty Councils can consider disciplinary actions that are less severe than dismissal if circumstances warrant.* -Ed.)

Section 2. Members who fall below the standards that were the basis for their selection shall be promptly warned in writing by the chapter adviser and given a reasonable amount of time to correct the deficiency, except that in the case of flagrant violation of school rules or the law, a member does not necessarily have to be warned.

Section 3. The Faculty Council shall determine when an individual has exceeded a reasonable number of warnings.

Section 4. In all cases of pending dismissal, a member shall have a right to a hearing before the Faculty Council. (*Note: This hearing is required and is considered "due process" for all members* -Ed.)

Section 5. For purposes of dismissal, a majority vote of the Faculty Council is required.

Section 6. A member who has been dismissed may appeal the decision of the Faculty Council to the principal and thereafter under the same rules for disciplinary appeals in the school district. (*Amended May 2004*)

Section 7. The National Council and NASSP shall hear no appeals in dismissal cases.

(*Note: Please refer to Article VIII, Section 7 regarding the permanent consequences for members when dismissed.*)

ARTICLE XI: CHAPTER OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the chapter, their duties, and the method of their election shall be determined by the members of the chapter, approved by the Faculty Council and the principal, and described in the chapter bylaws.

Section 2. New officers shall be installed at a special ceremony.

ARTICLE XII: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The executive committee shall consist of the officers of the chapter and the chapter adviser.

Section 2. The executive committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the chapter between its business meetings, make recommendations to the chapter, and determine and perform such other duties as are specified in the chapter bylaws. All actions and recommen-

ations of the executive committee shall be subject to the review of the chapter membership.

Section 3. The executive committee shall have the responsibility for ensuring that chapter activities and procedures follow school policy and regulations. (*Note: This section is generally viewed to include chapter activities except those with regards to the selection, discipline, and dismissal of members which are the sole domain of the chapter's Faculty Council per the provisions of Article VII, Section 4.* -Ed.)

ARTICLE XIII: MEETINGS

Section 1. Each chapter shall have regular meetings during the school year on days designated by the executive committee and in accordance with school policy and regulations.

Section 2. The regularity of the meetings (i.e., weekly, monthly, bimonthly) shall be designated in the chapter bylaws.

Section 3. The chapter president or other designated student leader may call special meetings approved by the executive committee.

Section 4. Chapters shall conduct meetings according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* in all points not expressly provided for in this Constitution or the chapter bylaws.

ARTICLE XIV: ACTIVITIES

Section 1. Each chapter shall determine one or more service projects for each year.

Section 2. All members shall regularly participate in these projects.

Section 3. These projects shall have the following characteristics: Fulfill a need within the school or community; Have the support of the administration and the faculty; Be appropriate and educationally defensible; Be well planned, organized, and executed.

Section 4. Each member shall have the responsibility for choosing and participating in an individual service project that reflects his or her particular talents and interests. This is in addition to the chapter projects to which all members contribute.

Section 5. Each chapter shall publicize its projects in a positive manner.

ARTICLE XV: OFFICIAL INSIGNIA

Section 1. This organization shall have an official emblem selected by the National Council. The emblem shall be uniform.

Section 2. The distribution of the emblem and the rules for its use shall be under the exclusive control of the National Council.

Section 3. Each active, graduate, or honorary member in good standing with the chapter shall be entitled to wear this emblem.

Section 4. Any member who resigns or is dismissed shall return the emblem to the chapter adviser.

Section 5. All insignia must be procured from the national secretary of the National Honor Society, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA, 20191. All insignia are filed for registration with the United States Patent and Trademark Office and may not be copied by anyone.

Section 6. The motto of the National Honor Society shall be *Noblesse Oblige*.

Section 7. The official colors of the National Honor Society shall be blue and gold.

Section 8. A graduate member may purchase a replacement for a lost emblem by verifying membership to the national office.

ARTICLE XVI: BYLAWS

Section 1. Each chapter shall write bylaws to amplify sections of this Constitution and to clarify operating procedures of the chapter. Bylaws do not need the approval of the National Council but must be consistent with this Constitution.

Section 2. The chapter bylaws shall contain information concerning the election and duties of officers, the schedule of meetings, member obligations, dues, and the like. (*Note: See the national handbook and the "Adviser Zone" at www.nhs.us for additional information regarding the appropriate content of chapter bylaws.*)

ARTICLE XVII: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any meeting of the National Council or by mail by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the National Council.

NHS National Constitution

Revised 2005 (based on approved amendments adopted 1992–2005). © 2005 NASSP

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Individuals wishing to purchase a copy of the *National Honor Society Handbook*, containing this constitution as well as all of the guidelines for establishing and running a chapter, can contact the sales office at the national office for the purchase, or check out our most recent catalogs found under the "Leadership Store" tab on www.nhs.us. Phone: 703-860-0200 or toll free 866-647-7253 (request the sales office from the operator); E-mail: sales@nhs.us

Member schools are asked to have their school affiliation number when placing orders for this and all Honor Society items to speed up the ordering process and to guarantee the application of appropriate member discounts.

Schools wishing to establish a chapter of NHS or NJHS can obtain a charter application from "Starting a Chapter" on the Web site, or contact the national membership office by calling 703-860-7214, or e-mailing nhs@nhs.us.

The National Honor Society was established in 1921 and is proudly sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).