

Constitution

2021-2022

Grades

- Minimum requirement for active members is a 3.2 overall average with a minimum of 3.0 in a 9-week period.
- A student whose required grade average fall below the 3.0 for a 9-weeks is suspended from competitions, meetings, and practices for a full 9-week period. Students can return to the team after the next 9-week's report card shows that both the overall GPA is a 3.2 or above and the new nine weeks is a 3.0 minimum. A student whose overall average falls below a 3.2 is suspended from the team until a 9-week report shows that the average has gone up to the requirement.
- Students who earn a D or an F in any subject(s) for a 9-week period - even if other appropriate grade averages have been met - will result in suspension from all speech and debate activities until the teacher and Volpe agree that the student has shown a marked improvement in the subject.
- Teachers are advised that they may report to speech and debate coaches that a student is not meeting standards at any time during the 9-weeks. The student will immediately be suspended from the team, and the teacher and Volpe together will determine when the student can return to the team. This will be considered on a case-by-case and student-by-student basis.

Attendance

- Speech participants are expected to attend meetings and practices.
- When tournaments have limitation to the number of students in an event, preference will be given to students who attend practices and meetings. An unexcused absence from a meeting / practice that is declared "mandatory" by the coaches will result in temporary suspensions.
- Contact the coach before an announced mandatory meeting if other conflicts occur. Try to give notice at least 24 hours in advance.
- An absence from a mandatory meeting / practice is excusable under the following conditions:
- Illness (coach's discretion), death in the family, job, family vacation, or other extracurricular activities (coach's discretion).
- Students choose the tournaments that they attend with the exception of district (state-qualifying and national qualifying) competitions. Once the student registers for a tournament or is assigned to a district tournament, it is mandatory to participate in that tournament.
- Unusual circumstances will be considered by the coach, but in most cases, an unexcused absence from a tournament will result in suspension from the team.
- Last minute notice of withdrawal from a tournament - fewer than seven days – is excusable under the following circumstances: Illness where it is impossible to compete, or death or serious illness in the immediate family.
- Students who miss a tournament without an approved, legitimate excuse are responsible for paying judging and registration fees (Minimum \$105)..
- The purpose for competing all year is to prepare to compete at the state and national levels. A student who qualifies to the state and/or national tournament(s) and cannot or does not attend is expected to pay all of the expenses for the speaker who was declared to be an alternate. This includes the registration fee, transportation and lodging costs, and judging expenses. Students are excused only if they are so ill that it is impossible to compete or if there is a death or serious injury in the family.
- If a team member is unable to compete at a regular tournament due to a condition already listed, then they must notify the coach by email an hour before the scheduled start or departure time for the tournament. Failure to immediately notify the coach results in the absence being considered not excusable.
- The school district attendance policy as outlined in the district's eligibility requirements for extracurricular activities and will be in effect for all team members. This includes attendance before a tournament and attendance upon returning from a tournament. (If students get out of school to attend a tournament, they must be in school for the entire day leading up to the dismissal).

Conduct

- Any member with conduct unbecoming of a speech and debate team member – at a tournament or in any class or school event - may be suspended or expelled depending on the offense. This includes rehearsal and tournament conduct, and anything that is a school policy violation even if the violation is not related to the team. Members of the speech and debate team are a part of a larger honor society. Students caught cheating in any class or "making up" research or sources are automatically expelled from the team. All other honor code / discipline infractions will be considered for suspension / expulsion.
- The members will conduct themselves with proper conduct and under school policies at all forensics activities. Violations, at determined by the coach, are likely to be met with suspension from the team.
- The coach is solely responsible for determining the penalty depending on the infraction. Administrators will be consulted before any final decision is made.
- While participating, all rules and procedures outlined in the NAI / NASH / NACA Student Handbooks, as well as the North Allegheny School District Code of Conduct, apply

- A student who uses the internet or any other vehicle to show blatant disrespect to teammates or contestants from other schools will be expelled from the team immediately. Again - This includes the disrespect of fellow team members, students on another team, or coaches and / or judges from any school, including North Allegheny. Bullying or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Transportation

- Students must take the bus or van to any in-person tournaments where they will be competing. No student will be allowed to leave a tournament early unless a written permission request is given to the coach two days in advance, and the reasoning behind the excuse must be approved by both the coach and the principal. No student will be allowed to leave with anyone but a legal guardian. The coach will consider emergencies on the day of the tournament.
- Students are responsible for their own transportation at some closer or smaller tournaments. These will be announced well in advance.

Online Tournaments

- For online tournaments, there will be a link for our opening team meeting, and a coach will also take attendance at final award assemblies. Even if you did not advance to a final round, the expectation is that you will be in the final assembly.

Points

- Points are turned into the national office at the coach's discretion. Points for the National Speech and Debate Association's district and national tournaments are submitted at the discretion of the national office.

Overnight Tournaments

- Students are expected to follow all rules for out-of-district tournaments as outlined in the North Allegheny Guidelines for Overnight Tournaments and Common Sense

Dress Code

- Trophy / District Tournaments - Students are expected to wear black, navy, or dark gray suits. Black, navy, or dark gray slacks with a coordinating jacket will also be accepted. Appropriate ties are mandatory for male students. Professional business attire. Appropriate shoes are mandatory. The coach will decide before leaving for an in-person tournament or in the opening meeting online if the proper attire is not being worn. Violations could cause removal from a tournament and count as an unexcused absence. This appropriate attire is expected for the entire tournament.
- If the coach announces that a tournament is a festival or practice tournament, students may follow the code above, or they may wear "business-casual" attire. Dress pants (or skirt), "nicer" shirt (no t-shirts), and "nicer" shoes (no sports shoes).
- Students who are acting as judges at novice tournaments should follow the guidelines above for festival or practice tournaments.

Honor Cords

- To wear honor cords at graduation, students must meet all of the following criteria:
- Have a GPA of 3.6 or higher
- Have a minimum of 250 National Forensic League (NFL) competition points, with at least 100 competition points earned during senior year
- Have participated in six of the regular season tournaments. Regular season is defined to be trophy tournaments (not practice tournaments or qualifying tournaments) during the year. One – and only one - national tournament during the regular season can be substituted for a trophy tournament.
- Participate in both the state and NSDA qualifying tournaments if selected, and students are expected to perform to the best of their ability.
- Participate in the PHSSL state, NSDA national, or NCFL national tournaments if the student qualifies. (Honor cords are not awarded to students who opt-out of attending the state and NSDA national qualifying tournaments). Followed all the rules of the North Allegheny Speech and Debate constitution for his entire career on the speech and debate team.
- All students who competitively speak and / or debate and earns 100 competition points during senior year will receive **NFL Seal** for their diplomas.

Trophies

- Any trophies won at tournaments that have costs covered by the school (NSDA nationals, states, local tournaments) are the property of the school. These trophies are expected to be given to the school for permanent display in the trophy case. Trophies won at local tournaments are returned at the end of the year. NSDA and state top awards will usually be engraved with the name(s) of the student(s) and kept in the speech and debate trophy case.

All students representing the speech and debate team are to uphold all rules in this Constitution.

Guidelines for Overnight Tournaments

Students are entirely responsible for all out-of-town tournaments (all arrangements include travel, judging and chaperones, hotel, and registration), and the costs associated with the previous list except the PHSSL state tournament and the NSDA national tournament. If the team attends the CFL national tournament, the coaches will arrange travel, but students are responsible for the costs.

Parents should direct all correspondence about these student-organized tournaments to the students who deems themselves in charge of that event.

Rules still apply at these tournaments. Students who arrange these tournaments should still create the following for parents:

A complete schedule

List of chaperones

Complete transportation information

Complete lodging information

Emergency phone number

When a chaperone reports misconduct to the coach, the coach will determine appropriate repercussions, which could include suspension or expulsion from the team and / or school. Violating curfew is a serious offense and will be treated as such.

Students who choose to violate rules on trips that have the "North Allegheny" name attached to them – student-organized or coach-organized – can expect to also have immediate consequences for their actions. In most cases, parents will be required to provide immediate transportation for the student to return home.

Graduated seniors who attend the NSDA national tournament and violate any rules will immediately be removed from all parts of the tournament. No more competition, hotel, or transportation. In the event that an infraction occurs, the school will not refund the cost of flights or any other expense incurred.

Students must attend general team meetings and meals

Students are not permitted to leave the hotel unless from the chaperone in charge has given permission to do so.

Common Sense Expectations For Travel And Hotels

Respect the rights of other hotel guests. They may retire early and / or prefer peaceful moments in their rooms. Walk calmly and speak softly in the halls; running and yelling will cause annoyance

Do not let doors slam closed behind you; guide them slowly until they shut silently

Do not play against the walls, whether you are in your room or walking the halls - For obvious reasons, this is inappropriate

Keep room talk and TV volume at a low level--you may like watching videos, but your neighbor may not share in your love of loud music / movies.

If checking in late at the hotel, realize that the en masse move-in will cause quite a bit of noise, so be especially civil and quiet

Adjust overall volume levels to the time; the later it gets the more tones should be muffled.

Set a wake-up call *and* your alarm clock *and* your phone.

In a room of four, you should get up at least 1.5 hours before departure time.

The person sleeping nearest the phone and clock should be the most responsible person in the room. Someone who is likely to answer / respond then stay awake so that no one is late.

SLEEP - Sleep is important. Without it, your energy is lessened, making your performance less than what it could be. An un-energetic performance could be your downfall in a tough round. Students from the nations' most successful NSDA schools get their rest.

CURFEW - Curfew will be set to insure your success and safety - and your coaches' and parents' sanity. Violations will result in immediate calls to parents and disciplinary action--a school detention, removal from the tournament and / or team, all decided as parents are making arrangements for your immediate departure – You will not be permitted to stay at the tournament.

BEHAVIOR - At tournaments, you are held to standards that are above the school's behavior code. Civil decorum is expected; none other will be acceptable. No trashy language, no ripped anything, no midnight rendezvous with paramours, no disrespectful behavior to judges, coaches, chaperones; no altercations with teammates, no smoking. Violations will result in calls to parents and any of penalties mentioned under CURFEW. The best behavior is the one that will make you a leader, a person who garners respect because they give it.

CLEANING - Each night, you should do general cleaning in your room. Toss trash in cans, fold clothing, put used towels neatly in one place in the bathroom, place pizza boxes outside the door, and so on. Maids have several obligations; but fishing through refuse and clothing in order to clean is not one of them. In the past maids have refused to clean rooms whose floors were littered with debris, worn clothing; and rooms that smelled.

ROOM SERVICE - If you order room service, pay with cash. Do not bill the room. When finished eating, place the tray outside of the room.

THE LAST NIGHT - Please pack before you go to sleep, especially when the vans must be loaded before leaving for the last day of the competition.

THE FINAL CHECK - Before departure check all drawers and search under beds, behind doors and shower curtains, and inside closets for left items. If you find something that you don't recognize, simply throw it in a suitcase and handle the issue later.

PROBLEMS - If you break something in the room, notify a chaperone immediately. Of course, you should not be doing anything that would lead to the shattering of bed boards, doors, TVs, and windows. Be aware that you will be responsible for any damages that happen in your room.

TIP - Consider leaving \$10 to \$20 tip for the maid, especially if your messiness may have given the hotel unnecessary and extra work, adding time to an already busy schedule.

BUS-VAN-PLANE ETIQUETTE 1. Bring work or individual music players. 2. No foul language--no loud volumes. 3. No horse-play. 4. Bring snacks, but no smelly food—stinky chips, etc. 5. Always clean up your trash—instantly. 6. Bring tasteful videos. 7. Feel free to sleep, schmooze, study, and rehearse. 8. Appropriate attire should always be worn 9. Totally respect each other, the drivers, the chaperones

Common Sense Guide To Tournament Behavior

At local and away tournaments, you are held to standards that are above the school's behavior code. See the constitution for consequences.

DRESS

Look your best during all rounds and upscale casual at other times.

If rain is predicted you must bring an umbrella.

You should continue wearing dress clothes for the awards assembly.

DECORUM

Be professional leaders.

Be supportive listeners in rounds.

Act maturely outside of rounds—you are judged at all times.

No foul language, no nasty remarks, no thuggish sounds and no piercing shrieks.

Never poor mouth a contestant or judge.

Bring all issues immediately to a coach.

Win/lose gracefully.

Do not approach a judge to ask for a reason for a decision unless you have been told to do so by that judge

PREP

Find your rooms ahead of time.

Arrive at your rooms 20 min early.

Check yourself in a restroom prior to competing. Carry a comb, water and mouthwash (or a toothbrush and paste).

OBSERVING

You will watch break rounds if you do not advance. No exceptions.

Code of Honor

“As a student or coach member of the National Speech & Debate Association, I pledge to uphold the highest standards of humility, equity, integrity, respect, leadership, and service in pursuit of excellence.”

Humility: A member does not regard oneself more highly than others. Regardless of a person’s level of success, an individual always looks beyond oneself to appreciate the inherent value of others.

Equity: A member respects individuals and their individual differences as well as fosters equity, diversity, and inclusion. A member promotes empowerment for people from all backgrounds, including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

Integrity: A member is honest, ethical, and adheres to the competition and conduct rules of the organization. A member follows the NSDA discrimination and harassment policy and abides by the rules of their schools, tournaments, and localities.

Respect: A member demonstrates civil discourse in their interactions with others. A member maintains and contributes to a safe space and welcoming environment for all.

Leadership: A member is aware their words and actions influence others. A member commits to thoughtful and meaningful words and actions that reflect NSDA core values.

Service: A member exercises their talents to provide service to peers, community, and the activity. At all times a member is prepared to work constructively to improve the lives of others.

In order for your child to compete in forensics, we must have this form on file –

Speech and Debate team member (Please print) _____

I understand that the National Forensics League / National Speech and Debate Association is an organization for honor students, and my child is expected to abide by all the rules established by the constitution of the North Allegheny Speech and Debate Team.

I further understand that students may at times address adult issues. In the rhetoric events, such as congress, extemporaneous speaking, and debate, the issues are sometimes of controversial nature. Students may discuss issues like abortion, capital punishment, homosexuality / sodomy laws, et al. If at any time, a parent or student is opposed to debating a planned issue, the student does not have to compete in these rounds (for example – Lincoln Douglas Debate has tackled the issue of capital punishment. Because of religious, moral, et al, beliefs, a student does not have to debate any issue. This decision is made by the parent and the student, and both are responsible for checking on the current topics on the NSDA website.)

In interpretation events, North Allegheny students may select material from a published work that if used in its entirety could / would be deemed inappropriate for inclusion in the North Allegheny School District curriculum. The North Allegheny Speech and Debate Team and its sponsors will not prohibit the use of excerpts from published works simply because the work in its entirety could/would be deemed inappropriate for use in the classroom; however, students will be expected to edit and eliminate any and all topics / words that could / would be considered inappropriate / unacceptable for presentation within the classrooms of the Intermediate and / or Senior High Schools.

Parental requests to prohibit their child from choosing selections from any work will be honored without debate by the Coaches and District Administration. It is the responsibility of the parent to read the material that the child is presenting to make this decision.

North Allegheny Coaches have no control over the content of presentations made by students from other schools and, therefore, cannot control what North Allegheny students may hear that may be in direct contradiction to the standards established for their own presentations.

We, the parent(s) / guardian(s) and student have read and understand the expectations in the team constitution.

Signatures _____
Parent / Guardian Student

Date _____

This form is good for one school year.