

# Northview Speech and Debate Handbook



2023-2024

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**PHILOSOPHY:**

The competitive debate opportunities are available to all students. Students choose to participate and may also choose their level of their participation. A sincere effort will be made to provide appropriate opportunities to every deserving student at every level of competition. However, it is important to remember that forensics is a **competitive activity**, and the most successful students will be those that exhibit intelligence, hard work, determination, motivation, and natural skill.

Participation on the NHS debate team is designed to yield the following benefits:

- 1) offer student an environment where knowledge, effort, and intellectual skills are promoted and reinforced
- 2) provide basic and advanced instruction for debate students in argumentation theory, cross examination, analysis, and synthesis of ideas
- 3) provide frequent practice and tournament opportunities
- 4) provide the opportunity to work as part of a team of students and teachers/coaches, emphasizing mutual respect and support for the experiences of all participants
- 5) provide support for the forensics activity (co-curricular and extra-curricular) in the state of Georgia.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Northview Speech and Debate team cannot operate without parent involvement over the course of the season. With the large number of trips and tournaments attended by the team over the course of the year, it is crucial that open communication is established between coaches and parents. As a part of building a culture of parental involvement, we are asking that parents step up and participate regularly with the team. Parental involvement can include the following:

- **Carpools-** Assistance with team travel to and from tournaments including coordinated carpools with multiple students to help ease travel burdens and costs for all team members.
- **Volunteering to judge speech and debate events-** you are all more qualified to judge speech and debate events than you might think. We spend an extraordinary amount of money on judge payments every year and would like to be able to reduce those overall costs by having parents judge rounds. Judging is also a great opportunity to see competition in action which is a great way to grow your appreciation for the activity your student spends time with. Additionally, volunteering to judge reduces your student's cost for attending the tournament. We waive tournament fees for any student who is able to provide a parent volunteer for a whole tournament.
- **Volunteering at the Clash of the Titans Tournament** which we will be hosting at Northview on the weekend of December 8th, 2023. Volunteer opportunities will include set up, coordinating the concessions, directing participants around the building and additional needs as they arise during the tournament. It is our expectation that all team families help with the Clash of the Titans Tournament in some capacity.
- **Various one time opportunities-** Coordinating parent meetings, assisting with fundraising, helping organize the end of the year banquet are all additional needs of the team for which we welcome your support.

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

**Registration:** Tournaments will be registered for online through an electronic form. The coach will enter students into the tournament on Tabroom. Payments for tournaments will be made online on the Northview School Website under Online School Payments/Debate and under Coach Strothmann's name. The amount of payment needed and a brief description of event will be listed. Once a tournament payment has been submitted, there will be no refunds unless the tournament host or school officials cancel the tournament.

No refunds will be issued for students that are removed from the team because of a rule violation, a personal schedule change, or for failing to meet the academic requirements. No late payments for tournaments will be allowed. If payment for tournament is not made and/or contact with coaches haven't been made before the tournament payment deadline, you will be removed from the tournament. Late drops may incur additional penalties.

**Students will not be able to attend a tournament if they have not paid their dues, tournament fees and travel expenses ahead of time. Additionally, if a student falls behind on payments for previous tournaments, they will not be able to attend the next tournament until the previous one is paid for.**

**PROCEDURES:****Tournament and Travel Procedures**

Students compete in all events by preparing at school and then attending tournaments held at other schools. Tournaments are usually two-day events that begin Friday afternoon and continue on Saturday until the late afternoon or evening. Some Varsity tournaments extend to Sunday and Monday. Some novice tournaments are Saturday only. Please be sure to check with tabroom for most up to date tournament schedules. Coaches will provide itinerary schedules for travel tournaments. Students will be able to attend tournaments locally, in-state, and out-of-state. Travel will usually be by car, charter bus, plane, or subway.

Students will be responsible for registration fees, housing, travel, and material fees. These fees may be substantial if they require travel and lodging. We at Northview believe that money, however, should never be an impediment to debating; if assistance is required please speak to one of the coaches privately, and we can discuss what accommodations are needed to cover costs.

For many tournaments, there may be research requirements in order to be eligible to compete. If you are assigned to complete research for the team and that research is not completed on time, you may not be eligible for competition. When a student doesn't meet this obligation, it impacts the entire team.

Students and teachers should be on time to depart and return from tournaments. While we can tentatively establish return times, these times change on a moment to moment basis. **Tournaments run notoriously behind schedule and our departure is often dependent on how successful students are at the tournament. If a Northview debater has made it to the finals, we cannot leave before the tournament is over; whereas we could leave early if all Northview debaters are eliminated in the quarterfinals.** While coaches make every effort to inform parents in advance, it is **ultimately** the child's responsibility to relay changes back to parents. Phones are always available on campus and a number of students carry cell-phones.

Also, **if a student is not picked up or dropped off in a timely fashion, that student may be temporarily suspended from future competition.** Coaches are required, by state law, to wait with students until a parent or guardian arrives. Excessive tardiness to be picked up is unfair to coaches, who give their time to this activity. All students should be picked up within **15 minutes** of the pre-designated time.

Parents will be notified of the tentative calendar of tournaments at the beginning of the year. JV/Varsity members have two signup dates for tournaments, August 27<sup>th</sup> for Fall tournaments and November 19<sup>th</sup> for Spring Tournaments. Novices will sign up for two months at a time; September and October signup date is September 9, November and December signup date is October 21, January and February signup date is December 9, and March date is February 10<sup>th</sup>. Once the sign-up date has passed, students who have signed up are locked into participation. **If a student must cancel because of minor illness, poor grades, family concerns, too much homework, etc. the student will be responsible for non-refundable fees incurred by the team in securing that slot.** Additional consequences may also occur. Please see the section entitled CONSEQUENCES. Deaths in the family or illnesses warranting doctor intervention are excused from penalties. Because many tournaments limit the number of students we may bring (and sometimes they won't tell us this number until a few days before the tournament), it may be possible that a debater will not be able to attend that specific event; the coaches will attempt to notify students of this situation as early as possible.

The coach's decisions on tournament attendance are final. Students who compete at a tournament separate from the participation of the NHS debate team without the permission from coaches will be **EXPELLED** from the team.

For in-person tournaments, a tournament information sheet given out the week of the tournament listing the tournament specifics. Tournament specifics include: location of tournament, approximate arrival and

departure times, costs, transportation information, emergency contact information and lodging specifics (if necessary). While we endeavor to provide contact phone numbers in advance, this is not always feasible. We encourage all students to carry a cell-phone for such times. Coach's and chaperone's cell phone numbers are always provided and available.

Some tournaments will require that students arrange their own transportation to and from an event. These are usually tournaments occurring in the local area or tournaments only occurring on Saturdays. **No student under the age of 18 is allowed to drive themselves to or from a tournament, under any circumstances.**

**All members are expected to help with the Titan Scrimmage and the Clash of the Titan Tournament if they are held.**

**GENERAL TEAM RULES AND POLICIES:**

1. Partners: For partner assignments in policy and public forum debate, student preference will be considered when possible. Partner assignments are assigned based on a combination of student preference, work ethic, skill, and personality. Coaches, however, make final partnership decisions. Those decisions are made for the benefit of both individuals and the team.
2. Academic requirements: Students are responsible for completing their school work. Some tournaments require the team to leave before school is out on a Friday. It is the student's responsibility to notify their teachers of absences at least one week prior to that absence. Students generally have a minimum of two weeks' notice of when they are going to a tournament. It is the student's responsibility to do their work and study ahead of time so conflicts do not occur when the tournament arrives. Debate work **SHOULD NEVER** take precedence over school work. If a student's average grade in a class drops to a 74% or below (ie: they are in danger of failing the class), they must notify their coach immediately. No students who are failing a class or do not meet the engagement expectations for the 2020-21 SY are eligible to compete, and any fees a student has paid for registration to a tournament might not be refundable, if the team is fined for their drop from the tournament.
3. Trip absences: No student may miss a class they are failing. If a student has a failing grade in a class, they are not allowed to miss that class until a note sent to one of the coaches from the teacher of that class indicating the student is passing that class. This note must be received by the coaches at the time they register for the tournament. There will be no exceptions.
4. Tournament Attendance: Students must attend at least two tournaments a semester and attend a minimum of three practices a month to be considered a member in good standing. In the fall, students must attend at least one tournament in September or October. **Students must also attend all State and National tournaments for which they are qualified.** Certain tournaments require specific eligibility.
5. Trophies: Trophies earned at GFCFA State Tournaments, NSDA Qualifiers, and National Tournaments such as Woodward, NSDA Nationals, NDCA Nationals, or the TOC help bring awareness of our team and its success to the rest of the school and the community. It is the support of the school and the community that is essential to our success. As a result, trophies earned belong to the team and the school. You may take the trophies home from a tournament to show to your family, but on the next school day you must bring your trophy to the main office where it will be displayed for about a week, and then put in our trophy case.
6. Zero-Tolerance: All school and GHSA rules will be enforced. In particular, please note the NHS Debate Team has a zero-tolerance policy toward drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. You will be considered in violation of these rules if you are using one of these substances or with someone who is using them.
7. Professionalism: As part of a competitive activity based on performance, it is important that team members display a certain level of professionalism. In general, a "business casual" wardrobe is expected. Students should reach out to division leaders if they have any specific questions regarding appropriate attire for tournaments.
8. Registration: Tournaments will be registered for online through an electronic form. The coach will enter students into the tournament on Tabroom. Payments for tournaments will be made online. Once a tournament payment has been submitted, there will be no refunds unless the tournament host or school officials cancel the tournament. No refunds will be issued for students that are removed from the team because of a rule violation, a personal schedule change, or for failing to meet the academic requirements. No late payments for tournaments will be allowed. If payment for tournament is not made and/or contact with coaches haven't been made before the tournament

payment deadline, you will be removed from the tournament. Late drops may incur additional penalties.

9. Independent Entries- The Northview Speech and Debate team attends a large number of tournaments each school year, often providing multiple opportunities to compete both locally and nationally. Given the number of tournaments already attended and to ensure that students are only attending tournaments where they have school-approved supervision, students are **not allowed** to enter **ANY** tournaments as an independent entry, even if they are registered with a different school name. This rule also applies to student-run tournaments on Tabroom. During the season, students are **not allowed** to attend student-run tournaments. Students must also **forfeit access** to any “Northview Independent” or other titled “school” registration accounts on Tabroom. Students found to either register as an independent entry or maintain an independent Tabroom account outside of the school’s knowledge will be immediately removed from the team.
10. Private Coaching- In order to help ensure that students engage with only school-approved personnel at a tournament and to comply with entourage rules for judging, the team will be monitoring the use of private coaching. While the team cannot prohibit families from choosing to hire private assistance for their students outside of practices, families who choose to hire a private coach or debate tutor should know that Northview prohibits private coaches from coaching students on competition weekends. This limitation includes private coaches watching students in competition rounds or helping students with pre-round preparation. If parents and students still desire to hire outside coaching, **parents** must email both coaches to let them know before the start of the season OR within a week of the hiring. **Any arguments/cards/evidence obtained as part of any private coaching or debate agreements must intentionally be made available and shared to all members of the Northview Debate Team.** Failure to comply with this rule will lead to removal from the team. Separately, students who choose to compete with private debate “clubs”, including but not limited to Ivy Bridge Academy, will not be allowed to compete with the Northview Speech and Debate team.
11. Equipment – Students may also be asked to comply with specific equipment for competing with the team in online speech and debate events. For example, students may be asked to purchase a headset with a microphone in debate events and a ring light for lighting in speech events. If a student has difficulties meeting this requirement, they should directly reach out to the coaches to discuss alternative solutions.
12. Online Accounts – Upon joining the Northview Speech and Debate Team, students should register for an account on Tabroom using a personal email address. Tabroom is where many online tournaments are hosted as well as the location of pairings for tournaments. Students will also be given windows to register for tournaments on tabroom.com. Students should also have an NSDA account. New students should sign up for an account with the same email as tabroom.com account.
13. Communication – The primary means of communication regarding tournament registration and check-ins will be through Slack. Students are expected to join the team’s Slack account. They should also check slack at least once a week, but often more. This will be the primary means of the coaches contacting students concerning speech/debate related issues.



**TRAVEL RULES:**

1. **Room Checks:** When staying in a hotel, students may not leave their room after they have been checked in for the night. The penalty for violating this rule will be a **SUSPENSION OF AT LEAST TWO TOURNAMENTS**. If the coaching staff is unable to determine which student left a particular room, all people in the room will be held responsible.
2. **Pairs:** It is impossible for Northview High School debate coaches and chaperones to visually supervise all students at all times. For example, when students are at tournaments, they are often scheduled in up to 30 different rooms of the host school. It is therefore imperative that at all times when we are away from Northview and not in competitive rounds, a student must always be in the presence of another Northview debater. This includes at tournaments, in a hotel, at the airport, etc.
3. **Room Assignments:** No student from Northview is allowed to be in the hotel room of someone of the opposite sex.
4. **Other Schools:** Northview students **are not allowed** to go into rooms of debaters from other schools and students from other schools are not allowed into Northview rooms. Socializing must take place in public areas.
5. **Behavior:** While students are at debate tournaments, they must behave as if they are at Northview. All rules that cover a student's behavior while at Northview, such as rules regarding drinking, smoking, etc. will be strictly enforced. If a student is found violating these rules, they will be sent home. It will be the parents' responsibility to make and pay for said arrangements. Students will also face discipline from the school in addition to severe consequences from the team. A second offense involving alcohol or tobacco by a student will result in immediate expulsion from the team. Any offense involving illicit drugs will result in immediate expulsion from the team.
6. **Eligibility:** Any debater in good standing (see general team rules and policies for definition of "good standing") is eligible to travel at the local and state level. National travel is available to members in good standing after students competing in four local/state tournaments. Exceptions in the case of partner debate may be made at the discretion of the coach.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR RULE/POLICY INFRACTIONS:**

Failure to perform tasks or meet responsibilities is a serious concern. When a student fails to complete an arranged research task or drops from a tournament at the last minute, their behavior affects everyone else on the team, and in some cases, other schools and debate teams. Due to the severity of an infraction or its repeated nature, consequences may be assigned to students. The consequence should be commensurate to the infraction. Consequences may include but are not limited to:

- Loss of non-refundable fees
- Compulsory judging obligations
- Suspension from 1 or more tournaments
- Suspension from the team for one semester
- Permanent expulsion from the team
- Coaches discretion

## ONLINE CODE OF ETHICS

After the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual tournaments were utilized with more frequency. As a result, the team has created a list of behavioral expectations and a code of ethics that all Northview students must adhere to while participating in digital practices and online tournaments. A student found to be in violation of this code of ethics will be considered for immediate removal from the team.

### All:

- Regardless of the change in format, all students attending practices or tournaments with the Northview HS Speech and Debate Team are expected to behave in accordance with Northview and GFCA rules and guidelines for behavior outlined in the earlier portions of this handbook. This expectation does not change given the change in format. Students suspected of harassment or bullying will be subject to a zero-tolerance policy that may result in their removal from the team if they are found in violation of these rules and expectations.

### During competitions:

- Students should not use the Internet or other electronic means to contact members of the coaching or judging staff, any debate friends from other schools, or members of the team that are not actively participating in the round before the round has officially ended. This rule includes: chatting or messaging, adding others to email chains or requesting assistance in any manner.
- Students should not enter a room alone with either a competitor or a judge prior to the round beginning. This rule is intended to keep team members safe from potential harassment or unsafe conditions. In the event that a student must enter a room alone to satisfy the requirements of a tournament's check-in requirements, the student should notify a coach and stay on a team meeting while entering their room so that a coach can choose to enter a room with the student.
- Students are expected to complete their own work absent any electronic assistance in the course of the round. This expectation prohibits students typing speeches on Google Docs while their partner is speaking, the use of a teleprompter in speech events, etc.
- Students will be expected to consistently fill out round reports after every debate in order to keep their teammates and the coaching staff updated on decisions and new arguments that are read in round. Given the non-traditional, online format for debates and the way this may limit direct communication with coaches at times during a tournament this is a **non-negotiable** expectation.

### Practice:

- Practices will consist of both synchronous team meetings where students will practice and learn live on call with their peers and asynchronous drills or speeches where students will be expected to practice the skills learned covered in synchronous meetings. Students will be expected to consistently attend both practice models in a timely fashion. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of synchronous meetings and participation in asynchronous practices will be considered in attendance taking for those practices where that model is used exclusively.
- Practices may include the use of breakout sessions where students work in small groups guided by student mentors without a coach present for the entirety of a session. Coaches will frequently check in on these sessions and students are expected to hold themselves to the same behavioral expectations they would have been held to at in-person practices.

**TEAM LEADERSHIP:**

Team members in good standing will be able to apply for leadership positions after the Tournament of Champions. Deadlines will be announced when the application is made available. There is no hierarchy on the leadership team. All leaders work under the direction of the coaches for the good of the team. Potential leaders will not apply for specific roles, but rather to be part of the leadership team. Coaches will identify skills and offer applicants roles. The skills required in competition and the skills required in leadership/teaching are quite different.

**Team Ambassador(s):** The team ambassadors lead the team. They are responsible for leading recruitment and for motivating team members. This person should be one of the most active members of the team. They are responsible for maintaining attendance or coordinating with the other team members to regulate this. They should support all other leadership roles.. They will be the first check on students who fail to attend meetings or complete research assignments. They should report students to coaches. Team Ambassador(s) are responsible for assisting all members of the team with managing the mental stress of participating in speech and debate. Additionally, the student in this position will focus on designing and executing methods of checking in with members of the team while debating.

**Media Lead(s):** The Media Lead oversees the team's photographic record, maintains the team's social media and website. They must ensure that pictures are taken at each speech debate tournament as well as during important social gatherings (e.g. Pizza & Prep, Northview's Tournament, etc.). The Media Lead will work with the Team Ambassador to maintain the school's NSDA membership by keeping track of award certificates and levels reached by each team member.

**Research Lead(s):** The Research Lead is required to be at both weekly meetings. In the rare case that this leader must miss a meeting, they should coordinate with another leadership member to substitute. The Research Captain oversees the generation of appropriate, timely, and properly cited research. They work with every division to ensure Northview is generating a wide breadth and depth of materials. This person should have some knowledge about all the topics and coordinate with captains to create research assignments. This individual should also coordinate the organization of the team Dropbox, ensure shared templates for card cutting, and maintain an understanding of what research is done by each division.

**Fundraising Liaison(s)-** The fundraising liaison will work with the coaches to coordinate at least two fundraising opportunities for the team. The fundraising liaisons will be in charge of coordinating as much of the logistics and planning as possible. All fundraising opportunities must be approved by the coaches prior to any work being done on completing the fundraising.

**Recruitment and Retention Coordinator(s)-** The Recruitment and Retention Coordinators are responsible for encouraging new member participation. The Recruitment and Retention Coordinators may have responsibilities including running a mentorship program for new members, maintaining open communication with River Trail Middle School regarding participation for Rising 9<sup>th</sup> grade students