

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY



James M. Bennett High School
Chapter of the National Honor Society
Bylaws

(Revised 30 January 2007)

Article I Name

Section 1 The name of this organization shall be known as the James M. Bennett High School Chapter of the National Honor Society.

Article II Purpose

Section 1 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 2 The NHS is under the sponsorship and supervision of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Article III Powers Vested in the Organization

Section 1 With regard to the powers of the principal (right to veto), the chapter advisor, and the faculty council, they shall be as stated in the Constitution of the National Honor Society (revised 1997).

Article IV Communication to students/parents/teachers

Each chapter needs to communicate standards and membership processes used by Wicomico County chapters of the National Honor Society to all stakeholders. To this end, the following resolution was adopted:

“Schools should post NHS information on their school website and in the school newsletter: Information should include but not necessarily be



Article XVI Amendment and Ratification of Bylaws

Section 1 Bylaws should be reviewed every three years or as needed.

Section 1.2 Proposed amendments or proposed revisions can be suggested by chapter members, Advisor(s) or members of the Faculty Advisory Council.

Section 1.3 Only the Faculty Advisory Council can vote on proposed amendments and revisions. A simple majority vote by the FAC and the matter must be referred to the Director of Secondary Education. Proposed amendment or revision can be implemented only when a consensus from all county chapters on the proposed change(s) is reached.

The National Honor Society is proudly sponsored by The National Association of Secondary School Principals. James M. Bennett High School is a duly-affiliated chapter of NHS which maintains policies and practices that are designed to prevent discrimination against any qualified candidate on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, and disability. This policy of nondiscrimination applies to all practices, including the selection, discipline, and dismissal of members.

Some material for this booklet and the bylaws was copied or adopted from the NHS Handbook, 16th Edition, 2005

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limited to the following: eligibility prerequisites, student forms, selection process, dismissal process, and membership obligations.

It was further recommended that, if possible, an abbreviated version be included in the student agenda with reference to the WCBOE's and schools' websites for more details."

Article V Membership

Section 1 Membership is an honor bestowed upon a student at an induction ceremony. Selection for membership is by a Faculty Advisory 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 Any NHS member, in good standing, who transfers into Wicomico County or between schools within the county, will be automatically accepted as a member in the new school's chapter provided that the member brings a verifiable letter from the former principal or chapter advisor to the new school advisor. Transfer members must meet the new chapter's standards within one semester in order to retain membership.

Section 3 Members who resign or are dismissed are never again eligible for membership or its benefits.

Article VI Selection Prerequisites

Only students with sophomore, junior, or senior status, as determined by credits (student must have

been registered in Wicomico County Public Schools for a minimum of one semester) and have a cumulative 3.4 GPA on an unweighted scale meet the academic criterion to be considered.

Article VII Selection Process

Section 1 Following the end of the first semester, each school will have an assembly/meeting to notify all students who meet the prerequisites eligible students will be given an application packet.

Section 2 Each school will notify the parent/guardian, of record, by mail, of their daughter/son's having met the prerequisites for consideration of membership in NHS.

Section 3 Each school will allow a student candidate to submit additional information that he/she feels is not covered by the application packet. Examples might include short essay or letters of recommendation. Note: (1) Anything submitted as part of the application packet will not be returned to the student. (2) Not submitting additional material is not viewed negatively when considering the student's application packet.

Section 4 In the case of a student who began the application/selection process prior to transferring into a new school, the selection process and decision of the previous school will be honored. However, the student, if inducted, must uphold the standards and membership obligations of the new school.

Section 5 Selection process should be finished by the last school day in March and Induction is to be held in April.

Section 3 The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of minutes and attendance for all meetings.

Section 4 The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of chapter monies and coordinate fundraisers.

Section 5 The Historian shall gather any and all publicity for the chapter, as well as any for chapter alumnus.

Section 6 In the absence of one of the officers, the President shall appoint a substitute to fulfill his/her duty at that meeting.

Article XV Election Procedure for Officers

Section 1 Open, individual nominations shall be held at the March meeting. At this meeting, candidates will give speeches lasting no more than two minutes, which, if deemed necessary, shall be screened by the advisor(s). Individuals may only be nominated for one office each.

Section 2 Voting shall be done by secret ballot. Anyone who belongs to the chapter and is attendance at the meeting shall vote.

Section 3 Current officers shall pass the torch to newly-elected officers at a special ceremony, which may be the induction ceremony.

Article XIII Chapter Meetings

Section 1 Meetings should be held at least once a month, and shall be held on the first Wednesday of every month unless otherwise noted. Any member who knows in advance that they will be absent from a meeting or ceremony must tell an advisor in advance; the absence may be excused at the discretion of the advisor.

Section 1.1 Excused absences include, but are not specifically limited to: school-related activities, absence from school, death in the family, or other extreme circumstances.

Section 1.2 Work is not an excuse for missing meetings. However, in the event that a member must be absent from a meeting due to a work **emergency**, the member will be given a form by an advisor to be given to their employer stating that their presence was truly an emergency; this form will be signed by the employer and returned to the advisors, who will then call to verify the validity of the emergency.

Section 2 Special meetings may be called by the President with approval of the advisor(s).

Article XIV Duties of Officers

Section 1 The President shall preside over all NHS meetings and call emergency meetings whenever necessary.

Section 2 The Vice President presides over all NHS meetings in the absence of the President and assists in the preparation for meetings.

Section 6 A candidate's (high school) teachers (past and present / core and special area subjects) should be invited to submit a NHS information survey on each candidate.

Section 7 A majority vote by the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) will determine whether a candidate is invited to be inducted into the NHS. A tie vote by the FAC is a rejection of that student's candidacy for membership. The NHS advisor(s) are Ex-Officio (non-voting) members of the Faculty Advisory Council.

Article VIII Evaluation Criteria

Section 1 Service: Because NHS expectations of members and students wanting to be members is above and beyond those of other students, a minimum service criteria for students seeking admission to NHS is 10 hours of community service for each grade level in high school AND must be separate from submissions a student is using to satisfy the Service Learning graduation requirement.

Note: (1) If a student has sophomore status at the time he/she is seeking membership to NHS, the minimum community service expectation would be 20 hours; a junior, 30 hours; a senior, 40 hours. (2) Submitted community service hours must have been performed for a nonprofit organization or an individual not related to the student. (3) Verification documentation must accompany said submission. (4) Chapters can also consider, as part or in addition to the documented minimum standard stated above, the following descriptors for service. This list is for consideration purposes only and

should not be thought of as a checklist for this criterion.

The student who serves:

- Volunteers and provides dependable and well-organized assistance, is gladly available, and is willing to sacrifice to offer assistance
- Works well with others and is willing to take on difficult or inconspicuous responsibilities
- Cheerfully and enthusiastically renders requested service to the school
- Is willing to represent the class or school in interclass and interscholastic competition
- Does committee and staff work without complaint
- Participates in some activity outside of school (e.g., Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, religious groups, volunteer services for the elderly, poor etc.)
- Mentors persons in the community or students at other schools
- Shows courtesy by assisting visitors, teachers, and students.

Section 2

Leadership: The leadership criterion is considered highly important for membership selection. Even though this NHS chapter recognizes some level of inherent leadership in terms of the number of offices a student has held in school or community organizations, we also recognize that leadership also exists outside elected positions including effective participation in positions of responsibility in other activities offered on campus such as athletic team captains, section leaders in band and chorus, committee chairs in student groups, etc. Such leadership roles in both the school and community may be considered, provided they can be verified.

Section 2

Dismissal: Major infractions of NHS standards, the School's Student Code of Conduct, or civil statutes could result in a referral requesting dismissal to the Faculty Council. Warnings or earlier discipline measures are not a prerequisite or required prior to a referral for dismissal in the case of major violations.

Section 2.1

The advisor will notify a member, in writing, that a dismissal referral has been received, the reasons for the action, the date and time of the hearing and the opportunity to respond in person or by a written statement.

Section 2.2

There is no "automatic" dismissal.

Section 2.3

The Faculty Council will conduct a dismissal hearing and have the power to dismiss a member from the chapter and its privileges. Members have the opportunity to represent themselves in person or by a written statement at any dismissal hearing.

Section 2.4

A member will be notified in writing of the Faculty Council's decision.

Article XII Appeals

Section 1

Questions or inquiries by parents or students regarding the Faculty Council's decision should be handled by the NHS Advisor. NHS Advisor should be able to refer to the letter of notification regarding the basis for the dismissal decision. However, if a formal appeal is requested, the building principal will hold an appeal hearing.

Section 3 Members are expected to participate (10 hours minimum per school year) in chapter service projects, which may include, but are not expressly limited to, the annual Salvation Army Christmas Distribution, the canned food drive, and the Game-a-Thon.

Section 3.1 New inductees will be expected to complete at least five service hours from National Honor Society-approved individual service projects.

Section 4 Members are expected to wear their NHS pins with pride.

Section 5 Every member has the responsibility to maintain NHS standards (i.e. GPA, Service, Leadership, Character) and fulfill member obligations. If a member falls below such standards, the advisor will notify the student, in writing, of the nature of the violation and the action to be taken or consequences to be pursued i.e. warning, probation or referral for dismissal.

Article XI Discipline and Dismissal

Section 1 Discipline for minor offenses could result in warnings, suspend chapter privileges, removal from NHS office, or probation (probation is defined as one marking term; a time period in which a member would have to improve, or correct the minor offense. (Minor offenses involving NHS principles, GPA standards or failure to fulfill membership obligations would apply) Failure to improve or correct the situation within the one marking term time frame could result in a referral for dismissal.

Chapters can also consider, as part of or in addition to elected positions the following descriptors for leadership. This list is for consideration purposes only and should not be thought of as a checklist for this criterion.

The student who exercises leadership:

- Is resourceful in proposing new problems, applying principles, and making suggestions
- Demonstrates initiative in promoting school activities
- Exercises positive influence on peers in upholding school ideals and spirit
- Contributes ideas that improve the civic life of the school
- Is able to delegate responsibilities
- Inspires positive behavior in others
- Demonstrates academic initiative
- Conducts business effectively and efficiently
- Demonstrates reliability and dependability
- Is a leader in the classroom, at work, or in other school or community activities
- Is dependable in any responsibility accepted.

Section 3

Character: Each chapter should consider the positive as well as the negative aspects of character. All judgments should be free of speculation and rumor. A person of character demonstrates the following qualities: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Chapters should consider the following descriptors of character. This list is for consideration purposes only and should not be thought of as a checklist for this criterion.

The student of character:

- Takes criticism willingly and accepts recommendations graciously
- Consistently exemplifies desirable qualities of behavior (e.g., cheerfulness, friendliness, poise, stability)
- Cooperates by complying with school regulations concerning property, programs, office, halls, etc.
- Demonstrates the highest standards of honesty and reliability
- Regularly shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others
- Observes instructions and rules, is punctual, and faithful both inside and outside the classroom
- Manifests truthfulness in acknowledging obedience to rules, avoiding cheating in written work, and showing an unwillingness to profit by the mistakes of others
- Actively helps rid the school of bad influences or environment.

A candidate will be able to demonstrate an outstanding record of conduct and behavior with regard to school and community rules, guidelines, and policies or be able to demonstrate sufficient growth and improvement to compensate for previous inadequacies. Because proper regard for adolescent growth and behavior improvement is essential, students who have a previous (previous is defined as prior to the school year the person is seeking membership) record of civil offenses or who have a chronic record of breaking school rules will not be automatically excluded from consideration for membership. Any student who has one or more out-of-school suspension day(s) in

the same school year as he/she seeking membership is not eligible for consideration.

Article IX Notification:

Section 1 All (selected and non-selected) students will be notified by mail.

Section 2 The notification letter for Non-selected students should include area(s) of deficit and/or suggestions for improvement.

Section 3 Questions or inquiries by parents or students regarding their non selection should be handled by the NHS Advisor. NHS Advisor should be able to refer to the letter of notification regarding areas in need of improvement based on the selection criteria. However, if a formal appeal is requested, the principal will entertain an appeal hearing with input from the NHS Advisor. The principal, upon review, can make a decision on the appeal or refer it back to the FAC for reconsideration or with other guidance depending on the circumstances.

Article X Membership Standards and Obligations

Section 1 Members are expected to attend all meetings and ceremonies.

Section 2 Members are expected to pay yearly dues. National dues are a minimum of \$5.00 per year. Any dues for the local individual chapter shall be decided at the first meeting of the year. Dues are due by the October meeting, and a \$1 late fee will be charged per month for late dues.