

# NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY HANDBOOK



CHARACTER  
SCHOLARSHIP

LEADERSHIP  
SERVICE

Rocori High School  
Cold Spring, Minnesota

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## INTRODUCTION

The National Honor Society is the front runner of organizations and societies that promote appropriate recognition for students who reflect outstanding accomplishments in the areas of academics, character, leadership, and service. Thousands of schools are chartered and their chapters are following the Constitution.

College admissions officers often look for Honor Society membership as a valid indicator that the applicant will succeed at the collegiate level of post-secondary education. The Honor Society member has already proven that he or she is able to achieve with academic endeavors. Leadership—either overtly or silently—honorable and admirable character, as well as service that demonstrates that the member is willing to use talents and skills for the improvement of society.

Serving one another and the community is expressed in the motto of the National Honor Society, “Noblesse Oblique.” Members of the National Honor Society are obligated to fulfill the motto with behavior that is honorable, responsible, and generous to others. The Honor Society chapter provides individual members the opportunity to share their talents with other students, their school, and their community.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals believes that the National Honor Society has made positive differences in the lives of the individuals, and the spirit of the community and school. The Association also commends the principals and advisors for their commitment to recognize outstanding student achievement.

Dale D. Hawley, Director  
NASSP Division of Student Activities

## **FORWARD**

When the National Honor Society was founded in 1921, our hope was to create an organization that would recognize and encourage academic achievements while developing other characteristics essential to citizens in a democracy. These ideals of scholarship, character, service, and leadership remain as relevant today as they were in 1921.

Now, over 70 years later, the National Honor Society has established a reputation for excellence among administrators, faculty members, students, parents, and residents of the school community. This reputation is the result of years of commitment on the part of everyone involved.

Through NHS chapter service activities, members maintain and extend the qualities that won them selection. Membership is this both an honor and a commitment.

The procedures, requirements, regulations, and suggestions outlined in the Handbook (National Honor Society Handbook) are meant to help principals, advisors, and faculty members as they guide students in the development of desirable personal qualities. To the extent that principals, advisors, teachers, and student members fulfill their respective roles enthusiastically, the society will continue to thrive for the benefit of its members and of our democratic society.

Scott D. Thomson  
Executive Director. NASSP

## **HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

If a society with many chapters commends itself to the schools of a certain district because each is helped by the other, a nationwide society ought to be a stronger organization and receive the support of all of the schools that believe in such a society. Will not one common badge for the entire country be more valuable than many different local badges? In other words, if the fundamental principle of the honor society is sound, it should be national in its applications: a national honor society of secondary is a logical outgrowth of the wisdom and experience of the past fifteen or twenty years.

Edward Rynearson, often considered the founder and father of the National Honor Society, made the above remarks in support of the proposal of J.G Masters, principal of Central High School in Omaha, Nebraska, to form a nation honor society. At the time, Rynearson was principal of Fifth Avenue High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which was awarded charter number one of the National Honor Society.

Masters made this proposal in 1919 at the annual convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. He and many others in attendance at this convention were concerned about the growing movement to emphasize athletic and academic activities. This emphasis was often regarded as detrimental to programs designed to stimulate leadership and character.

To be sure, there had been local and regional organizations whose memberships were required to meet predetermined standards of citizenship, leadership, and scholarship. Others included service as a criterion for membership. But until 1921, when the National Association of Secondary School Principals passed the resolution to form the National Honor Society, there was no national organization whose objectives were to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in students of the secondary schools of the nation.

The determination of Society standards was no easy task, according to Rynearson, who presented the report of the committee on Constitution and Organization, which had been appointed at the 1920 NASSP convention. This group presented its findings in 1921, when the NASSP met in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

In drawing up the constitution, the committee was faced with the necessity of providing an organization broad enough to meet all the varied needs of these numerous societies. Scholarship alone seemed too narrow: where tried, the society had, in the words of Dr. Powell, “got the stigma of being high-browish.” On the other hand, there was great danger of according too little recognition to scholarship. After considerable discussion, the committee fixed upon character, leadership, scholarship, and service as the fundamental virtues most worthy of encouragement.

The resolution to form the National Honor Society was passed in the hope that unification of effort might lead to improved national standards:

The organization of the National Honor Society in the high schools, as recommended by the committee on the subject, would have a strong tendency to improve scholarship and to place the regular and faithful performance of academic work in its proper place in the estimation of the student body.

The resolution also mentioned the need to ‘counteract a prevalent tendency among secondary schools to place undue emphasis upon individual performance in the various athletic events by giving excessive and expensive awards.

The formation of secret societies was also to be condemned, even made illegal in all the states, according to the resolution. “The chief business of high schools is to make the greatest possible contribution to the realization of the American ideal of democracy, the resolution stated, “Whatever interferes with this function is an obstruction to education and inimical to the public welfare.” All organizations should not only satisfy a social need but also “be devoted to the purpose of worth to the individual and of profit to the school.”

Thus, the National Honor Society was regarded from its inception as a concrete way to promote high academic standards, a means of ensuring the continuation of democracy, and an instrument for the betterment of the individual and the school.

The Society has flourished; today more than 20,000 chapters are chartered. The National Junior Honor Society, founded in 1929, has also experienced encouraging development. Variety characterizes the activities of many chapters.

(French phrase that literally means nobility obligates. In broader terms, it signifies that those of high rank have the obligation to behave honorably, generously, and responsibly to others.)

## **ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE**

**Section 1:** The name of this chapter shall be the ROCORI Chapter of the National Honor Society of Secondary Schools (NHS), which appears on the charter granted by the National Council of the National Honor Society, duly signed by the national Secretary.

**Section 2:** The purpose of this chapter shall be to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in all students of ROCORI High School.

**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 22091.

## **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1:** Membership in this chapter is an honor bestowed upon a student. Selection for membership is by faculty vote 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 of this chapter shall be known as active and graduate. Active members shall become graduate members at graduation. Candidates become members when inducted at a special ceremony.

**Section 3:** To be eligible for election to membership in this chapter, the candidate must have been in attendance for a period equivalent to one grading period in this school.

**Section 4:** An NHS member who transfers to another school and brings a letter from the former principal or chapter advisor shall be accepted automatically as a member in the new school's chapter. Similarly, an active NHS member who transfers from this school will be given a letter indicating the status of his membership and signed by the principal or advisor. Transfer member must meet the new chapter's standards within one grading period in order to retain.

**Section 5:** Candidates eligible for election to this chapter must be members of the sophomore or junior class in the year they are in at the time of selection and have a cumulative scholarship average of 3.7 or its equivalent. This scholastic level of achievement shall remain fixed. The candidate's eligibility shall then be considered on service, leadership, and character.

**Section 6:** The description of the selection procedure shall be published and be widely available in a timely fashion to all students and parents of the school. The selection process shall be determined by the faculty council and shall be consistent with the rules and regulations of the

NHS. The selection of each member to the chapter shall be by a majority vote of the faculty council.

Membership should never be considered on the merit of grades alone.

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

**Section 8:** The faculty council shall reserve the right to award honorary membership to exchange students in recognition of outstanding NHS qualities or to an outstanding student who has a handicap which prevents the student from fully meeting the requirements for membership.

### **ARTICLE III: OFFICERS**

**Section 1:** The officers of this chapter, their duties, and the method of their election shall be posted prior to the elections.

**Section 2:** The officers shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian.

**Section 3:** It shall be the duty of the officers to attend monthly executive board meeting.

**Section 4:** It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of this chapter. The President shall also work with the executive board in making decisions which will best benefit the chapter members and delegate duties to the best of his/her ability. The President will be a member of the senior class.

**Section 5:** It shall be the duty of Vice-President to fill the chair of the President in his/her absence. The Vice-President shall also work with the President in assigning and accepting delegation of duties and see that these duties are carried out. The Vice-President will be a member of the junior class and will take over the duties of President their senior year.

**Section 6:** It shall be the duty of the chapter Secretary to keep the minutes of each meeting, a record of all business, and all records on file. The chapter Secretary shall also submit a report of old and new business at monthly executive board meetings.

**Section 7:** It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to keep accurate and up to date records of the financial status of this chapter of NHS. The Treasurer shall also submit a report at monthly executive board meetings.

**Section 8:** It shall be the duty of the Historian to keep record (written, photographs, video, etc.) of all National Honor Society events through the course of the school year, to be compiled in a scrapbook which will be submitted at the Minnesota Association of Honor Societies state convention. The Historian shall also inform the public of the chapter's events (via newspaper, school paper, announcements, etc.)

**Section 9:** The majority of votes cast shall be necessary to elect any officer of this chapter. Majority shall be over one half or the majority of votes cast for one member whichever occurs.

**Section 10:** The new officers will be installed at the induction ceremony in the spring. The new officers will work with the present officers to ensure a smooth transition for the following year.

## **ARTICLE IV: FACULTY COUNCIL**

**Section 1:** The faculty council shall consist of a faculty advisor and five faculty members who are to be appointed by the principal. No principal or assistant principal may be included in the faculty council.

**Section 2:** The faculty shall meet, when necessary, to select members and to consider dismissal, non-selection, and warning cases.

**Section 3:** The faculty council shall be an advisory board to the membership.

## **ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Section 1:** The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the chapter and the advisor.

**Section 2:** The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the meetings, affairs, and business of the chapter, make recommendations to the chapter, and determine and perform such other duties as are specified in the national by-laws. All actions and recommendations 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.

## **ARTICLE VI: 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 and activities.

**Section 3:** The activities and 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 and organized, and executed.

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

**Section 5:** each chapter shall publicize its projects in a positive manner.

## **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

**Section 1:** The 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:** Special meetings approved by the Executive Committee may be called by the President.

**Section 3:** All meetings shall be open meetings and shall be held under the sponsorship of some member of the faculty council.

## **ARTICLE VIII: ATTENDANCE**

**Section 1:** All active members shall be required to attend scheduled meetings and activities.

**Section 2:** In the event of an absence, the member shall have three days after his/her absence to justify himself/herself. Any of the presiding officers may accept an excuse for absence.

**Section 3:** If a member does not participate in National Honor Society sponsored activities and/or has poor attendance, he/she shall be warned. If this problem should continue, the member shall then be declared inactive and have his/her membership withdrawn.

## **ARTICLE IX: DISMISSAL**

**Section 1:** The procedure for dismissal shall be determined by the faculty council in compliance with the rules and regulations of NHS. A written description of the dismissal procedure shall be available to interested parties.

**Section 2:** Any members who fall below the standards which were the basis of election (scholarship, leadership, service, and character) shall be promptly warned by the chapter advisor and given a reasonable amount of time to correct the deficiency, except in the case of flagrant violation of school rules or civil laws in which case a member does not necessarily have to be warned. A member will be allowed only one warning period. Once a member is dismissed, he/she is never again eligible for membership in the NHS.

**Section 3:** In all cases of dismissal, a member shall have a right to appeal and a hearing before the faculty council under the same rules for disciplinary appeals in the school district.

**Section 4:** Any member who withdraws or is dismissed from the chapter shall return any emblem or award to the chapter of which he/she was a member. Furthermore, each member agrees that acceptance of the emblem shall be considered affirmation of this stipulation in regard to the title of the emblem.

## **ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1:** this constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the chapter, provided that the proposed amendment has been approved by the chapter's Executive Committee and by the national secretary of the NHS and that notice to members had been given at least one month prior to the meeting at which it is to be voted.

**Section 2:** Each chapter may write by-laws to amplify sections of this Constitution and to clarify operating procedures of the chapter. The by-laws may contain information concerning the election and duties of officers, the schedule of meetings, member obligations, dues, and the like.

## **BY LAWS FOR ROCORI HIGH SCHOOL**

### **Article I: Name and Purpose**

**Section 1:** The name of this chapter shall be the ROCORI Chapter of the National Honor Society of Secondary Schools.

**Section 2:** The objective of this chapter shall be to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in students of ROCORI High School.

### **Article II: Membership**

**Section 1:** Membership in this chapter shall be known as active and graduate. Active members become graduate members at graduation. The graduate members have no vote.

**Section 2:** Membership in this chapter shall be based on Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character.

**Section 3:** To be eligible for election to membership in this chapter, the candidate must have been in attendance for a period of one semester at ROCORI High School.

**Section 4:** Candidates eligible for election to this chapter must be members of the sophomore or junior class. Candidates eligible for election to the chapter shall have a cumulative scholarship average of 3.7. This scholastic level of achievement shall remain fixed and shall be the required minimum scholarship level of achievement for admission to candidacy. All students who can rise in scholarship to or above such standard may be admitted to candidacy for election to membership. Their eligibility shall then be considered on their service, leadership, and character.

### **Article III: Election of Members**

**Section 1:** The final election of members to this chapter shall be by faculty council consisting of five teachers appointed by the principal as of February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The chapter advisor shall be an ex-officio (non-voting) member of that faculty council.

**Section 2:** Prior to the final election, the following shall occur.

1. Students' academic records shall be reviewed to determine scholastic eligibility.
2. Students who are eligible scholastically shall be notified and asked to complete the Student Activity Information Form for further consideration for selection. Failure to return the form by the assigned date drops the candidate from further processing.
3. The faculty shall be requested to comment on candidates determined to be scholastically eligible by voting on the top choices using a + for positive and a – for negative in the areas of character and leadership.
4. The Student Activity Information Form and faculty votes shall be reviewed by the faculty council.

**Section 3:** The election of active members shall be held once a year during the third trimester of the school year.

**Section 4:** An active member of the National Honor Society who transfers from this school will be given a letter indicating the status of his/her membership signed by the principal of the NHS advisor.

**Section 5:** An active member of the National Honor Society who transfers to this school will automatically be accepted for membership in this chapter. This transfer member will attain membership within one trimester and then maintain the membership requirements for this chapter in order to retain his/her membership.

#### **Article IV: 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 (see Appendix A).

**Section 2:** Members who fall below the standards which were the bases for their selection shall be promptly warned in writing by the chapter advisor and given a reasonable amount of time to correct the deficiency, except that in the case of flagrant violation of school or civil laws 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 impending dismissal, a member shall have a right to a hearing before the faculty council.

**Section 5:** A member who has been dismissed may appeal the decision of the faculty council through the High School Due Process Committee (see Appendix B).

**Section 6:** The National Council and the NASSP shall hear no appeals in dismissal cases.

**Section 7:** A member who has been removed for violation of the code of ethics may be reinstated by following the restorative process (see Appendix C).

## **Article V: Officers**

**Section 1:** the officers of the chapter shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian.

**Section 2:** Student officers shall be elected prior to the induction ceremony from chapter members of the sophomore or junior class.

**Section 3:** The candidates for the Executive Committee receiving the greatest number of votes shall be the officers for the upcoming year. The President will be a senior and the Vice-President a junior.

**Section 4:** It shall be the duty of the President to reside at the meetings for this chapter.

**Section 5:** The Vice- President shall preside in the absence of the President. It will be the duty of the Vice-President to become President the following year.

**Section 6:** The Historian will be responsible for keeping the school and the community informed of NHS activities throughout the year.

**Section 7:** The Secretary shall keep the minutes and a record of all business conducted at meetings.

**Section 8:** The Treasurer shall keep track of the amount of money of the chapter and report at each meeting the balance of funds.

## **Article VI: Executive Committee**

**Section 1:** The Executive Committee shall have general charge of the meetings and the business of the chapter, but any action on the part of the Executive Committee shall be subject to the review of the chapter.

**Section 2:** The Executive Committee shall consist of the faculty advisor and the officers of the chapter.

**Section 3:** The faculty advisor shall act as chairman of the Executive Committee.

## **Article VII: Activities**

Section 1: The activities of this chapter shall be subject to the approval of the principal.

## **Article VIII: Meetings**

**Section 1:** Meetings of this chapter shall be called by the Executive Committee or the faculty advisor

**Section 2:** This chapter shall conduct its meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section 3:** Meetings of this chapter may be conducted during school hours if approved by the faculty advisor and the principal.

**Section 4:** The faculty advisor shall notify teachers of NHS activities. The students shall be excused from class pending the approval of the teacher.

## **Article IX: Emblem**

**Section 1:** Each member of this chapter shall be entitled to wear the emblem adopted by the National Honor Society, which he/she will receive upon induction if he/she purchases the pin.

**Section 2:** Any member who withdraws or is dismissed from the chapter shall return the emblem to the chapter.

## **Article X: Dues**

**Section 1:** No dues shall be required of active members unless a sum is assessed each year by vote of the chapter.

## **Article XI: Amendments**

**Section 1:** These by laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the chapter, provided that the proposed amendment has been approved by the Executive Committee and the faculty advisor and the notice to the members has been at least two weeks previous to the meetings which it is to be voted upon.

**Section 2:** Any proposed amendment shall be presented to the ROCORI School Board; however the principal has final say on any matter.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Dismissal Procedure**

1. Academic warnings, suspensions and dismissal are described in the chapter by-laws.
2. Members who fall below the standards that were the bases for their selection shall be promptly warned in writing by the chapter advisor and given a reasonable amount of time to correct the deficiency.
3. The ROCORI National Honor Society maintains high expectations for all of its members and the following behaviors can prompt the dismissal procedure:
  - Substance abuse violation during or outside of the regular school day
  - Cheating during or outside of the regular school day
  - Violence or actions that jeopardize the safety of others
  - Other flagrant violation of school rules or civil laws
4. The Faculty Council shall determine when an individual has exceeded a reasonable amount of warnings and/or suspensions.
5. In all cases of impending dismissal, a member shall have the right to a hearing before the Faculty Council.
  - A. The principal will communicate with the student orally and in written form regarding notification of the impending dismissal.
  - B. The notice of dismissal will provide the student a right to a hearing before the Faculty Council. The Parent/Guardian will also receive a copy in the mail.
  - C. The student will have five (5) school days, from the meeting with the principal, to request a hearing. The student will need to inform the principal with a written request.
  - D. The hearing will be scheduled in a reasonable amount of time and will consist of the following individuals:
    - NHS President
    - Parent/Guardian or an advocate of the NHS student
    - Faculty Council
    - NHS Advisor
    - Principal
6. A majority vote of the Faculty Council is required to dismiss a member. The Faculty Council is the voting body, the NHS Advisor and the Principal do not vote, they only act as advisors. When the Faculty Council has made a decision the principal will meet with the student and present the decision orally and in written communication. A copy of the decision will be mailed to the parent/guardian.
7. A member may appeal a decision of the Faculty Council through the High School due process policy. (Appendix B)

8. A student wishing to follow the Due Process Policy must complete the Due Process Committee Form and return it to the senior high principal or secretary within three school days of the decision of the Faculty Council.
9. The principal shall determine the members of the Due Process Committee and inform the student of the Due Process Committee meeting.
10. The National Council and the National Association of Secondary School Principals shall hear no appeals in dismissal cases.
11. Students will remain inactive/ineligible during the review process.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Due Process Procedure/Committee**

When a determination has been made by the Faculty Council that a National Honor Society student has violated any provision of this policy for which he/she has been subject to discipline, the student may request an informal review of the Faculty Council determination and action by a due process committee. A Request for Review must be made by the student, in writing, within three (3) school days of being notified of the Faculty Council decision or action. If the written Request for Review is not made within that time, it shall be deemed that the student has acquiesced to both the determination of violation and the action taken by the Faculty Council.

If the student has made the proper Request for Review, **the student** and/or the parents/guardians or an advocate shall personally appear before the committee and give reasons and provide evidence why he/she believes that there was no violation if a ROCORI National Honor Society or school rule or policy and/or that the disciplinary action or punishment was not consistent with the ROCORI NHS policy. The burden shall rest with the student. At the Due Process Committee meeting, the high school principal shall present the reasoning behind the Faculty Council's decision.

The principal will schedule and formulate the Due Process Committee in a reasonable amount of time.

It shall be the sole function of the Due Process Committee as part of this review process to determine:

1. Whether the conduct or actions of the student violated an RHS NHS or school rule or policy; (yes or no)
2. Whether the punishment or discipline administered by the Faculty Council was consistent with school policy.

Decisions of the committee shall be by majority vote. The Due Process Committee will inform the principal of the decision and the principal will communicate the decision within three (3)

school days through a meeting with the student to communicate the decision orally and in written form to the student. The parent/guardian and/or advocate will receive a copy of the decision in the mail.

The Due Process Committee shall be comprised of the following:

- Two high school teachers appointed by the principal
- One high school counselor appointed by the principal
- One high school staff person or administrator appointed by the administration (but not the affected principal)

This review process shall only apply to Faculty Council actions.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Restorative Process**

A member who has been removed from NHS for violation of the code of ethics may be reinstated if they complete the following:

1. The member must notify the advisor of the infraction before the school receives the notification.
2. The member needs to write a letter to the advisor explaining why they want to be reinstated.
3. The member must speak to the entire membership apologizing for their actions and asked to be reinstated.
4. The member must speak to NHS faculty selection committee asking to be reinstated.
5. The member must complete at least 100 hours of community service within the academic year the infraction occurred.
6. The member must complete a special community service project not part of the projects already done by NHS. The hours can be used as part of the 100 hour community service commitment. The member must update in writing the progress of service project at approximately half way point and present community service project to the membership upon completion.
7. The member must continue to attend NHS meetings and take an active role in NHS activities.
8. The member must complete the other procedures required by the school because of the infraction.

9. The member will receive honors cords at graduation if above items are completed.
10. A second offense will result in removal from NHS.