1. CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

All policies and procedures for NHS chapters are based on the provisions of the National Constitution. The following version of the NHS Constitution was approved for all chapters on July 8, 2016, by the NASSP Board of Directors. This is the most recent edition for use by chapters. Changes have also been approved for the NJHS Constitution.

Chapter advisers and school principals are asked to review this document carefully. Copies can be provided to chapter officers and all chapter members as a reference to the national guidelines that govern all chapters of NHS. (Always consult www.nhs.us/constitution for the most recent edition of the National Constitution.

ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

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

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

Section 3. NHS is a program of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1537, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit association.

ARTICLE II: THE NASSP STUDENT LEADERSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Section 1. The control of this organization shall be vested in the NASSP Board of Directors.

Section 2. There shall be a national advisory committee to advise the NASSP staff and Board of Directors regarding NHS and its policies and procedures.

Section 3. The Student Leadership Advisory Committee shall consist of 14 members appointed by the Board of Directors of NASSP, as follows:

- 6 high school student members (3 NHS, 3 NASC member schools)
- 2 middle level student members (1 representing the school of the middle level adviser-at-large and 1 from the NJHS principal-at-large)
- 2 high school advisers-at-large (1 NHS, 1 NASC member school)
- 1 middle level adviser-at-large (1 NJHS or 1 middle level NASC member school)
- 3 practicing principals-at-large (NASSP members: 1 NHS school, 1 NJHS school, 1 NASC school)
- The executive director of NASSP shall be an ex officio member of the Student Leadership Advisory Committee.

Section 4. Members shall be appointed for a term of no more than two years.

ARTICLE III: STATE ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. Local chapters may choose to organize state associations.

Section 2. Any state association of National Honor Society chapters shall conform to this Constitution and shall work with NASSP in furthering the purposes of this organization.

Section 3. All state associations shall be affiliated with the National Honor Society.

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

Section 5. Bylaws of the state associations must be approved by NASSP and must be consistent with the NHS Constitution.

ARTICLE IV: LOCAL CHAPTERS

Section 1. Any secondary public school is eligible to establish a new chapter. Nonpublic secondary schools accredited or approved by state departments of education or by accrediting agencies approved by NASSP are eligible to apply for a chapter. Each school shall have its own chapter except in cases where a school's size precludes the formation of a full Faculty Council. In such cases, a chapter can be shared as long as all other constitutional requirements can be met. A middle level unit in the same building with a high school unit will be appropriate cause for two separate chapters (one for the National Junior Honor Society and one for the National Honor Society). (See Chapter 4 for clarification of this last provision of Section 1.)

Section 2. Deleted.

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

Section 4. The annual individual member dues paid to a chapter or state affiliate, if any, shall not exceed twenty (20) dollars inclusively. The exact amount shall be determined by the executive committee of the chapter and shall be subject to the approval of the chapter membership.

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

ARTICLE V: THE PRINCIPAL

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

Section 2. The principal shall annually appoint a member of the faculty as chapter adviser, who may serve consecutive terms. Co-advisers may be appointed where necessary.

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

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

ARTICLE VI: THE CHAPTER ADVISER

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

Section 2. The chapter adviser shall maintain files on membership, chapter history, activities, and financial transactions. The chapter adviser shall complete the annual survey and submit it to the national office.

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

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

Section 5. The chapter adviser shall be an ex officio, nonvoting, sixth member of the Faculty Council and shall facilitate all meetings of the council.

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

ARTICLE VII: THE FACULTY COUNCIL

Section 1. The Faculty Council shall consist of five (5) voting faculty members appointed annually by the principal. The chapter adviser shall be an ex officio, nonvoting, sixth member of the Faculty Council. No principal or assistant principal may be included on the Faculty Council. (See commentary in Chapter 3 regarding the functions of the Faculty Council.)

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

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

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

ARTICLE VIII: MEMBERSHIP

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

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

Section 3. Members of the Faculty Council shall support the school leader in creating and sustaining a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community. As such, the Faculty Council shall reserve the right to award honorary membership to students who warrant special consideration—including those who receive accommodations for a disability, or foreign exchange students—in recognition of achievement and/or outstanding service rendered to the school in keeping with the purposes of the National Honor Society. The Faculty Council might also award honorary membership to school officials, principals, teachers, NHS advisers, or other adults. Honorary membership grants to the recipient all of the privileges of membership without the obligations associated with active member status (See Chapter 3 of the *National Honor Society Handbook* for additional information).

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

Section 5. Members who are seniors in good standing are eligible to apply and compete in the National Honor Society Scholarship program.

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

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

ARTICLE IX: SELECTION OF MEMBERS

Section 1. To be eligible for membership the candidate must be a member of those classes (sophomore, junior, senior) designated as eligible in the chapter bylaws. (Freshmen [ninth graders] are not eligible.) Candidates must have been in attendance at the school the equivalent of one semester.[1] [See notes at end]

Section 2. The national minimum standard for scholarship shall be a cumulative scholastic average of at least 85 percent, B, or 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or the equivalent standard of excellence. Candidates shall then be evaluated on the basis of service, leadership, and character.[2]

Section 3. The selection of each member to the chapter shall be by a majority vote of the Faculty Council. Prior to notification of any candidates, the chapter adviser shall review with the principal the results of the Faculty Council's deliberations.

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

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

ARTICLE X: DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL

Section 1. The Faculty Council, in compliance with the rules and regulations of the National Honor Society, shall determine the procedure for dismissal. A written description of the dismissal procedure shall be available to interested parties.[3]

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

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

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

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

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

Section 7. NASSP shall hear no appeals in dismissal cases. (Note: Refer to Article VIII, Section 7 regarding the permanent consequences for members when dismissed.)

ARTICLE XI: CHAPTER OFFICERS

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

Section 2. New officers shall be installed at a special ceremony. (See sample officer installation ceremony in Chapter 3.)

ARTICLE XII: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

Section 2. The executive committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the chapter between its business meetings, make recommendations to the chapter, and determine and perform such other duties as are specified in the chapter bylaws. All actions and 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.[4]

ARTICLE XIII: MEETINGS

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE XIV: ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE XV: OFFICIAL INSIGNIA

Section 1. This organization shall have an official emblem. The emblem shall be uniform and its distribution and rules for its use shall be determined by the NASSP Board of Directors.

Section 2. Each active, honorary, or alumni member in good standing with the chapter shall be entitled to wear this emblem.

Section 3. Any member who resigns or is dismissed shall return the emblem to the chapter adviser.

Section 4. All insignia must be procured from the national office of the National Honor Society, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA, 20191. All insignia are registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office and may not be copied by anyone without written permission of the NHS national office. (See also, Logo Usage Guidelines at www.nhs.us/logo.)

Section 5. The motto of the National Honor Society shall be *Noblesse oblige*.

Section 6. The official colors of the National Honor Society shall be blue and gold.

Section 7. An alumni member may purchase a replacement for a lost emblem by verifying membership to the national office.

ARTICLE XVI: CHAPTER BYLAWS

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

Section 2. The chapter bylaws shall contain information concerning the election and duties of officers, the schedule of meetings, member obligations, dues, and the like. (Note: See Chapter 3 and the adviser section at www.nhs.us/bylaws for additional information regarding the appropriate content of chapter bylaws.)

ARTICLE XVII: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by the NASSP Board of Directors based on the recommendations of the Student Programs staff and approved by the NASSP Board of Directors.

Notes:

1. Article IX, Section 1. Some candidates may be ineligible for induction because of the semester ruling. Many students, including students of military parents, are required to move with parents or guardians who have transferred in their work. The present school principal should seek a recommendation from the previous school principal or chapter adviser pursuant to the candidate's selection. On the basis of the recommendation from the previous school, the Faculty Council may waive the semester regulation.
2. Article IX, Section 2. Local chapters may raise the cumulative GPA standard above the national minimum, or increase standards for the remaining selection criteria, apply them fairly and consistently, and include these standards in their locally published selection procedures. See Chapter 4 for additional information.
3. Article X, Section 1. To maintain compliance, all local procedures must conform to the full provisions of this article. Faculty Councils can consider disciplinary actions that are less severe than dismissal if circumstances warrant.
4. Article XII, Section 3. This section is generally viewed to include chapter activities except those with regards to the selection, discipline, and dismissal of members, which are the sole domain of the chapter's Faculty Council per the provisions of Article VII, Section 4.

NHS National Constitution
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