



Before proceeding with the membership process, please read the following carefully!

Please note:

- **Service projects performed as requirements for all religion classes may not be documented as service hours on the NHS forms.** Other activities performed as service to SM or to your community may be documented and included with the appropriate verification contact information for the designated moderator/advisor. Service activities performed and verified through Santa Margarita's Campus Ministry Department (**beyond class requirements**) may be noted on the membership forms. These activities will be verified with Campus Ministry staff. **Students who attempt to use hours required by their classes or for graduation requirements will NOT be considered for membership and may face disciplinary consequences.**
- Any questions concerning Leadership should be directed to Mr. Van Ness. For example, being in MUN is NOT a leadership role as it is a class. There are, however, leadership roles within MUN. Being on a sports team is not considered leadership, but being a captain or co-captain is a leadership role. Being in the Campus Ministry class is NOT a leadership role, but may be considered as service if the student engages in activities **outside the expectations of the class.** Be advised that Faculty Council members and NHS advisors may also review classroom demeanor (cooperation, being consistently prepared for class, dependability in group projects, etc). **However, NHS candidates MAY NOT "lobby" teachers for positive comments or recommendations; this is the responsibility of the club advisors. Any candidate who does so WILL NOT be considered for membership.**
- Please note that teachers/club advisors may use their discretion in verifying hours of service and leadership. **If you have not been a consistent, active, and contributing member of a club or organization, DO NOT expect the advisor to verify your participation when they are contacted by Mr. Van Ness.**

Steps to be considered for membership:

1. Initially, Juniors and Seniors with cumulative academic GPAs of 3.5 or above are eligible to seek membership. Each student should ensure his/her exact cumulative academic GPA meets this requirement, further verified by NHS advisors. Transfer students with appropriate documentation of previous NHS membership can transfer their membership to SMCHS.
2. Each student is reviewed by NHS advisors in the Dean's office to determine if conduct qualifies one for eligibility (five demerits or less). Academic dishonesty disqualifies the student for one academic year.
3. Students may then complete the digital information form on the SMCHS NHS website. The student includes work experience, honors or awards, leadership and service activities. Each activity **MUST** have contact information of the advisor/moderator. Parent signatures are NOT considered valid documentation unless the parent is the SM

APPROVED event moderator. Any and all relevant evidence which gives the Council documentation/verification of the student's leadership and service is encouraged for inclusion. Do NOT include service/leadership from middle/grade school. Sports participation is NOT considered service.

4. The entire faculty is invited to comment on the students seeking membership. This feedback allows the Council to determine if a consistent standard of quality in the four areas is (and has been) maintained by the student, and provides the SMCHS faculty with the opportunity for input regarding the suitability of students as members of National Honor Society.
5. The forms MUST be submitted by the designated due date/time. Late forms WILL NOT be considered for membership.
6. Individually, each Faculty Council member reviews the students' forms and examines each, using a rating scale of one to five (five is the highest level of recommendation, one is lowest, three is average), for leadership and service. Commentary from the faculty is included for consideration.
7. The Faculty Council meets with the faculty advisors and, after discussion of each individual's leadership and service, the members vote separately on the two categories, based on information documented in the form and **consultation with the Deans's Office and other SM faculty members**. A simple majority vote in each category determines whether or not the student meets the standards for an offer of membership in the National Honor Society school chapter. **Students must achieve at least three votes in BOTH leadership and service in order to be eligible for the offer.**
8. Each student receives a formal mailed letter offering membership, or an explanation why membership is not being offered. The list of students offered membership is sent to Counseling and posted on the NHS webpage.
9. Students wishing to accept the offer of membership must respond by the indicated date with a typed, signed letter, acknowledging the offer of membership and agreeing to uphold the chapter's rules and regulations, as well as agreeing to full participation in the tutoring philanthropy NHS students provide to the school. Student accounts for those accepting the offer of membership will be assessed \$85.00 to cover membership fees and the official NHS regalia worn at Graduation.
10. A formal induction ceremony is held at a location on campus, at which time students become full-fledged members of the National Honor Society, and receive their certificates of membership.

Frequently asked questions:

Is it true that Santa Margarita's National Honor Society chapter is limited to a certain number of students offered membership each year?

No. There is no restriction on the number of students offered membership.

Who makes up the members of Santa Margarita's NHS Faculty Council?

The Faculty Council is currently comprised of five voting members, representatives across the school's faculty; including the Math, Science, Foreign Language, Religion, and English departments. These members remain anonymous. The faculty advisor(s), as an ad hoc member, **does not vote**. The Council accurately follows procedures from the NHS Handbook, and upholds the commitment to high standards of character, academics, leadership, and service. Our chapter maintains standards which comply with national guidelines.

I'm a Junior. I was not offered membership. Am I still eligible?

Yes. If you maintain good conduct, a 3.5 cumulative GPA and add to your leadership and service experience, you are still eligible to apply as a Senior.

I made a mistake and committed an academic dishonesty my sophomore year. Am I eligible to seek membership as a Junior?

No...you are ineligible for a period of one academic year. You become eligible your Senior year. One consequence of academic dishonesty (beyond the Freshman year) is ineligibility for NHS for one academic year. Hence, students who commit any act of academic dishonesty documented by the Deans' Office during the Junior year are ineligible to seek membership. Acts of academic dishonesty, however "small," reflect poor decisions and unethical behavior, a violation of the character pillar of NHS. Any ACCEPTED member who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to dismissal from NHS and the designation removed from transcripts.

My older sister (brother) has an NHS stole. Can I just pay my membership dues and use that stole at graduation?

Yes, but most students prefer to have their own.

When do graduating Seniors receive their stoles to wear at graduation?

Graduating Seniors are recognized as NHS members at Senior Awards Night in May. Stoles will be distributed then or picked up in the Counseling Office.

I am a freshman. How can I prepare for NHS?

You may wish to peruse the information form and begin to keep track of your leadership and service, documenting time invested, describing activities, and obtaining moderator information so that when you become a Junior, you will be ready. **Get involved! NHS requires more than just a high GPA!**

What is a moderator?

A moderator is the individual in charge of a particular event or organization.

How important is it to have all moderator contact information on the form?

Very important. This verifies your work, and if any question arises, a member of the Council may contact the individual in charge for an explanation. **If any form is lacking this information, it will not be reviewed for membership. False information results in disqualification from the acceptance process AND disciplinary action from the Dean's Office.**

I'm an excellent student. I have a 4.2 overall GPA. I wasn't offered membership. Why?

Membership in the National Honor Society is not just about high grades. It involves DEMONSTRATED commitment to the four pillars of NHS, consistent integrity and ethical/moral behavior that is evident THROUGHOUT campus, and service and leadership in the community as well as at school.

I'm a sophomore in NHS who transferred to Santa Margarita from my old school. What should I do?

Students who have been inducted into NHS are members of the chapter in the new school. Just bring a signed letter documenting your membership from your prior advisor to the Faculty Advisor of NHS here at Santa Margarita Catholic High School. You will also need a copy of your membership certificate documenting your induction into NHS.

Do the service hours from my religion classes count as "service" for NHS?

NO...as indicated above, required service hours from each grade level are **NOT** to be included in the "Service" portion of the membership forms. However, any service opportunities offered through Campus Ministry OVER AND ABOVE what you do for class, may be properly documented and verified on your information form.

Once in NHS, always in NHS, correct?

NO! Inappropriate behavior in class, on campus, or in the community as a representative of SM, grades lower than a 3.5 overall GPA or failure to fulfill NHS requirements (missing three meetings cumulatively [Juniors], missing three meetings in a row [Seniors], not showing up for tutoring or ignoring NHS chapter projects) are causes for dismissal. For these violations, the student receives one written warning from the Faculty Council. However, **ANY ACT OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IS GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL.** If the student continues with any one of the aforementioned negative behaviors, and does not respond in writing in a timely manner (within five school days) to the warning, the Faculty Council may then meet and vote to remove the student's membership. Again, a majority vote is utilized. The student must return the NHS certificate given to him at induction. The student is not allowed to

wear the stole at graduation, and loses the honors and privileges which accompany NHS membership. Once a student is no longer a member, national rules dictate that the student is never eligible for membership again.