

National Honor Society



Handbook

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction**
- II. Criteria for Membership**
- III. Project System**
- IV. Mandatory Projects**
- V. How is Project Worth Determined**
- VI. Ambassadors**
- VII. Communication**
- VIII. Mandatory Meetings**
- IX. Honesty**
- X. Project Signup- SignUp.com**
- XI. Verification of Projects**
- XII. Chaps in Service Policy**
- XIII. Contact Us**

I. Introduction

Across the United States, National Honor Society is an organization held with the utmost respect and prestige. The four pillars of NHS include Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character. Members of this organization, in accordance with the four pillars, are excellent students in the classroom, selfless, willing volunteers in their community, natural born leaders, and respected individuals of integrity. It is our duty, as members, to meet the already high expectations that come with being an NHS member, as well as to strive to improve the organization and in doing so, to make a difference in our school and in our community.

II. Criteria for Membership

National Honor Society is a nationally acclaimed society which only accepts the most qualified individuals. In order to qualify, one must demonstrate each of the four pillars listed above. To show Scholarship, a prospective member must have a weighted GPA of a 97.5 or better. To show Service, one must have at least 10 points of service prior to applying (points of service are further explained on the candidate form). To show Leadership, a prospective member must present an example of a role of leadership in another organization (if one does not have a previous leadership role, leadership competency will be evaluated from the submitted essay as well as the recommendation letter). To show Character, a prospective member will submit an essay and a recommendation letter from a teacher; both must demonstrate valuable character traits that are necessary for acceptance.

III. Project System

At Westlake High School, in order to simplify and ensure that our members are active in the community, we have implemented a project system. This system requires that over the course of the year, in order to meet NHS requirements, a member must receive credit for 8 projects. It is important to note that half projects are sometimes awarded and thus, a member must receive exactly 8 projects to reach the minimum requirement (there is no rounding with project amounts). That being said, members who exceed this bare minimum and reach a total of 12 or at least 16 projects will be rewarded and recognized further for their exceptional dedication to the organization and the community. Projects vary in their purpose; some include helping out faculty members, volunteering at local events, tutoring students enrolled in the Eanes district, or helping keep the Austin area clean and beautiful. The execution of these projects demonstrates a member's selfless and responsible character, displaying the character traits NHS values immensely.

IV. Mandatory Projects

Mandatory projects are new this year. The way mandatory projects work is members will be provided with a list of three or four options of projects each semester that have been labeled “Mandatory.” Of these three or four each semester, members must choose at least one per semester to attend. The reason behind this new installation is to ensure a larger turn out at events where more volunteers are necessary to the success of the event. There are no exceptions to not completing one mandatory project each semester, especially considering members are provided several options, all of which occur at different locations and times. The two mandatory projects are included in the eight required projects each year (meaning, for instance, if Sally completed her two mandatory projects (in this instance the projects would only be worth one; however, the weight of a project is determined individually as seen in a later section), one each semester, she would then have only six additional, non-mandatory to complete to meet the bare minimum of eight projects for the year). Please note that if a member has completed his or her minimum eight projects, he or she must also attend the mandatory projects, both semesters.

V. How is Project Worth Determined

Project worth, or the number of projects a single event awards a member, is determined by the Executive Board using a simple algorithm that takes into account time, manual labor, and travel. The number of hours a member is present at a project is multiplied by 0.5 to determine the amount of projects awarded for time. If a project requires manual labor, such as pulling weeds, stacking boxes, painting etc., then a manual labor bonus of 0.5 is added. It is up to the discretion of the Executive Board how labor intensive the project is and thus how many manual labor bonuses should be awarded. Lastly, if a project requires long-distance travel, a travel bonus of 0.5 is added to award the willingness to help despite difficulty.

VI. Ambassadors

Part of being an NHS member is being responsible for yourself as well as having the ability to take direction from others. In order to create a more cooperative and cohesive atmosphere, one that makes our larger organization more personable, we have divided all members into small groups, first based on grade level then on alphabet. The “grade level division” was done in order to ensure a commonality among small group members to promote collaboration. Each of these small groups is led by a senior member. This senior member applied and was hand-selected based on exceptional qualifications to become an Ambassador. Each Ambassador is given a group of around twenty members. It is their duty to inform their members of policies and projects. Ambassadors and their groups are also *required* to meet every one to two months to ensure all members are meeting expected requirements. That being said, communication is a two-way street. It is also the member’s responsibility to communicate any questions or concerns with their Ambassador. Communication is pivotal to the success of NHS. It is important to note that Ambassadors will be evaluated with anonymous surveys at each of the quarterly all-members meetings; this is done to ensure our organization is running as best it can be.

VII. Communication

The success of any organization is dependent upon the quality of communication between leaders and their members. We are well-aware of the past communication difficulties that were unfortunately present in NHS, and we are determined to improve this year. In order to accomplish this goal, our website will be remodeled to include a Google Calendar that will be updated constantly with all projects. This website will also include all information that is necessary for members to have. In addition to a well-kept and highly informative website, all board members will be sharing their contacts with members via the website and in person at the first meeting. This will be in addition to each Ambassador having a personal REMIND class with their group of twenty. This REMIND class will be used by the Ambassador to send reminders regarding every project and to answer and chat with group members to ensure everyone is kept in the loop. Please note that REMIND is being used rather than group messaging to prevent a member being charged for each text sent in a group message which would add up rapidly. Also, NHS has a Facebook page that will be updated with “Pop-Up” Projects, reminders regarding planned-in-advance projects, and pictures recapping past projects. It is our hope that as many members as possible will join the page in order to be in the loop regarding all project-related news. All Executive Board members, Ambassadors, and our sponsor can be reached through email, text, or Facebook messaging.

VIII. Mandatory Meetings

There will be four mandatory meetings where everyone—all ambassadors and all of their group members—will meet. These will be scheduled on designated days whose exact date, time, and location will be provided at the beginning of the year. There will be a morning and afternoon meeting available on each of the four mandatory meetings. Attendance at these meetings is *absolutely required*.

IX. Honesty

As given in the name, this is the National *Honor* Society. Members must be honorable; this entails always being truthful with each other and with the organization. Lying about credentials or about completing projects is not characteristic of a true NHS member and reflects poorly on the organization as a whole. It is up to members to hold themselves accountable to complete and achieve all expectations set by the organization truthfully. Our organization is dedicated to making sure that everyone is able to meet their requirements with relative ease, and we are always willing to help our members accomplish their goals. Therefore, there is no possible justification for dishonest conduct. That being said, in the event that a member becomes aware of some corrupt action and feels obligated to report it, any of our leaders including Ambassadors, Executive Board members, as well as our Sponsor, Nadine Herbst will graciously hear and attend to the issue. Honesty is imperative to our organization and thus, we will do our best to ensure a high standard of honor is upheld.

X. Project Signup- SignUp.com

SignUp.com will now be used for all signups for projects. Members will have access to the sign ups through email, text, or social media. All members should open up the links (no matter the manner in which the link is presented) in order to learn more about the project. If they are interested and can attend, they will then proceed to sign up, providing information particular to the event. Please note that SignUp.com is a trusted organization. Members should not worry about sharing information such as their name, phone number, or email in the sign ups. This organization will help NHS to be more organized and more reliable. The lists of participants will be taken from the SignUp.com database and put into a spread sheet that will be used by an Executive Board member at the event to sign members in and out. Do note that if a member signs up prior to an event, he or she can also un-signup in the instance that an unforeseen conflict arises (preferably not last minute as this makes meeting volunteer requirements incredibly difficult for NHS then). However, in addition to un-signing up, members should notify a board member and/or their ambassador to help with ensuring volunteers quotas can be met.

XI. Verification of Projects

In addition to operating on honor, there will be a verification system in place. At each event, each member who has signed up to attend must both sign in at the beginning and sign out at the end of the event with whoever the Executive Board has designated to monitor attendance. If a member shows up late or has to leave early, the time of arrival or departure will be recorded and their project credit adjusted accordingly. The attendance sheets will be signed by the designated Attendance monitor and given to the Treasurer for record keeping and project credit allocation. At all group projects where it is possible, a group photo will be taken for memories and for record of who was present at the event. If this attendance system is not applicable to the project (for instance, with tutoring), a verification form must be filled out. This verification form will include details such as a signature of the participant, the sponsor, as well as contact information of the sponsor in order to confirm accuracy further. Additional details regarding this form are present on the form itself.

XII. Chaps in Service Policy

Chaps in Service is a separate organization from Nation Honor Society that is present at Westlake High School. We are fully aware of the difficult requirements to graduate with various titles at Westlake including the “Distinguished” route which requires at least seventy hours of community service. That being said, we must make it clear that Chaps in Service and NHS are two different organizations that each have their own requirements. No member is ever allowed to “double-dip” meaning no member is allowed to receive both Chaps in Service hours and projects for one event. That being said, the purpose of NHS is to help the community, and therefore, we will never turn away individuals that want to help. If members need Chaps in Service hours, they are certainly allowed to attend the NHS project and receive Chaps in Service hours— however, only Chaps in Service hours. A member must have met his or her eight project minimum in order to be eligible to use a NHS event to get Chaps in Service

Hours. It is the member's decision if he or she would rather want project credit (to reach the additional project markers that will later correspond to awards, see III. Project System) or Chaps in Service hours for his or her work at an event— they may NOT receive both. In the event that a member “double dips” on a project, NHS will not give the member any credit for that project.

XIII. Contact Us

Thank you for reading. We truly appreciate it. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the NHS president, Jessie Meek, or the NHS Vice President, Luke Sang. We will be happy to assist you.

Jessie Meek:

Cell: 512-375-1505

Email: jessie.k.meek@gmail.com

Luke Sang:

Cell: 512-571-9649

Email: luke.at.9@gmail.com
