

# National Honor Society

Fairview High School



## Becoming a Member Guide Sheet

### Introduction (selections from the NHS Constitution)

The National Honor Society (NHS) is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. More than just an honor roll, NHS serves to recognize those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of **Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character**. These characteristics have been associated with membership in the organization since its beginning in 1921.

### Selection Criteria

The NHS National Council establishes national standards for all NHS chapters. Local chapters create their own by-laws, which are consistent with and comply with the NHS National Constitution.

The “national” NHS establishes rules for membership that are based upon a student's outstanding performance in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, and character. These four criteria for selection form the foundation upon which the organization and its activities are built.

**Scholarship:** "students who have a cumulative grade point average of 85 percent, B, 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or equivalent standard of excellence, or a higher cumulative average, set by the local school's faculty council meet the scholarship requirement for membership. These students are then eligible for consideration on the basis of service, leadership, and character."(NHS Constitution, Article IX, section 2)

**Note: Although a cumulative GPA may be the most objective membership criterion, it is inappropriate to admit a student into NHS based solely on his/her GPA.**

**Service:** This quality is defined through the voluntary contributions made by a student to the school and/or community, done without compensation and with a positive, courteous, and enthusiastic spirit.

**Leadership:** Student leaders are those who are resourceful, good problem solvers, promoters of school activities, idea-contributors, dependable, and persons who exemplify positive attitudes about life. Leadership experiences can be drawn from school or community activity while working with or for others.

**Character:** The student of good character upholds principles of morality and ethics, is cooperative, demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability, shows courtesy, concern and respect for others and generally maintains a good and clean lifestyle.

Specific standards for these four criteria may vary from one school to the next. Such variations are acceptable as long as they do not fall below the standards set by the National Council of the NHS. All chapters are required to write down the criteria and procedures used in their local selection processes. The NHS adviser maintains copies of the local procedures and has them available upon request. Fairview adheres to these standards; see the following page for a description of the procedures used for membership selection.

## Membership in NHS here at Fairview . . .

Becoming a member in NHS is a three-step process.

**1. Nomination.** The first step in becoming a member of NHS is to be nominated as a potential member. Students do not apply to become members, but instead are nominated by teachers and staff as candidates for potential induction. Each spring semester, Fairview teachers are asked to nominate deserving students, and a nomination list is developed. Some students ask teachers to nominate them, but this is not appropriate. Students are notified of being nominated via postal letters sent to home addresses.

Students who receive a nomination letter are then asked to provide additional information, to include: a listing of extra curricular activities, leadership responsibilities, and some essay responses to specific questions. This information should be carefully assembled because it will be used later as a measurement for evaluation. An intelligent presentation of the information is also important.

NHS Teacher Committee members verify eligibility of students on the nomination list.

Students who are nominated and supply the additionally requested information go through a faculty review. Teachers, administrators, and staff are solicited to provide insight about the nominated students. The goal here is to give adults in the building the opportunity speak favorably about deserving students. Traditionally, members of NHS receive multiple positive comments.

A comprehensive review of each nominated student is then conducted by the NHS Teacher Committee. This committee is comprised of a core group of designated teachers representing each of the school's academic departments (five to eight members total). The review examines each student's GPA, essay responses, supplied additional information, faculty comments, and any other available pertinent information. When conducting the review, the committee utilizes the NHS membership criterion as the key benchmark for evaluation: scholarship, service, leadership, character. Some of these criterion are subjective (e.g. character), so there is an attempt to quantify these elements as part of the process. Remember, making membership decisions based solely on GPA is inappropriate (even though GPA is the most objective criterion). Evidence of existing leadership positions in other activities, personal commitment to community service, and well-roundedness are areas of interest to the committee. Although membership into NHS is indeed criterion-based, there is an element of norm referencing as well. Some membership decisions are based on the strengths of a student of the remaining nomination pool. The end result of this process is the creation of the **invitation list** (one step beyond the nomination list). Traditionally, 30% - 40% of the initial nomination list will be invited to join.

**2. Invitation.** Students who move from the nomination list to invitation list will receive a letter inviting students to participate in the annual NHS Induction Ceremony. Letters are distributed during the spring semester, several weeks after the selection process had begun; however, the induction ceremony occurs the following fall semester.

**3. Induction.** Students are NOT members of NHS until they attend an Induction Ceremony. Fairview holds one ceremony each year, the very first week of school (August). The ceremony is a pleasant occasion and family members are encouraged to attend. Attendance is mandatory, so students should plan accordingly. Specific information about the ceremony is included in the invitation letter.

## Once a member of NHS . . .

There are three main priorities for students.

1. **Scholarship.** Students are encouraged to carry on their development in student leadership by continually striving to improve academically and be the very best students possible. As a minimum standard, NHS members are expected to maintain a 3.75 weighted GPA.
2. **Fostering community relationships.** This is largely accomplished by working on service projects and attending regular morning NHS meetings. When leaders regularly meet with other leaders, positive ideas and actions result for the benefit of the school and surrounding community. Members are expected to attend all regular NHS meetings and participate in the community service projects outlined below.
3. **Community service.** This, in many respects, is the heart and soul of NHS. Good leaders serve the community (both in and out of the school) from which they are integrally connected. At Fairview, this is largely done through *service projects*. Community service is a requirement for members; see the guidelines below:
  - Individual Service Hours – 16 hrs. required each semester. These are hours accumulated doing various in and out of school activities (e.g. tutoring or nursing home visits). Participation is determined by student choice and can be done as an individual or in a small group.
  - Sponsored Group Activity – members are encouraged to participate in at least one NHS group activity each semester. These are large group projects (20 or more students) that are coordinated and carried out by NHS members. The idea behind these projects is to get several NHS members working together on one project at a time (as opposed to doing many individual projects where the students never meet). Each semester, the student leadership team will present several service project choices; they may range from a day-long activity to an extended project carried out over a period of time but your options are not limited to these projects. Have fun creating your own project and let a Leadership Team Member know your group and what you plan to do.
  - Fairview Activities – there are specific annual activities here at Fairview that NHS students have traditionally supported. These activities promote school and community spirit and allow NHS students to assert student leadership. They therefore are **required** activities for all members and do **not** fall under the realm of *individual service hours* or the *sponsored group activity*.

Back to School Night – September  
NHS Induction Ceremony – August  
Senior Graduation – May (seniors excluded of course, and also performing band members)

NHS Service

<b>Individual Service Hours</b>	<b>Sponsored Group Activity</b>	<b>Fairview Activities</b>
16 hrs. per semester	One per semester	All activities listed above

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