



National Honor Society Westfield High School Frequently Asked Questions

The Millennium Chapter of the National Honor Society at Westfield High School inducts new members in the first semester of each school year. Prior to induction, prospective members are required to submit a membership application and a teacher recommendation to the faculty sponsors of the NHS chapter. Each application is reviewed, the teacher recommendation is considered, and a decision on membership is made by a committee of faculty members called the Faculty Council. Those students whose membership is accepted to the Millennium Chapter are installed at an induction ceremony in December or January of the school year.

Here are some frequently asked questions that may help you understand what is required of prospective members and the application process.

1. Who may apply for membership in NHS?

Any Westfield student in his/her junior or senior year may apply for membership in NHS provided he/she first meets the minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) requirements. Other criteria for membership include: teacher recommendation, participation in extracurricular and community activities, and a commitment to community service. Senior students who have previously applied but were not accepted for membership in NHS during their junior year are highly encouraged to submit a new application at the start of their senior year.

2. What are the minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) requirements for membership in NHS?

Prospective members must have a minimum GPA of a 3.5. Current members must maintain a 3.5 GPA to retain membership in NHS. Current members whose GPA falls below 3.5 are put on probation for one semester, ending with a review of the student's GPA after the probationary period. Members on probation who do not raise their GPA above 3.5 after the probationary period are subject to faculty review and possible revocation of the student's membership in NHS.

3. How do I apply for membership in NHS?

Students who are interested in applying for membership in NHS are required to complete a membership application. An application may be acquired by asking any NHS faculty sponsor. The application consists of two parts. The first part asks the student to provide information on extracurricular activities, leadership positions, community involvement, and service activities. The second part is a teacher recommendation which must be completed by a member of the Westfield faculty and submitted by that teacher to one of the NHS faculty sponsors.

4. When do I apply for membership in NHS?

Any student in his/her junior or senior year may apply for membership in NHS. Applications are typically distributed in October and collected in November. A specific and final deadline date for applying is listed on the application. This deadline will not be extended; therefore, all applications must be turned in on or before this deadline date, or the application will not be accepted. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!!!** In addition, students who apply for membership in NHS are not automatically invited to join NHS. The application is

used by the Faculty Council as one of the criteria for membership, along with the student's GPA and disciplinary record and teacher recommendations.

5. When will I know if I've been accepted for membership in NHS?

Invitations to join the National Honor Society will be mailed to the applicant home address approximately two weeks prior to the induction ceremony. Those students who are not offered membership will receive a letter explaining the reason(s) for the applicant not being extended an invitation for membership into NHS.

6. Besides scholarship, what are the other criteria for membership in NHS?

The National Honor Society requires members to demonstrate leadership in and outside of school, perform service to their school and community, possess a character of high morals and ethics, and demonstrates citizenship by their membership in school and community organizations. The Millennium Chapter requires prospective members to list and describe their extracurricular activities, their leadership positions in these activities, their involvement in school and community activities, and the types and number of service hours performed in each of their high school years.

7. What are extracurricular activities?

Extracurricular activities include membership in school or community sports teams, band, chorus, orchestra, clubs, internships, part-time jobs, etc.

8. What is considered a leadership position?

A leadership position is any position in which the student had to manage, motivate, and oversee other people. These leadership positions can be elected or appointed positions in student government, clubs, or community organizations. Leadership positions can be associated with a particular service or community project. Work-related leadership positions (such as store manager, assistant manager, team leader, etc) are also acceptable.

9. What part does character play in the application process?

The Millennium Chapter of NHS holds in high esteem the character of its members. Therefore, students who have violated the Westfield Honor Code or have been subject to disciplinary measures by Westfield High School will most likely NOT be accepted for membership in NHS. While the likelihood of a student being granted membership in NHS for these types of infractions is slim, the student may still decide to submit his/her application. Students who choose to do so are highly encouraged to also submit a detailed explanation of the circumstances of the infraction as well as what the student learned from being involved in this infraction.

10. What are community activities?

Membership in NHS requires active participation in the community outside of school. Community organizations include: Boy and Girl Scouts, Police Explorers, Neighborhood Watch, community sports leagues (as a volunteer and not as a participant), service organizations like the Rotary Club or the Optimists Club, professional groups like the Chamber of Commerce, Adopt-a-Highway or similar environmental groups or activities, local chapters of national charity organizations such as the American

Cancer Society or American Red Cross, religious organizations such as church/synagogue/mosque, youth or mission groups, etc. Many of the activities of these types of volunteer organizations would fall under the “Service Hours” heading of the membership application. For instance, if you volunteered with the Red Cross two hours per week, you may list your involvement with the Red Cross in the “Community Activities” part of the application and the service hours performed as a Red Cross volunteer would be listed in the “Service Hours” section of the membership application.

11. What are service hours?

Service hours are the amount of time a student is involved in activities for which he or she receives no compensation. The student participates in these activities as a volunteer and with a “positive, courteous, and enthusiastic spirit.” Compensation does not only mean a monetary reward. Service hours that are performed in order to receive or boost a class grade (including service activities for the Student Government Association or SGA class) or to satisfy the requirements of a class (e.g. US/VA Government) may not be used as part of a student’s application to NHS. In addition, service hours performed so a student may be rewarded with a trip, prize, or other non-monetary reward may not be included in the student’s application to NHS. The exception to this is any service activity associated with the Boy/Girl Scouts or similar organization whereby the student is recognized with a badge or similar type of award or recognition.

12. How many service hours do I need for membership in NHS?

For prospective members to NHS, there is no magic number of service hours needed for admission to NHS. However, in reviewing the application of prospective members, the Faculty Council takes into consideration some factors concerning service hours. First, the Faculty Council looks at the overall commitment to service on the part of the student. In doing so, the Council considers whether or not the student participates in a number of different service projects and activities. Second, the Faculty Council considers if the student demonstrates a consistent commitment to community service. In doing so, the Council looks at frequency of the service activity (i.e. once a week, once a month, or once a year). Students who have participated in a number of service projects on a consistent basis throughout their high school career are looked upon more favorably than those students who have never participated in service activities or who do so on an infrequent basis. The good news is by living in the Washington Metro area, students have many opportunities to participate in service-related projects, organizations, and activities. A good place to start a search for volunteer opportunities is at www.volunteerfairfax.org.

If accepted for membership in NHS, a student is required to perform 20 community service hours per year in order to retain membership in NHS. These service hours may not be combined with the service hour requirements of other Westfield clubs, honor societies, or classes. In other words, no double-dipping! For juniors, community service hours must be completed by the start of school in September following their junior year. For seniors, community service hours must be completed by May of their senior years.

13. What should I include on my application?

In short: EVERYTHING! Leaving something out because there is not enough room on the application, you are too lazy, you are rushing through the application, you forgot, or you did not feel the information is significant might hurt your chances for acceptance into NHS. Typically, the Faculty Council is looking for a well-rounded student focused on academic success and who has a deep commitment in service to the community. Leaving important areas on the application blank will only diminish the chances of admission. This is not to say if you don’t have, for example, any leadership positions listed you will not get into NHS

but it certainly means the rest of your activities have to be that much stronger. While omitting relevant information on your application which would help the Faculty Council consider you for admission to NHS is bad, fabricating or making up information on your application is much worse. The members of the Faculty Council are experienced teachers who are highly involved in their communities and generally know what sort of volunteer activities are available to young people. All volunteer activities listed on the student's application must also include a contact name and telephone number or email address in order to verify the applicant's service hours and activities.

14. I'm a freshman or sophomore, why should I care now about membership in NHS?

If you think you might want to apply for membership in NHS in your junior or senior years, the NHS faculty sponsors advise you to start preparing now. What this means is you should become involved with school clubs and activities, research and start participating in volunteer organizations or service activities, maintain your GPA, and ensure you follow the Westfield Honor Code. Each year about 200 students apply for membership in Westfield's NHS chapter and only about 100 are accepted. The standards for membership are very high and, therefore, you will want to start getting involved now. The personal benefits of volunteering and community involvement surpass just NHS membership or even admission to college. Giving of yourself to the community fosters personal satisfaction and contentment as well as good citizenship. Your freshman or sophomore years are not too early to start a lifelong commitment to volunteerism.

15. Does it cost anything to be a member of NHS?

Dues for the 2011-12 school year are \$15.00 per member. By paying dues and remaining a member in good standing, you will receive a NHS member pin and certificate. You will also wear a National Honor Society cord at graduation and be listed in the graduation program as a member of NHS.

16. Who should I speak to if I need more information on membership to NHS?

The faculty sponsors are Mrs. Warren and Mrs. Campbell. They will be able to answer most questions you may have; however, it doesn't hurt to speak to a current officer or member of NHS. They will probably be able to give you advice on what service opportunities are out there for high school students. You may also visit the National Honor Society website at www.nhs.us if you would like to get information on the national organization of NHS.