



# Durham Academy

## Speech & Debate Team Handbook

2022-2023 School Year

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### **PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK**

The purpose of this handbook is to outline rules, regulations and guidelines that are necessary to maintain the integrity of the speech and debate team. These rules and expectations supplement and do not supercede school rules outlined in the Durham Academy All-School Handbook. While the intent of the handbook is to inform team members and families of basic rules and expectations, it is impossible to anticipate every situation that may arise during the year and thus school officials reserve the right to respond according to their judgment.

All participating students and parents are required to read and sign this contract before tournament travel. A signature page must be on file prior to all competition with Durham Academy Speech & Debate.

### **TEAM MISSION AND VALUES**

#### *Durham Academy's Mission Statement*

Our mission is to provide each student an education that will enable him or her to live a moral, happy and productive life. The development of intellect is central to such a life and, thus, intellectual endeavor and growth are the primary work of the school. The acquisition of knowledge; the development of skills, critical judgment and intellectual curiosity; and increased understanding are the goals of the school's academic program

Competitive speech and debate achieves Durham Academy's mission because when done correctly, it is the highest form of civil discourse. Its goal is to create a marketplace of ideas that foster carefully considered, research-based solutions to society's problems. Public speaking and debate is service to others, as speakers deliver important information to their audience and open themselves to questioning and critique.

Speech and debate fosters both individual and team development. In this activity, students compete both as individuals and as a team at tournaments. Students pursue individual excellence while simultaneously understanding that their success contributes to something worthwhile and greater than self: their team. The coach-student relationship is a long-term, intensive teaching opportunity that promotes individual development and growth. This handbook constitutes a commitment on behalf of the coaching staff to uphold the School's mission.

Coaches, students and parents agree to promote and to exemplify the School's Statement of Purpose and its core values of *developing sound mental and physical health, discover creativity and encourage growth of imaginations, develop habits that lead to moral behavior and growth of character, and to gain awareness of present and future obligations to fellow students, community, country and world.* Our coaching staff approaches each student as an individual, and we encourage close personal relationships fostered in an atmosphere of trust, respect of

individual differences and appreciation of diversity in order to succeed in our obligation to students and parents.

Additionally, the Speech & Debate team mirrors the Upper School's Principles of Community. We strive to teach our members to:

- Respect the dignity of each individual
- Treat others with kindness
- Share with those in need
- Conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity
- Encourage intellectual curiosity
- Care for the environment and property
- Discover the courage to do the right thing

The Mission Statement, Core Values and Principles of Community serve as our guidance in developing policies, standards and expectations on our team.

### **ACHIEVING VALUES THROUGH COMPETITION**

Tournament competition offers students the chance to see honor in action, growing in their understanding that success produced by taking shortcuts or cheating does not endure and harms the entire community. Their collective efforts as a team nurture a culture that honors and values each other's personal gifts and accomplishments. Of course, the pursuit of competitive success promotes a culture of excellence, and the advocacy skills learned through speech and debate prepare students for leadership throughout their lives. Speech and debate requires students to prepare to advocate for many sides of an issue, increasing empathy and tolerance even in the face of deep disagreements. Through the speech and debate team, students come to understand personal responsibility as they work together to prepare arguments and speeches, as they see the fruits of their combined efforts or the consequences of not upholding their shared responsibility. Chief among these core values, speech and debate demands moral courage, as students learn to stand before audiences to advocate for their beliefs, remedies to injustice, and to demonstrate how they value honor above all.

### **NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE ASSOCIATION'S CODE OF HONOR**

The National Speech and Debate Association's Honor Society recognizes students for participation in speech and debate activities. Students earn distinction through speech and debate competition, as well as community service, public speaking, and leadership activities. Members are eligible to join the Honor Society once they have earned the required number of points.

Members of the honor society are held to the Code of Honor, the highest standards of integrity, humility, respect, leadership and service. These standards have been required of members since the organization was founded in 1925:

**INTEGRITY:** An honor society member obeys the highest ethical standards and adheres to the rules of the organization. Members recognize that integrity is central to earning the trust, respect, and support of one's peers. Integrity encompasses the highest regard for honesty, civility, justice and fairness.

**HUMILITY:** A member does not regard him or herself more highly than others. Regardless of a person's level of success, he or she always looks beyond oneself to appreciate the inherent value of others.

**RESPECT:** A member respects individual differences and fosters diversity. He or she promotes tolerance, inclusion and empowerment for people from a variety of backgrounds.

**LEADERSHIP:** A member influences others to take positive action toward productive change. Members commit to thoughtful and responsible leadership that promotes the other core value in the Code of Honor.

**SERVICE:** A member exercises the talents he or she has been given to provide service to his or her peers, community and the activity. At all times a member is prepared to work constructively to improve the lives of others.

### **COACHES CODE OF ETHICS**

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in speech and debate. Students should be treated with the utmost respect, and their welfare should be considered in decisions by coaches at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the National Speech & Debate Association.

- Coaches shall be aware that they have tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of their students and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideal of character.
- Coaches shall practice integrity by upholding the honor and dignity of our profession. In all personal contact with students, judges, tournament officials, activities directors, school administrators, other coaches, the media, and the public, coaches shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- Coaches shall take an active role in the prevention of student drug, alcohol, and tobacco use.
- Coaches shall be expected to uphold their school's policy in regards to drug, alcohol, and tobacco use when in contact with students.
- Coaches shall strive to understand the contest rules and to teach them to their students. Coaches shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- Coaches shall exert their influence to enhance sportsmanship and fair-play by competitors and other coaches.
- Coaches shall respect and support tournament officials. Coaches shall not indulge in conduct that would incite other coaches or students against tournament officials. Public criticism of tournament officials, other coaches, or students is unethical.
- Coaches shall set the correct tone for a tournament or competition.

## **MEMBERSHIP POLICIES**

### *Eligibility Standards for Membership*

Durham Academy strongly desires to allow all interested students in grades 9-12 the opportunity to participate in the speech & debate program. Membership may be extended to students Grades 7 to 8 by invitation only. Participation in hosting the Cavalier Invitational and/or any additional tournaments held by Durham Academy is a requirement of team membership for all grade levels. Students may attend as many or as few travel tournaments as they wish. Middle School students are not permitted to participate in overnight travel. First-year participants may attend local tournaments as observers, but student observers may not attend overnight tournaments. Students are expected to attend all tournaments in the Triangle area during the competitive season. Students who do not compete in at least one tournament during the school year should not list forensics as an activity for that year on any college applications or resume.

### *Eligibility Standards for Grades*

Speech and debate team members must maintain high academic standards. Students must be in good standing with the school in order to be eligible for any overnight trips. "Good standing" is defined in the All-School Handbook as:

- No grade below a C-
- No more than 3 unexcused absences per semester
- No more than 12 excused absences per semester
- No more than five unexcused tardies per semester
- No more than two detentions and/or disciplinary actions per semester

Students placed on Academic Warning or Academic Probation may participate in practice, but may not travel to tournaments until their grades improve.

### *Eligibility Standards for Attendance*

Attendance is of critical importance in maintaining adequate progress in individual class sections. Immediately before and after tournaments team members must attend school except when the coach has specifically excused an absence. In situations when departure takes place during the school day, students must attend all classes before the scheduled departure time or the coach will bar them from attending the tournament. The only allowable exception to this policy is in the event that the student can produce a doctor's note explaining that an appointment caused the absence and that the student is in good health for travel. Attendance is required the day after a tournament.

Students are expected to be proactive in communicating with teachers, anticipating missed work and completing it in advance of the due date or in a timely manner when returning to school. Participating in speech and debate is never an excuse for not completing assignments.

### *Standards for Approving Materials*

The Director of Speech & Debate is the final authority over students' presented material and performance. Although students are encouraged to seek their own competitive material. All materials, arguments and/or performances need to be approved, prior to use, by a member of the coaching staff.

### *Standards for Partnered Events*

In partnered events, students must clearly understand their partner's objectives ahead of time before embarking on tournament competition (e.g. a partner who only desires to attend a few tournaments may hold back a student who wishes to participate more frequently.) The coaching staff will assist students in finding someone who has a similar commitment level, but the ultimate decision for partnerships rest with the Director of Speech & Debate.

### *Standards for Communication*

Because the focus of this activity is communication, team members are to demonstrate the highest degree of excellence in communication. Team members understand that all informative and administrative information is communicated via email, via Slack and by our website, and it is the team member's responsibility to be informed on important activities and deadlines. Furthermore, team members will initiate timely communication with the coaching staff whenever there are any conflicts or concerns.

### *Standards for Accountability*

Students are to be accountable for their own actions. Students will not blame judges, other members of our team or other teams, and will focus on what they need to do to get better. Students will hold themselves accountable by seeking to find where they can improve, listening to coaches on what they need to do better, and by making that change. Students strive to have a positive attitude.

### *Standards for Speech & Debate Team Leadership Positions*

All leadership positions are non-elected positions. Each Spring, the coaching staff will name a Leadership Team for the following school year after an application and interview process. Individual expectations will be established with each member. If necessary, leadership positions can be withdrawn from a student. The Director of Speech & Debate may also name Tournament Directors and Assistant Directors for the Cavalier Invitational at their discretion. Only these positions (leadership team and tournament staff) are recognized positions to place on resumes or college applications.

### *Standards for Team Meetings*

Attendance at regularly scheduled meetings is mandatory as directed by the coaching staff. The coaching staff must clear exceptions to this rule in advance.

### *Standards for Practice*

Students are expected to attend a minimum of one practice a week. Tournament entries create expectations concerning practice attendance. The coaching staff will make these expectations clear at the beginning of the year. At any point, students who are not meeting expectations may be removed from future tournament registrations. Those students who are continually absent, late or disruptive will lose travel privileges. Ideally, all conflicts with practice, will be disclosed by the student at least two weeks prior. The coaching staff expects that students help one another on the team, and are supportive of their teammates. Returning members are expected to be leaders to the rest of the team, and set the example for first-year students.

### *Standards for Tournament Competition and Independent Entry*

The coaching staff decides which tournaments to attend as well as which students will travel. School policy strictly prohibits students traveling to tournaments without a member of Durham Academy faculty or a supervising employee designated by the coaching staff or the school administration. No student or parent may ever register for a tournament as an independent entry.

### *Standards for Dress & Appearance*

As a representative of Durham Academy, students should exhibit an appearance in dress and behavior that is above reproach during competition. How students look communicates nearly as much as what they say. In general, tournament attire is:

- Business dress, pants or skirt with a blazer and blouse or sweater and dress shoes
- Business suit or jacket and slacks, dress shirt, tie, dress socks and dress shoes
- All hair should be worn in a professional manner and may not obstruct a team member's face

All team members are expected to remain in tournament dress throughout the duration of the tournament. Team members receiving awards must be in tournament dress. No team member will be allowed on-stage at any tournament in casual attire. Students eliminated from competition, and not receiving an award, may change at a tournament to a casual outfit. However, students may not edit their professional attire at tournaments to become more casual if they are finished at the tournament (e.g. removing a tie, rolling up sleeves, untucking dress shirts). All casual dress must comply with the standards and expectations of the dress code in the Durham Academy *All-School Handbook*.

Should any student have a specific question, please ask a member of the coaching staff. Final approval and discretion rests with the Director of Speech & Debate.

### *Standards for Social Media*

As a representative of Durham Academy, students should exhibit behavior that is beyond reproach on all social media platforms. Students should understand the public nature of these social platforms and the risks, responsibilities and accountability they assume when using them. Durham Academy may monitor the content of these sites because of the impact the sites can have on our learning community and team. Individuals should have no expectation of privacy since posted materials are owned by the site and can be redistributed at any time to others without the author's permission. Students who use social media to comment on other competitors, judges, coaches, schools or tournaments will lose travel privileges.

### *The Durham Academy Honor Code*

Durham Academy's Speech & Debate team is an integral part of the Durham Academy culture. It works in conjunction with the Upper School community to maintain a culture of honor. Any violation of the Durham Academy Honor Code will be referred immediately to the Honor Council. This includes, but is not limited to: evidence violations, unethical cutting of scripts or writing of cases, lying, misrepresentation, cheating, etc.

## **TOURNAMENT TRAVEL**

### *Payment Policy*

Durham Academy generously subsidizes the costs of attending tournaments. The students participating in each particular trip pay only a portion of travel expenses for that tournament. These student-paid expenses include airfare, hotel accommodations, ground transportation and some meals. The School assesses fees for tournament travel to each student's account on a monthly basis. Financial aid for travel with the speech & debate team is available when approved through the School's financial aid system. All students with demonstrable need are encouraged to apply.

### *Procedures for Local Tournament Registration*

The tournament schedule will be posted online at our team website ([www.dadebate.com](http://www.dadebate.com)). All registration will be completed by the students on an online form on the website. All registrations must be completed by the date listed via the provided Google Form. As registrations are accepted and approved, students' names will be posted as approved. This serves as a final commitment to the tournament. All students traveling to a tournament that requires that school be missed must fill out an Anticipated Absence Form and have it on file with the Front Office of the Upper School. Failure to do so may result in loss of travel privileges.

### *Procedures for Overnight Tournament Registration*

The tournament schedule will be posted online at our team website ([www.dadebate.com](http://www.dadebate.com)). All reservations for tournaments must be made by the prescribed due date. All students traveling to a tournament that requires that school be missed must fill out an Anticipated Absence Form and have it on file with the Front Office of the Upper School. Failure to do so may result in loss of travel privileges.

### *Standards for Tournament Travel*

Durham Academy schedules all flights and related travel arrangements in order to secure the best fares and a travel schedule that best accommodates the needs of the group. The Director of Speech & Debate will provide transportation, accommodation, and other logistical information to parents and students via email and website once finalized. Any parent, for any participant, may not change these plans. The coach schedules flights to allow students to reach the final round of each tournament. Although students may be eliminated earlier, the team will not depart until after the tournament is fully completed. A Durham Academy representative must always accompany students when traveling to, from and during tournament trips. Durham Academy never permits students to travel alone.

Students must always stay together at tournaments, and travel together in groups. No student may temporarily leave a tournament site unless approval is given by the Director one week prior to departure. Students may not leave a tournament site on their own, or with anyone other than a legal guardian or parent.

### *Standards for Communication at Tournaments*

Students should always keep their cell phone charged and on while at tournaments. Although it should not be on (unless in Airplane Mode) in rounds, it must be checked in between rounds. Students who fail to keep in touch with the coaching staff at tournaments will lose travel privileges.

### *Standards for Trip Cancellation*

In the event that a student cancels from the trip for any reason, including illness and academic performance, unrecoverable travel costs will be billed to that student's account subject to the following additional rules:

- Retained airline ticket value: Although airline ticket costs are unlikely to be refundable because of fare restrictions, depending on the airline on which we are traveling, the canceled ticket is likely to retain some value. In these cases, remaining value after cancellation becomes the property of the student whose name it was issued in after cancellation and that student's account will be billed for the full cost of the ticket. Parents may contact the Director and request that, when possible, the retained value of the ticket be applied to future tournament flights. If and when this occurs, the applied value of the canceled ticket will be deducted from the costs billed to the student for that future trip.
- Transferable tickets (usually available only as part of group contracts): If the team is traveling as part of a group contract, the ticket of a canceling student may be transferable. In such situations, the team will always attempt to substitute another student in that spot, so long as it is permitted by the host of the tournament, conducive to the Durham Academy Speech & Debate team, and permitted within the airline ticketing rules. If the ticket can be transferred, the canceling student's account will only be billed for any associated change fees.
- Tournament cancellation fees: If a student's cancellation incurs a fee from the tournament host, the canceling student will be responsible for that charge. This will be directly billed after the tournament.
- Cancellation policy for partnered events: In the case of partnered events where a student is unable to compete without his/her partner, the canceling student will be responsible for both his/her financial obligation as well as his/her partner's financial obligation for the cancellation.
- If student participation in a tournament is canceled by the school administration for academic or behavioral reasons, the family is responsible for costs accrued by the team specific to the student and in instances of a team event, their partner's expenses.

It is important to note that other trip expenses are calculated and charged to participants based on the number of students originally scheduled to participate. Therefore a portion of other expenses such as ground transportation, lodging and airfare may also be billed to the account of any canceling student unless Durham Academy is notified far enough in advance to realize savings from canceled reservations.

Students may always cancel their participation without penalty prior to the signup deadline. A student who cancels after the deadline twice during a school year will be barred from entering any additional tournaments during the year.

The Director reserves the right to suspend these procedures in the event of truly extenuating circumstances for a student or his/her family. In such cases, the Director and the administration will work with a family to determine if cancellation costs can be waived.

### *Standards for Tab Protests*

Students will not make protests to either the tab room or a judge without the Director of Speech & Debate.



### *Hotel Policy*

Each evening during a trip, chaperones will designate a curfew time. Students may not be out of their rooms after curfew time except to contact a chaperone in the event of illness, for an emergency evacuation, or other immediate need. A student leaving his or her room after curfew is considered to have committed a serious violation and will be subject to disciplinary action, including being sent home at parents' expense (which is likely to involve a parent having to travel to pick up the offending student).

Students may not enter any hotel room not assigned to them. Students may never be in the rooms of individuals who are not part of the Durham Academy team. Students may not leave the hotel without a chaperone. Students may not lounge in hallways or other recesses of hotels. All interactions must be done in the lobby of the hotel and visible to all.

Students are expected to be respectful of all hotel rules and procedures, and will be courteous to all hotel staff. Students are responsible for any damage or additional charges accrued during their stay at the hotel. This includes, but is not limited to additional cleaning fees, unauthorized purchases, or stolen or damaged property.

Students are not permitted in any pool or hot tub at any hotel. Students are allowed in a fitness center of hotels only with the permission of the coaching staff.

### *Transportation for Local Tournaments*

Durham Academy will sometimes provide transportation to the local tournaments. Procedures for signup for transportation will be emailed out with tournament registration. Space is sometimes limited, so parents and students need to be aware of arrangements. Otherwise, parents and students are responsible for providing their own local transportation for each day's competition when Durham Academy is not providing it. In such cases, it is the students and parents responsibility to make transportation arrangements. Supervision will always be provided at the tournament site.

## **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

In order to ensure a positive experience for everyone, Durham Academy's behavior expectations are clear and concise.

- All members of the speech and debate team are expected to show mutual respect and sensitivity to others. This includes all interactions with teammates and members of the community at-large. Vulgar/hateful remarks or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
- Harassment - defined as behavior that is insulting, demeaning, distressful, or intimidating - as well as physical aggression and violence will be cause for disciplinary action.
- Sexual Misconduct - defined as sexually-based verbal, physical, written, image-based or electronic conduct that demeans another's fundamental human dignity or violates the community standard of acceptable behavior will be cause for disciplinary action.
- Bullying - defined as willful, deliberate or hostile activity that physically and emotionally harms another person will be cause for disciplinary action.
- Students should cooperate with instructions from coaches and chaperones. Coaches and chaperones will not tolerate a repeated, deliberate lack of cooperation.

Violations of the above expectations can result in disciplinary actions including parental notification, suspension from tournament travel, and referral to the Honor Council or administration as proportional to the infraction. If violations occur while traveling to a tournament, consequences can include being sent home at parents' expense.

Any student who uses or possess drugs, alcohol or tobacco during any team event, function or trip will be sent home at the parent's expense. Such infractions will result in expulsion from the speech and debate team as well as immediately reporting to the school administration for further disciplinary action.

To maximize the educational experience of the activity and to teach the value of teamwork, all students are expected to share all evidence with their teammates. All team members are expected to follow the rules of competition and behave as ethical members of the community. At tournaments, the coaching staff, as well as tournament staff, will investigate any protest filed against a team member. As soon as possible after an alleged violation of any of the above, should the Director find merit, a report of the incident will be filed with the Honor Council for further investigation and appropriate punishment. Violation of team expectations of evidence sharing or ethical competition expectations as stated above will result in at least

- A warning, parental notification and reporting to the Honor Council for additional action.
- Suspension from the team a full semester of competition and reporting to the Honor Council for additional action.
- Permanent removal from the team and reporting to the Honor Council for additional action.

Any infraction of Durham Academy's conduct policy can prevent a student from participation in speech and debate activities at the determination and discretion of the coaching staff and the administration.

### **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

Part of being a responsible team member is to adhere to these standards and expectations. In the event that the coaching staff begin to see a pattern of behaviors that do not align with these standards and expectations, certain procedures will be followed to assist students in correcting the error of their ways. Students may be asked to leave practice and/or be dropped from (or not considered for) tournament entry at anytime. Additionally, these procedures serve as a suggested avenue for discipline. The Director of Speech & Debate may change procedures due to the nature or severity of the violation.

- As coaches notice a pattern of behavior that is concerning, they will have an official meeting with the student to remind them of the standards and expectations of this agreement.
- If this behavior continues or occurs again, coaches will have another official meeting with the student explaining the violation of the agreement. An action and behavioral plan will be agreed upon, and students and parents will sign the behavioral plan.
- If the behavior continues further, the coaches will refer the student to the Deans of Students.

### **AGREEMENT**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the *Durham Academy Speech & Debate Team Handbook*. As the student, my signature attests to the fact that i have read its content and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained therein. As the parent, I also acknowledged that my student has read these policies and procedures and agrees to abide by them.

**Please return this page and keep the remainder of the Handbook for your reference.**

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Printed Student Name

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Printed Parent Name

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Student Signature

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Parent Signature

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Date

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Date