



National Honor Society Information Sheet

Membership in the National Honor Society (NHS) is one of the highest honors that can be awarded to a high school student.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF NHS

Scholarship: The student not only achieves high marks academically, but also demonstrates a love of learning, a thirst for knowledge beyond what is required, and a commitment to the pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty.

Character: The student consistently meets the MCA expectations, and is a virtuous role model for all members of the MCA community. The student exhibits the classical cardinal virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Justice and Fortitude.

Leadership: The student is not only a passive leader by living an exemplary life, but is an active leader in the MCA community and/or beyond. These roles may be acquired either through personal initiative, or through appointment or election by others. The student serves as a leader in roles which require decision-making, exercising good judgement, and conducting oneself virtuously. The leadership role is carried out with confidence, but also with humility.

Service: The student is involved in acts of service to others which require sacrifice. The service is undertaken out of a genuine commitment to meet a need, and not for personal aggrandizement or to build a resumé. In other words, the student would serve in this way even if it did not include recognition.

NHS FACULTY COUNCIL

- The Upper School NHS Faculty Council is tasked with the selection process for inductees in the Upper School NHS Chapter
- The NHS Faculty Council consists of 5 voting members, approved by the Headmaster. The 5 voting members are selected, in part, to represent the various disciplines of Science, Math and the Humanities.
- The NHS Faculty Council also consists of 1 non-voting member who serves as the Chapter sponsor, chairs Council meetings and performs other administrative duties related to the Chapter.



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ELIGIBILITY

- Students first become eligible to apply for membership in the MCA Upper School National Honor Society Chapter at the end of their sophomore year. Juniors whose GPA meets the standard are also eligible to apply.
- To be eligible to apply, a student must have a cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.75 calculated from the beginning of the 9th grade year to the last complete quarter (typically 3rd quarter).
- *N.B. Student report cards typically represent a weighted GPA and so may not provide the relevant value for NHS eligibility.*

APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

- All eligible students are given a written invitation to apply for membership.
- The invitations are given only once per year, typically late in the the 4th quarter.
- The invitation includes an application in which the student explains his or her commitment to the four pillars of the NHS: scholarship, character, service and leadership.
- The application must be submitted by a stated deadline.
- Each applicant is scheduled for an in-person interview with at least 2 NHS Faculty Council Members. The interview lasts about 15-30 minutes and addresses anything of relevance to the four pillars (scholarship, leadership, service, character) and NHS membership.
- The Faculty Council subsequently meets, discusses and votes on each applicant's membership individually.
- *N.B.* No student is inducted simply because of a high academic average. The NHS Faculty Council makes a decision based on the totality of the student's eligibility, written application, oral interview, exemplary life in and outside of the classroom, and suitability to serve as a school leader in the NHS Chapter.
- Applicants may receive one of three decisions by the Faculty Council. The applicant may be accepted as a member into NHS. The student may be declined membership. Or, the student may be offered an extended application period.



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- Students are notified by mail of the Faculty Council's decision during the first week or two after the spring semester ends.
- Accepted applicants are inducted into NHS in the subsequent fall semester.
- Declined applicants are given an explanation for the Faculty Council's decision, suggestions to improve eligibility and, if the GPA standard is still met, may re-apply the following spring. Applicants who are declined membership may appeal the decision. The appellate process is explained below.
- Some applicants may be given an extended application period in which to demonstrate growth or improvement in an area of deficiency. This is explained more fully below

IMPORTANT BENCHMARKS

- Late 4th Quarter (Spring Semester), Sophomore or Junior Year: NHS Application Process
- First two weeks of summer vacation: Applicants receive notification of Faculty Council Decision
- First full week of Fall Semester: Those whose applications were declined may initiate appeals process in writing to the Faculty Sponsor if they wish to appeal the decision. Those offered an extended application period indicate acceptance of the offer in writing to the Faculty Sponsor.
- Early 1st Quarter (Fall Semester): NHS Induction Ceremony
- December: NHS Faculty Council convenes to reconsider any applicants who accepted the offer of an extended application process

MCA UPPER SCHOOL NHS "EXTENDED APPLICATION PROCESS"

The extended application period gives an applicant an additional semester to demonstrate to the NHS Faculty Council that he or she meets the standards necessary for approval as an inductee. This application period consists of the fall semester following the May/June application process in which the candidate was not approved. Following is the Extended Application Process:

1. The applicant is informed that he/she was not approved for Fall induction, but is offered the option of an extended application period for the following Fall semester.



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2. During the first full week of school in the fall semester, the applicant submits a letter to the faculty sponsor indicating acceptance of the offer. Barring extenuating circumstances, any applicant who does not submit such a letter *de facto* declines the offer and must re-apply for induction in the following spring if he/she wishes to be reconsidered for NHS membership.

3. Within one week of receipt of this letter, the faculty sponsor, in collaboration with some or all of the Faculty Council, communicates to the applicant the criteria by which he/she will be deemed eligible for induction. These criteria must relate specifically to the reason for non-approval and must be designed to encourage the student to cultivate one or more of the four pillars of NHS (scholarship, leadership, service, character). A possible (but not required) measure of the candidate's success in overcoming any deficits may be a late fall survey of the student's current teachers and other staff with whom the student regularly interacts during the extended application period. A sample question posed to such faculty and staff could be, "John Doe is being considered for membership in the Upper School NHS. Your input will greatly assist the NHS Faculty Council in reaching a fair and well-informed decision. In your view, has the student demonstrated a commitment to and love of learning since the beginning of this school year?" or, "In your view, has the student been a leader since the beginning of this school year in fostering a positive learning environment and appreciative student culture at MCA?" Regardless of the measure to be used, the student will be notified by the faculty sponsor of the measure so the student has a reasonable opportunity to meet the standard.

4. The Faculty Council will meet in late November or early December to reconsider the student's application. If it is agreed that the student has satisfactorily rectified the deficit(s) that prevented approval in the previous spring, and the student has not demonstrated any new substantial reasons to bring his/her eligibility into question, the student will be approved for induction. If however, the student has not satisfactorily rectified the deficit(s), or if the student has demonstrated a new relevant deficiency (i.e., one related to the four pillars), then the student may be denied approval for induction. In such a case, the extended application period ceases. The student may then either appeal the decision or (if he/she has a qualifying GPA) may go through the application process in the following spring if he/she wishes to be reconsidered.

5. A student who is approved for induction at the end of the extended application process becomes an official member in good standing of the MCA Upper School NHS at the beginning of the spring semester. The student will be publicly and formally inducted at the regular induction ceremony in the subsequent fall semester.



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6. This extended application period is not a “fall semester” membership process open to new candidates. It is not open to any except those to whom it is offered at the conclusion of the spring process.

NHS “NON-SELECTED STUDENT APPEALS PROCESS”

In the event an MCA Upper School student applies for membership in the MCA NHS chapter, is not selected, and wishes to appeal the non-selection decision, the student should follow this procedure:

1. All appeals must be made to the faculty advisor in writing (hard copy, not digital) during and no later than the first week of the new school year following the spring selection process (or no later than the first full week of school following Christmas break for extended application process candidates)
2. The faculty advisor will then set up a meeting with the NHS faculty council who will serve as the appeals board. At least 3 faculty council members must attend. The faculty advisor will attend this meeting, but not have a vote in the decision. This meeting should take place within the second week of school. At this meeting, the appellant will explain why he or she believes the non-selection should be reconsidered.
3. The faculty appeals board will meet privately as soon as practicable after this meeting and decide either to reject or sustain the student’s appeal. The decision will be relayed to the student *and* to the Upper School Dean in writing (hard copy) within 24 hours of the meeting, or on Monday of the following week if the meeting takes place on a Friday.
 - 3A. If the appeals board sustains the student’s appeal, the student and Upper School Dean will be notified in writing within 24 hours of the meeting, or on Monday of the following week if the meeting takes place on a Friday.
 - 3B. If the appeals board rejects the student’s appeal, the student may then appeal in writing (hard copy) to the Upper School Dean or school Headmaster (one, but not both), within one week of the appeals board decision. The Upper School Dean or school Headmaster should meet with the student within one week of this appeal. The Upper School Dean or Headmaster will notify the student *and* the NHS faculty advisor of his/her decision in writing (hard copy) within 24 hours, or on Monday of the following week if the meeting takes place on a Friday. The decision of the Upper School Dean or school Headmaster will be final.



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4. In the event the student's appeal is sustained by either the faculty appeals board, or the Upper School Dean (or school Headmaster), the student will be initiated into NHS with the other candidates at the fall initiation and will enjoy full NHS obligations and privileges.

5. In the event the student's appeal is denied, the student may re-apply with qualifying GPA during the next application process.