

## Check List and Instruction Sheet

### Admittance into National Honor Society 2012

Please read the following document carefully regarding the NHS application process.

If accepted for membership in the National Honor Society, I understand and agree to the following:

1. I will attend ALL meetings. Meetings are held after school every other week in Room 1201.
2. I will accumulate 24 total hours (12 per semester) of community service during my membership in NHS per the guidelines of the Vernon Hills High School NHS.
3. I will not let my grade point average fall below a cumulative 3.4 any semester. I understand should my GPA fall below the 3.4 minimum GPA, I will automatically be dismissed from NHS.
4. I will abide by all school rules, local, state and federal laws. Should I be found to participate in any activity that is illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable, I understand my situation will be reviewed by the Faculty Council. They will determine the appropriate consequences up to and including dismissal.
5. I will sign and abide by the D128 Activities Code of Conduct and the NHS Code of Conduct.

As you complete the application process, please initial each box accordingly in the following Check List:

**Print one completed set of the application paperwork to turn in. Assemble the paperwork in the following order:**

- 1.** Check List and Instructions page with your initials.
- 2.** Activity Form – page 1 with your Signature and Personal Statement
- 3.** Activity Form – page 2 and 3
- 4.** Your personal essay

**Make sure your name is not located anywhere on the Activity Form pages 2 or 3, or on the essay.** Also be sure to initial each box on the Check List and Instructions page.

Paper clip all parts of the Activity Form together IN CORRECT ORDER.

**Activity Form due date is Thursday, February 9, 2012** in Mrs. Steffens' Office in the Blue Teacher Workroom no later than 3:30 P.M. Applications will NOT be accepted after 3:30 P.M. Do not put applications in mail trays, LST's, the Main Office, or at any other location. Only Mrs. Steffens and Mrs. Richert, her secretary, will accept your application.

I have read the application and the instructions thoroughly and understand that failure to follow the specific directions will likely disqualify my application.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY APPLICATION

If you feel that you are an eligible candidate for NHS, you have a cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher, you have some leadership experiences and some service experiences, please continue reading the instruction sheet and download the application. An invitation letter to apply will be sent home verifying your qualification to apply.

In the VHHS application you will be asked to address your community service, leadership and involvement within the school and community.

### **Downloading and Completing the Activity Form (READ CAREFULLY)**

Go to the Vernon Hills High School Website (<http://vhscougars.org/>) and locate the four NHS documents for the application process including the Check List and Instructions for Application, the Activity Form, the Code of Conduct, and the form for Community Recommendations.

You are to **type** all of your information directly onto the application. Please allocate enough time to complete the entire application well before the due date. After you have completed your portion of the application, print it out so you can gather all the appropriate signatures. Again, **ALLOW ENOUGH TIME TO COMPLETE THE ENTIRE APPLICATION** and get all signatures. They are not always available the day before the applications are due and the committee pays particular attention when blanks appear on the application.

Avoid the use of acronyms so that the selection committee understands your application.

Activities and experiences may include those with the high school and those completed outside the high school while attending high school.

If you decide to ask a member of the community to write a recommendation for you because this person can verify your good character, service or leadership, please print the copies you need of the Community Recommendation form from the VHHS website. **All Community Recommendations must be MAILED to Mrs. Cheryl Steffens at VHHS.** Consider providing your recommendation writer with a stamped and addressed envelope.

Turn in one completed set of application paperwork. Make a set for your records, as well. Make sure your name is not located anywhere on the Activity Form pages 2 or 3, or on the essay.

Your completed application paperwork must be turned in to Mrs. Steffens by Thursday, February 9 no later than 3:30 P.M. Pictures, certificates of achievement, awards, etc. may not be included with your application. If all instructions are not followed, your application will likely not be considered.

### **Community Service/Volunteer Work Section**

The committee looks specifically at how you have shown examples of leadership and been involved in community service. It is **recommended and desirable** to demonstrate at least 10 cumulative hours of your community service. The hours must be those you have completed during your high school career only.

Please note that simply being involved in an activity or athletic program in high school is not service—it is an activity or athletic program that you were selected for due to a skill or an interest. Activities and athletics are not a pillar of NHS. If you can demonstrate how you completed service while with your club or sport, then that would qualify. Many athletics/activities/clubs have service opportunities already built in.

Generally speaking, service activities are those which are done on behalf of others (not including immediate family members) for which **no compensation** (monetary or other) has been given. You may list any school, community, or religious activities in which you have offered service without pay during your high school years.

### **Leadership Section**

To complete this section, you must demonstrate leadership qualities in school, community or religious activities during your high school years (not before and not those that may be anticipated). It is **recommended and desirable** to demonstrate at least 10 hours of leadership (hours completed during your high school career only).

Simply being involved in an activity or athletic program in high school is not leadership—it is an activity or athletic program that you were selected for due to a skill or interest. Activities and athletics are not a pillar of NHS. If you can demonstrate how you completed leadership while with your club or sport, then that would qualify. If you held a leadership position in that activity /athletics, then that would be leadership. Leadership may also be from a job, an outside VHHS organization, etc. and **a leadership position can be paid.**

Leadership can be direct (club officer, tutoring) or indirect. In the case of indirect leadership, a student must demonstrate that despite the lack of a title, he/she exhibited some degree of responsibility and leadership outside of normal expectations. In the case of direct leadership, title is not enough. A student must explain how he/she demonstrated leadership in the position. Showing up for required practices/activities is not leadership—that is an expectation of membership.

### **The Selection Process**

The NHS Faculty Council, selected by the principal and the Faculty Council Advisor, evaluates the students' submissions for leadership and service. The Faculty members will remain anonymous. The NHS Faculty Council consists of 5 voting faculty members who review all applications in a blind process. No names are ever shared so every application is given the same merit based only on the characteristics you have shared on paper. The Faculty Council is given the charge of only admitting those students with considerable leadership responsibilities already exhibited, philanthropic involvement and strong character. This is a charge the committee takes very seriously.

There is no minimum or maximum number of candidates selected for membership each year; rather all who are judged to meet the criteria are accepted. Applicants who are not chosen will have another opportunity to reapply in the fall as Seniors, provided they maintain the required 3.4 GPA. We strongly encourage that they also seek additional leadership and service experiences to improve the quality of their application. Most often students who are not accepted are lacking in leadership and service examples.

The faculty recommendations and community recommendations for each candidate are used to support the strength of each student's candidacy in the areas of character and leadership. Faculty and staff are encouraged to comment concerning their interaction with candidates. Students' personal behaviors, classroom conduct, social behavior (in the halls, at school events, and outside of school) are all used to help evaluate the student's candidacy. Rumors and hearsay are not considered.

One negative rating and/or comment does not automatically disqualify a student from admission. However in the case of any reported incidents of cheating (plagiarism, any type of copying or allowing one's work to be copied) and illegal behavior (substance abuse, for example) an application will likely be disqualified.

## **Summary of Admission to the National Honor Society at District 128**

The National Honor Society promotes appropriate recognition of students who reflect outstanding accomplishments in the areas of SCHOLARSHIP, LEADERSHIP, CHARACTER, and SERVICE.

### **SCHOLARSHIP**

Candidates must have a cumulative, weighted, academic average of at least a 3.4 GPA. Please understand that a 3.3999 does not qualify. Rounding is not used to accurately determine a student's GPA. Students at VHHS must encompass ALL four pillars of NHS- scholarship, leadership, service and character. Scholarship is not enough by itself and is never part of the selection process once the initial 3.4 or above GPA is met. GPA is never given to the selection committee.

### **CHARACTER**

The candidate will be able to demonstrate an outstanding record of conduct and behavior with regard to school and community rules or is able to demonstrate sufficient growth to compensate for previous inadequacies. Character scores presented on faculty recommendations are confidential. At no time will character scores be shared.

**LEADERSHIP and SERVICE** – See detailed description earlier.

The Faculty Selection Committee evaluates each student's leadership and service based on the following criteria:

**Exceptional** candidate, student is of outstanding character/leadership. Student exemplifies all attributes desired of a VHHS NHS applicant.

**Student is of average** character/leadership

**Student lacks** character/leadership (not shown on application)

**Incomplete application**/Did not follow instructions, application not considered

**QUESTIONS** – Please contact the VHHS NHS Faculty Council Advisor – Mrs. Cheryl Steffens at 847-932-2015.