

The ETHS Speech and Debate Team Handbook

Welcome to the Handbook. This document is designed to help students and families better understand our team: our principles, our practices, and our purpose.

Sections 1-4 establish our guiding principles and norms, describe the various events we participate in, and discuss the various levels of commitment that our team involves for students and families.

Sections 5-8 are a collection of guidelines, advice, and admonitions for students who will be attending tournaments: preparation, competition, behavior, and travel. These sections are still very much under construction.

1: Fundamentals

1A: Guiding Principles

1B: Community Norms

1C: Consequences

1D: ETHS Pilot and Student Activity Code

2: Event Descriptions

3: Time Commitments

3A: Practice and Preparation Expectations

3B: Tournament Basics

4: Financial Costs

4A: Tournament Financial Obligations

4B: Fundraising

5: Resources

5A: Coaches

5B: Team Captains

5C: Team Website

5D: Google Drive

6 - Competition

6A: The Night Before and the Morning Of

6B: Before You Go to Your Round

6C: During Your Round

6D: After Your Round

6E: Round Reports

7 - Tournament Etiquette

7A: General Behavior

7B: Watching Rounds

7C: Cafeterias

7D: Award Ceremonies

8 - Travel

8A: How Do Van?

8B: What Is Airport?

8C: Why Coach Anger?

8D: How It Hotel?

1: Fundamentals

1A: Guiding Principles

These are the goals of our team; our coaches are committed to these principles, and we ask that you commit yourself to them, as well.

1. **Education:** Speech and Debate is an educational activity, and we will always seek to develop, refine, and implement best practices to help our students learn and grow.
2. **Inclusion:** The Speech and Debate team should reflect our student population. We will work to create and maintain an open, inclusive, and safe space for all students.
3. **Student Leadership:** Speech and Debate empowers students by helping them find their voice. We will structure our team and our decision-making process such that students are involved and empowered.
4. **Fun:** The Speech and Debate team should be an enjoyable experience for students. We will create a relaxed, inviting space that recruits and retains students on its own.
5. **Competitive Excellence:** To the extent that competition is a goal for our students, we will encourage them to aim for the highest levels of success. We will facilitate local, state, and national competitive excellence.

1B: Community Norms

In order to enact these principles, we hold to several community norms:

1 - Love and respect your teammates.

You do not need to like every member of the team, or be friends with every member of the team, but you will respect every member of the team and what they do. Every event we compete in has value; every tournament we attend has value; every success our students achieve has value.

Whether you compete by yourself or with a partner, in debate or speech, nationally or locally, every member of this team is family. Support, appreciate, and love your teammates.

2 - Communicate.

Our team is a large and complex one, and it requires effective communication to thrive. We communicate in a number of ways. First and foremost is email. Each Sunday there is an update email that will include most of the relevant information for team members.

Second is our team website: <http://www.ethsspeechanddebate.org/> There you will find our current practice schedule, a calendar of our tournaments for the year, rosters for upcoming tournaments, and important travel documents.

Third is our Facebook group: ETHS Speech and Debate. There, students and parents can celebrate victories and reach out for support.

Fourth is our Twitter handle: @ETHS_Debate. An updated twitter feed is available on our website's frontpage, and we try to use this to push out live results from tournaments.

3 - Take ownership of the team and your experience.

We want students to invest in this activity and in our team. There are many ways to do this.

Fun: Actively contribute to team culture. Help your teammates keep their focus on enjoying this activity.

It's okay to enjoy debate!

Work: You can get from Speech and Debate whatever you put into it. Practices, tournaments, and team activities are all optional. Students may participate as much or as little as they want. That said, tournament slots are occasionally limited (especially for travel tournaments), so preference will be given to students who have demonstrated commitment and hard work.

Accountability: Many aspects of the team ask students to set their own expectations. Be cognizant of when your teammates are depending on you to deliver work product. For example, if you commit to completing research or coming to a practice, try your best to complete those tasks. At the very least, communicate with coaches and teammates.

Leadership: Every team member is capable of leading in their own capacity, be it through formal or informal roles. All students can lead by example; everybody is encouraged to envision growth for the team and make suggestions to coaches about best practices. Moreover, students will be selected for official leadership positions at the end of every year based on prior years' performance. Students who have accepted a leadership position on the team have an added expectation to fulfill their position description.

1C: Consequences

Students who fail to respect their teammates or coaches, or who make other students feel unsafe, will not

be allowed to attend tournaments until the coaches are certain that the problematic behavior will not repeat itself. If a student persistently demonstrates disrespect towards their teammates, they will not be allowed to attend any team events (including practices).

Students who fail to communicate are subjecting themselves to a less functional team. Students who do not communicate are unlikely to be fielded for tournaments.

Similarly, students who do not take ownership of the team face the consequence of being on a debate team they don't enjoy. This is the worst consequence of all...

1D: ETHS Pilot and Student Activity Code

All provisions of the [ETHS Student Handbook](#), including rules regarding behavior and school discipline policies, apply at all Speech and Debate team events and functions, including tournaments.

Of particular importance is the section on Academic Eligibility (pg 40); students may only participate in Speech and Debate if they are passing five classes and have at least a 2.0 GPA.

2: Event Descriptions

Lincoln-Douglas debate, or LD, is one-on-one debate. Topics range from animal rights to universal healthcare to Constitutional questions. The topics, also called resolutions, change every two months.

Public Forum debate, or PF, is two-on-two debate. Debaters work with a partner to debate topics ranging from tax policy to Middle Eastern policy to climate change. The resolutions change every

month.

Policy Debate, often just called Policy, is also a partnered (two-on-two) event. Teams debate a single proposition throughout the entire year, exploring a variety of policy options on the issue. This year's topic is Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its non-military exploration and/or development of the Earth's oceans.

Congressional Debate, often just called Congress, is modeled after the US Congress. Students participate in a chamber of 18-20 students, debating bills and resolutions that they have written themselves.

In **Interpretation Events** (Humorous Interp, Dramatic Interp, Prose, Poetry, Duo Interp, Humorous Duet Acting, Dramatic Duet Acting), students select a piece of literature to perform or interpret, then edit their script down to a set time limit, and perform the piece either by themselves or with a partner.

In **Platform Speaking Events** (Oratory, Declamation, Informative Speaking, Special Occasion Speaking), students select a topic or pre-written speech that interests them. Then they write, revise, memorize, and perform that speech throughout the year.

In **Limited Preparation Events** (Extemporaneous Speaking, Impromptu Speaking, and Radio Speaking), students are given a question, prompt, or unedited script, and given a limited amount of time to prepare a speech in response.

3: Time Commitments

3A: Practice and Preparation Expectations

Every event meets roughly once or twice a week. The days of the week on which meetings are held vary by activity. Practice lasts about 1-2 hours, although practices may last longer right before tournaments. Practices may include discussion of strategy, analysis of past performances and results, research, and practice speeches and debates.

Most activities will require some event preparation on the student's own time. This also varies widely by event, the student's level of commitment, and the time of the season.

To give you an idea of how the commitment might vary by activity, we've included a table below. Keep in mind that these are not expectations, this information is just meant to be a gauge for how the average debater in a given activity works. We encourage you to participate in events you're interested in even if you can't commit to the level indicated in the table.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Practice</u>	<u>Homework</u>	<u>Learning Curve</u>	<u>Work Distribution</u>
Policy Debate	High	High	Very High	Consistent; slightly more at beginning of year, but steady afterwards
Lincoln Douglas	High	High	Med-High	Cyclical; new topic every two months
Public Forum	Medium	Medium	Medium	Cyclical; new topic every month
Congress	High	Medium	Low	Consistent; year-round research and skill development
Limited Prep Speaking	High	Low	Low	Consistent
Interpretation of Literature	Medium	Medium	High	Heavy at beginning of year, lighter afterwards
Platform Speaking	Medium	Medium	Low	Heavy at beginning of year, lighter afterwards

3B: Tournament Basics

Speech and Debate tournaments take place on weekends throughout the year. A schedule for this year can be found here: [ETHS Speech and Debate Calendar](#).

For Saturday tournaments, we typically take an ETHS activity van from the school to and from the host school, departing ETHS around 7 AM and returning between 4 and 9 PM, depending on the tournament.

For travel tournaments, or for local tournaments that begin on a Friday, students often miss school. These absences are excused, and do not count towards an incomplete.

4: Financial Costs

4A: Tournament Financial Obligations

There is no cost to students for *local* tournaments.

When we travel to tournaments that require an overnight stay, we will report the actual cost of the trip to families. For example, when we travel to Des Moines for the Mid-America Cup, the team spends about \$260 per student; if families are able to pay the true, full cost of the trip, we ask that they do so.

Recognizing that not all families are capable of financing these trips in full, we ask for a slightly reduced commitment from all families for each trip; for the Mid America Cup, we asked families to contribute \$150.

By contributing the full cost of trips, or the requested commitment level, families help us maintain the following fundamental commitment: no student will ever be denied an opportunity because of an inability to pay. If you can afford a smaller contribution, we welcome it, but even that is not necessary. If we cannot bring every student who has worked hard and wants to attend, then we do not go.

4B: Fundraising

We host tournaments during the year; we require that all students, and many family members, assist during those events. Volunteering to help us run these tournaments keeps our costs down, and ensures that the money we bring in goes directly to supporting opportunities for our students.

We also do a number of other fundraisers throughout the year. We encourage all students and families to participate as often as they can, and also to suggest fundraising opportunities we may be overlooking.

5: Resources

5A: Coaches

Our team is fortunate to employ a number of excellent coaches. To get the most out of this resource, you

should be proactive in asking for help; though a coach's attention and time at practice may be limited and split between many students, you will find that all of our coaches are happy to put in additional time during the week. That might be AM support sessions, lunch sessions, or digital work (editing speeches, contributing ideas, etc). To get the most out of your coaches, establish consistent communication, preferably email.

Also, know that most of our coaches have experience in multiple events. Each coach typically is responsible for one event or event group, and should be your primary contact for that event; that said, we encourage students to reach out to other coaches on staff to make use of their expertise.

5B: Team Captains

Our team captains are seniors who know how our team works; we also have event captains that provide

leadership for each squad. Please communicate with these students if you have questions or concerns or

feel like you need additional support. If they can't help, they will direct you to the relevant person.

5C: Team Website

Our website (www.ethsspeechanddebate.org) has many useful resources. Our weekly practice schedule,

a calendar of upcoming tournaments, our rosters for upcoming tournaments, and forms for travel.

Please

check the website before asking organizational or logistical questions.

5D: Google Drive

Each event or event group (LD, PF, Congress, Policy, Interp, Limited Prep, Platform Speaking) has a folder on Google Drive. That folder has resources specific to that event, and all of our students do the majority of their speech and debate work in Drive. This allows for efficient cooperation and sharing. If you

have chosen an event, or would like to try one out, please ask either a varsity member in that event or a coach to share you on the Drive folder.

Once shared, there are some important guidelines for using your event's Drive.

1 - Unless working in a group document, make copies of things before using or editing them.

Flow templates, cases, block files, speeches, scripts, all of these documents are important, especially

to

the person or persons who created them; you are welcome to use these documents, but be respectful and make a copy to use. That way you do not mess up the work or formatting of the original.

Writing Cases

Share documents on Drive

Use footnotes to store citations and/or hyperlinks

Formatting: Arial, Font 11 (Google Drive Default)

Title things usefully (year, month, topic, author, etc, not "Aff stuff")

6 - Competition

6A: The Night Before and the Morning Of

1 - Get a normal/healthy amount of sleep.

Staying up late to prepare trades off with performance the next day; do not disrupt your sleep schedule

or

pull an all-nighter before a tournament. This activity is as much about execution as it is about preparation;

besides, preparation done the night before is rarely the most effective preparation.

2 - Fuel your body and mind.

Same thing as above; try to eat a normal/healthy breakfast. We say 'normal' here because if you

normally

just eat a cup of yogurt in the morning, don't go overboard with a huge breakfast before competition;

that

can actually disrupt your body's natural cycle and do more harm than good.

Still, make a plan for the day. Consider bringing a packed lunch or bag of snack food to keep you

satiated

during the day. Tournament concessions are notoriously unhealthy; more to the point, these foods often disrupt your performance. They can make you sluggish, give you indigestion, or make you hyper; none ideal conditions for speaking or debating. Try to make healthy choices when possible; just as athletes

take

care of their bodies to perform at their best, you should be making similar efforts.

6B: Before You Go to Your Round

1 - Organize your materials.

Make sure you have the necessary materials to compete in your next round. This may include: pens, paper, cases, scripts, files, and pre-flows. If you are in a debate event that requires pre-flowing,

pre-flow

before each round is posted; better yet, prepare pre-flows before the tournament and make copies (we can literally make copies, like, with a copying machine).

Also, have research and cases organized and available before you go to your round. If you are using paper copies, organize the papers; if you are using digital copies, open the relevant documents/tabs.

2 - After pairings are posted, consult the judge database.

We maintain a record of ballots and decisions from every tournament we attend; this helps us adapt to judges that we see most often. See if your judge is someone who has judged us before; if so, there will be useful information in the database.

3 - See if your teammates or coaches have additional information for the round.

Maybe a teammate has already debated your opponent, or maybe a coach has judged them. Ask around to see if anyone has useful information.

6C: During Your Round

You are judged from the moment you arrive at the tournament until the moment you get into the van to leave. A more concrete corollary to this rule is that you are judged from the moment you enter the room for competition until the moment you leave. The round starts as soon as the competitors enter the room with a judge, even if the first speech hasn't started it. Be calm, be confident, be mature, and you will have more success.

1 - Walk in ready to perform

Take a moment before you enter the room to make sure you have everything you need. Pre-flows, scripts, pens, paper, etc. See above (6B) to make sure you are ready for the round.

2 - Assess your judge(s).

In all events, consider your judge as you enter the room. If possible, have a conversation. Introduce yourself, ask them about their day, etc. Be authentic; be yourself.

In debate, seek information about your judge. Ask them a question about themselves, like "Are you a coach" or "How is your day going so far"? This will get them talking about themselves and their experience. You might also ask if they have any preferences for the debate round; avoid the word "paradigm", because that's a weird word, and preferences means the same thing and everyone will understand it.

3 - Be engaged through the end of the round.

Take notes on performances; flow through the end of the debate. In debate events where the judge offers feedback afterwards, be sure to take notes. Not only does this help you reflect on the round and remember what was said, but it also sends the right message to the judge.

6D: After Your Round

In debate events, every debater and team should be saving their flows from every round. These flows are invaluable for a number of reasons: they are useful for practices, they help your coaches monitor and evaluate your in-round performance, and they help our team understand what arguments are popular with different teams.

All round records, be they flows or notes, should include certain basic information: the date and time of the round ("Glenbrooks Rd 3", for instance), the judge's name, and the opponent's name or code (when applicable).

6E: Round Reports

An important tool for our team is the round report form; after each round of competition, every student or team must complete a round report form (digital). These forms help students maximize their learning (by reflecting on their experience) and helps coaches get a better understanding of students' tournament experience and competitive/educational needs.

7 - Tournament Etiquette

7A: General Behavior

When we attend tournaments, each of our students is representing our entire team. Your performance between rounds is, in many ways, as important as your performance during rounds. Judges and coaches and students from other schools will form impressions of you based on your behavior at the tournament, and those impressions will influence our competitive success. Here are some rules that our team make a great impression at tournaments.

1. The Five Minute, Five Mile Rule (Or the "Van Talk" rule)

Do not discuss (or complain about) opponents or judges while still at a tournament; this sort of discussion should be saved for the van, or until you are five miles or five minutes away from the tournament. First, it's just not okay to heat people behind their backs. Second, you never know who might overhear you. Even if I don't know who a debater is talking about, hearing them talk trash about an opponent makes me dislike them. Worse, if whoever overhears you knows the opponent or judge you are talking about, you could end up doing serious damage to your (and the team's) reputation.

Also, always try to remember that not everyone has the same background or experience or advantages that we might have. If you beat your opponent, or they are not very good at debate generally, perhaps it is because they don't have access to a big coaching staff, or the chance to travel to national tournament, or the time at home to dedicate to this activity. Be charitable. It's important.

2. Stay dressed.

If, upon being eliminated, you immediately undress like a cranky four year old at a wedding, you are not doing it right. Loosen your tie, roll your sleeves, change into comfortable shoes, but do not strip to your undershirt or change into sweatpants.

7B: Watching Rounds

Once you are eliminated from a tournament, or perhaps if you are just attending as an observer, you may find yourself observing rounds. You might be supporting and watching your teammates, you might be watching and scouting potential opponents, you might be watching in order to learn more about an event, or you might be watching just for entertainment. Whatever the reason, you are still a representative of our team, and so it is important to behave as such. Here are some guidelines for being the best observer you can be.

1 - Your primary focus should be on the performance in the round.

If you are watching a round, be it to support your teammates or to just see good speech/debate, you should be focused on the round. Take notes, flow, be a good audience member. This is the best way for your to learn as much as possible, and to make your teammates feel great. Also, if you sit in a round and play video games or talk with friends, you are both distracting the performers and possibly representing our team poorly.

2 - Display your best behavior for the judges.

This is most important when you are watching your teammates compete. Judges can be very touchy about their personal space, and many are easily upset by “rude” behavior. If possible, do not sit near judges, and especially not immediately behind them. Wherever you sit, aim to be an asset for your teammates: be a respectful and attentive audience that makes the judge more likely to vote for your teammate.

Wait until you leave the room before talking about the round; if you must share something with a friend during the round, write it down. Avoid whispering or talking, even during prep time; you and the competitors might be okay with it, or maybe your last judge was fine with it, but you never know what a judge might hold against you or your teammates.

7C: Cafeterias

The most common space for students to hang out between rounds at tournaments is in cafeterias. This is where students can work between rounds, eat meals, and purchase snacks from concessions. Here are some considerations when in a cafeteria at a tournament.

1 - Find table space by an exit and by outlets.

Electrical outlets are at a premium in most cafeterias, so look for tables by a wall or pillar or wherever the outlets are. Also, look for a table that is by the edge of the cafeteria, preferably by an exit. When rounds are announced, everyone in the cafeteria will be trying to head out to their rooms at once; sitting by an exit allows our team to move freely to their rounds.

2 - Keep our table clean.

Everyone is going to be eating and drinking during the tournament. When you eat or drink, make sure you take your trash to the garbage can. Be an excellent citizen and take any trash from our table to the garbage can. Keep our workspace and relaxation space tidy and clean, for all our students.

Be the most excellent citizens and clean tables around us, too; it's a great way to make a great impression on other teams, coaches, and judges. And also a great way to make tournaments a nicer place.

7D: Award Ceremonies

1 - Sit in the back of the award ceremony.

This allows us to leave quickly when the awards are over. If you are the first person from our team into awards, and you go and sit in the front, and then wave at the rest of us when we walk in, we will wave back and then leave you to sit by yourself in the front.

2 - Be quiet, attentive, and respectful during award ceremonies.

The award ceremony will take everyone at the tournament and put them in one big room; the way you behave here will be seen (and scrutinized) by everyone at the tournament. We know, it's the end of the day; you are tired; you are salty because of that one round. This is why you must be on your best behavior in awards.

Do not throw shade at any winners. Applause and cheers are okay; gasping with surprise, rolling your eyes, or making other signs of disapproval are not okay. Remember: you are being watched, and judged, by the whole tournament during awards. We should strive to be happy for the winners because that's being a good person; we should also strive to be happy for winners so that we do not damage our team's reputation.

3 - Cheer for Evanston and stand for champions.

When Evanston students earn recognition, let's raise a ruckus.

When any champion, top speaker, or special award recipient is announced, our whole team should stand and applaud. They've earned it, and it's classy.

8 - Travel

8A: How Do Van?

Our most common form of transportation is in a van or bus. There are a bunch of things you can do to make this experience easier for everyone.

1 - Keep garbage under control.

On long trips, students eat a lot of snacks, and a lot of trash often ends up on the floor of the van. This is both gross and quite a hassle to clean at the end of the trip; if the team stops at a gas station or a

restaurant, consider grabbing an extra plastic bag to put garbage in.

2 - Be a champ and close the doors.

When people are packing their bags into the back of the van, be the person who makes sure everything fits. Use your awesome spatial reasoning and Tetris those bags in, and then make sure the door is closed.

If you are sitting in the seat by the passenger/side door, you have a special responsibility: you have to close the door after everyone is in, and you have to make sure the door is closed after everyone gets out.

This is the price you pay for getting that sweet door-side legroom.

3 - Respect the enclosed space and the people in it.

Van rides can be a lot of fun: we play games, we listen to weird and new music, we talk about speech and debate. At the same time, the tight quarters can be pretty stressful. Do your best to keep that stress

under control by respecting everyone around you. Keep your voice down, keep your shoes on, try to stay

in your space, etc.

8B: What Is Airport?

When we fly for tournaments, we will have to go through airport security. There are some important things you should know before this happens.

You will have to take off your shoes, jacket, and belt.

You will have to take out your laptop.

You will have to empty your pockets. This doesn't mean empty your pockets of all metal things. It means empty your pockets.

If you double-knot your shoes before going to an airport, you are either 10 or fewer years old or a terrorist. If you are on our team, you are presumably neither of those things, so your shoes should be easily removable.

8C: Why Coach Anger?

But really, envision Jeff as a traffic light. When Jeff is green, you can ask him questions. When Jeff is yellow, he has liver disease. Not really. But you should only ask him questions if it's super important. When Jeff is red, you should only ask him questions if someone has gotten their head stuck in a hornets' nest. Not a metaphorical hornets' nest, mind you; an actual hornets' nest. So, you're probably wondering, "how do I know which color Jeff is at any given moment in time?" This is a good question, since Jeff is a metaphorical rather than literal traffic light. You know those pain charts they have at hospitals to determine how severe an injury is? Same concept applies here. When Jeff is green, he will probably look like this:



. When Jeff is yellow, he will probably look like this:



. When Jeff is red, he will probably look like this: .



When Jeff looks like this, you should only ask him a question if you look like this:



If you are in an airport, Jeff is red.

If you are in a train station, Jeff is red.

If you are in a cafeteria between rounds, Jeff is green.

If you are in a van, and the drive ahead will take more than one hour, Jeff is yellow.

Never go anywhere alone, and never go anywhere without letting a coach know. If you want to go around the corner to get some food, go with a teammate, and let a coach know where you'll be.

Related: charge your cell phone. If you have a cell phone, you have a cell phone charger. If you have a cell phone charger, and you spend all day in a building with outlets, your cell phone should be charged. If your cell phone is dead, you should let someone whose cell phone is charged know, and then charge your cell phone. It is your responsibility to be able to be found.

8D: How It Hotel?

Waking Up On Time Is, Seriously, the First Step

When you are sleeping in a hotel room, set multiple alarms. Set alarms on your cell phones; set the alarm clock in the room; call the front desk and request a wake up call. Do not rely on one person's cell phone; SET MULTIPLE ALARMS. When you are late, you end up rushed and hurried and you perform poorly. And you also increase everyone else's stress level, and possibly even make other people late to their rounds.

Going To Bed On Time Is the Zeroeth Step

Get some sleep, for God's sake. Going to sleep at tournaments should be used in textbooks as the prime example of a collective action problem. No one wants to be the one who goes to sleep first because you can't even really sleep if everyone is up. So as a result everyone keeps everyone else up super late and that really impacts your and your teammates' performance. If you're being super loud while you're up late (like that would ever happen) it can be rude to the other people in the hotel too.

Make Your Mornings Easier

Take five minutes the night before competition to make your mornings less stressful. Make sure you have your materials for competition: pens, paper, cases, speeches, files, etc. Lay out or set aside your clothes for the morning. Even if you wake up on time, it's all for naught if you make yourself late trying to track down your shoes and then force everyone to return to the hotel to pick up your cases.

Be Human Beings in Hotels

Unpack your bag when you arrive in a hotel; living out of your suitcase increases stress. Put dirty clothes back into your empty bag.

Do not leave garbage lying around your room for someone else to pick up.
Do not be loud in hotel rooms.