

Hill Country Communicators Speech and Debate Club

Club Policies & Information 2023 - 2024

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I. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Hill Country Communicators (HCC) Speech and Debate Club. It is our desire to clearly explain the purpose of this club and what the expectations are if you would like to join our club. We are not content to just have a club, but we want to make it the most efficient and effective club possible. In accordance with I Corinthians 14:40, we have spelled out specific expectations for the student and family in an attempt to and eliminate potential problems. It is our desire that as we continue to develop communication skills in our families, others will join us and together we can help the students develop speech and debate skills that God will use in their lives. We strongly believe all children need to develop these skills and believe through these skills we can impact the world for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

II. VISION

To equip students with the skills necessary to become godly servant leaders who can communicate effectively and impact the world for Christ.

III. MISSION

This is a Christian speech and debate club for students that compete in the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA) League and speak at community events and venues. We support the mission of NCFCA, which states “promote excellence in communications through competitive opportunities where Christian students develop the skills necessary to think critically and communicate effectively in order to address life issues from a biblical worldview in a manner that glorifies God.” Each of these arenas gives students the opportunity to refine their speech and debate skills and use them to communicate effectively for God's honor and glory throughout their lives. NCFCA requires and HCC affirms that affiliate families agree with the statement of faith and position statements (**Please read**): <https://www.ncfca.org/about/foundational-beliefs/>

IV. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

1. To develop communication and speaking skills that honor and glorify God, and to model the love and character of Jesus Christ in the lives of all who participate. Psalms 19:14, Proverbs 16:23-24
2. To learn how to think critically, logically, and objectively.
3. To learn how to research and organize information, and to persuasively and humbly present and defend ideas. Colossians 4:6
4. To learn how to use debate and speech skills to communicate God's truth to the world. I Peter 3:15
5. To learn how to encourage and support others with our words. Ephesians 4: 29-32.
6. To learn how to work together with others in a team effort and strive to help each member reach maximum potential in a manner that is God-honoring and worthy of respect. Philippians 2:3-4, Proverbs 27:17
7. To help learn how to do things unto the Lord and to the best of their ability. Colossians 3:23-24, I Corinthians 10: 31
8. To help experienced students develop leadership skills through mentoring young or inexperienced students. Matthew 23: 10-11, I Timothy 4:12
9. To equip and prepare students for speech and debate tournaments in NCFCA league if they have a desire to participate in competition.
10. To help students find ways to utilize their developed speaking skills in the community.

V. DRESS CODE

The spirit of the dress code is modesty and professionalism with the intent to glorify Christ. The goal is to minimize the focus on the physical body and not defraud one another, and to maximize the focus on the person's countenance, development of ideas, and communication skills. Thus, we will dress and present ourselves in a manner that is professional, respectful of others, clean, and well-groomed.

1. CLUB MEETINGS' DRESS CODE

- a. General: The club leadership board reserves the right to ask you to change clothing if in their estimation there is a violation of the club dress code.
- b. Gentlemen: Are to wear full length pants of modest fit and in good condition and shirts with collars.
- c. Ladies: Modesty is the key and attire may include suits, dresses, skirts, slacks, or pants. The overall guiding principle is to keep it high on neck, low on the legs, loose fitting, and not too much skin showing.
 - i) Skirts or dresses are to have a hemline that falls to at least the bottom of the knee when seated.
 - ii) Tops are to be modest and may be a shirt-type top, blouse, or jacket, and your midriff must remain covered. Spaghetti strap tops, tight-fitting or low-cut tops/sweaters are inappropriate.
 - iii) Pants or slacks are to be of modest fit and in good condition.

2. NCFCA TOURNAMENT DRESS CODE

- a. Please refer to the NCFCA website and be aware that failure to follow the dress code can lead to significant penalties. We highly advise parents to review their competitor's competition apparel prior to leaving to the tournament.

VI. CLUB INFORMATION

1. MEETINGS

a. Location: **Oak Hills Church in the Fall of 2022.**

b. Date: Regular club meetings are the first, third, and sometimes fifth Thursday evening of each month of the season. For debate, we may have an additional Skype meeting on the Thursdays we aren't meeting for club.

c. Schedule: Our typical club meeting schedule is as follows.

Arrival: 4:30 PM – 4:45 PM

Devotional and Prayer: 4:45 - 4:50

Announcements: 4:50 PM – 4:55 PM

Speech: 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Dinner: 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Cleanup: 6:55 PM – 7:15 PM

Debate: 7:00 PM – 8:45 PM

Final Cleanup/Doors Closed: 8:45 - 9:00 PM

2. FEES AND EXPENSES*

a. Club Membership Fees

i) \$80 per senior student annually (12 y/o by January - one senior-aged student is **required** for Club Membership)

ii) \$20 per additional senior student within the same family annually

iii) \$10 per junior student annually

iiii) Maximum of \$120 per family annually. Families undergoing financial difficulties may reach out to the HCC Parent Board about alternatives.

iv) Other expenses will include required curriculum for speech and debate. Expenses vary depending upon curriculum but are approximately \$50 per family for speech (first year only) and approximately \$50 - \$90 per year for each debater.

b. Tournament Fees and Expenses

i) NCFCA Affiliation necessary to compete (~\$125/family)

ii) Vary according to the venue. NCFCA tentatively planning for a combination of in person and virtual tournaments with regional and national finals to be on site.

iii) Gas, food, lodging, miscellaneous expenses, supplies, and professional attire are the responsibility of the individual club members and their families.

3. PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

Parental involvement is important for the success of your own student, as well as the club itself. As with any activity, when the parent devotes time and energy and sees value in the activity, the more successful the student will be. Your input is valuable. .

Therefore, it is **required** for at least one parent or designated guardian (“PARENT”) to be present at each club meeting, whether on site. Attendance to club meetings will give PARENTS the opportunity to learn speech and debate skills alongside the student. It will help the PARENT to gain insight in ways to assist their student to develop and improve speeches, to learn debate theory and to learn how to assist students to develop logical and solid arguments for a position, and how to communicate it in a gracious, persuasive way. PARENTS will have the opportunity to develop skills necessary to critique public speaking and/or debate rounds.

_____ a. At least one PARENT is expected to attend club and remain there for the duration of the meetings.

_____ b. PARENTS will hold their students accountable to adhere to dress code and code of conduct.

_____ c. PARENTS will hold their students accountable in preparing for club meetings.

_____ d. PARENTS are responsible for their student's own financial needs in participation of club and tournaments.

_____ e. PARENTS will strive to do all they can to have good relationships with all the members and families in the club.

_____ f. When their students are participating, PARENTS are expected to assist in helping with their own transportation and chaperone needs when practices and tournaments take place outside the local area.

_____ g. PARENTS are expected to help keep the club running by assisting in various chores and duties such as evaluating speakers and assist with practice tournaments or other events.

_____ h. PARENTS are expected to attend parent meetings (in person or virtual). These meetings will be held either during club time or at a previously agreed upon time for the purpose of discussing club-related issues. This is the time to discuss administrative and organizational ideas, ask questions, seek help, make suggestions, instruct parents, and so forth.

_____ i. PARENTS are responsible for signing and returning to the HCC Secretary the HILL COUNTRY COMMUNICATORS PARENT AND CLUB MEMBER RELEASE LIABILITY, PROMISE NOT TO SUE, ASSUMPTION OF RISK, AND AGREEMENT TO PAY CLAIMS release statement.

4. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

When students join the club, it is a serious commitment to faithfully attend and participate in club activities. Students are expected to come to club prepared and to work on developing and improving speech and debate skills. Students will follow code of conduct and dress code guidelines.

_____ a. Students are expected to attend regularly scheduled meetings.

_____ b. Students are expected to follow the code of conduct and dress code whether on site or virtual.

_____ c. Students are expected to faithfully prepare for meetings and complete required assignments individually or as part of a team, including the **mandatory Apologetics** assignments for club and for your personal benefit.

_____ d. Club members are expected to work cohesively by sharing ideas and evidence freely, so that each club member can reach their maximum potential.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT

We are a Christian organization in a Christian league. Our work in the club is and must be a facet of our Christian discipleship helping us to become like our Lord and teacher Jesus Christ, in love, truth, courage, and generosity.

_____a. In our relations within the club, and when representing the club to others, we strive to imitate our Master. We accept the scriptural teachings on love, unity, humility, and peace (Colossians 3:12-17).

_____b. Club members are expected to treat each other with honor and kindness, (Romans 12:9-11), to speak truly and courteously (Ephesians 4:29-32), to aspire to righteousness and peace in our relationships (Matthew 5:4-11), to serve each other with humility (Matthew 20:25-28), to act helpfully and generously to each other (Galatians 6:9-10), and to be mindful of each others' needs before our own (Philippians 2:3-7). We aspire to show the kind of generosity to each other that God has shown to us (Luke 6:38).

_____c. The nature of our training exercises, practices, and tournaments may be competitive, but our competition is not aimed at pride or domination, but rather at the sharpening of our own and of each others' skills (Proverbs 27:17). In debate, the purpose is to argue effectively, to support and refute ideas, not persons. We strongly pursue excellence in debate, thereby becoming better speakers, researchers, and thinkers. In the end, our diligence in this is an offering to God (Colossians 3:23).

_____d. When we lose a round or speech competition, we are thankful for the exercise, and when we win we encourage others. We refuse to be bitter, even after seemingly unjust losses. We refuse to be proud, even after a great performance.

_____e. In proper order, we share with each other our research, insights, and plans, expecting to prosper not from hoarded evidence or concealed cases, but from the sharpening we receive in our practice debates, team discussions, and speeches.

f. We welcome strangers and seek to do them good. We are thankful to those who serve us.

_____g. We love, serve, and pray for our opponents. We realize that our wins and losses are momentary events, but the brothers and sisters whom we meet will be with us through eternity.

_____h. All club members are expected to use with discretion and respect the property of others, including whatever facility is in use at the time and any of the resources that are made available for their use.

_____i. All club members are required to stay within the geographical boundaries set by the administration of the facility in use and are to strictly adhere to all established rules and regulations.

_____j. All club members must adhere to the guidelines stated in Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-17 when conflicts arise. This means if one partner offends another, the offended partner will go one-on-one to the other to resolve the matter. We understand that if resolution does not take place, we will participate in third-party mediation in order to reconcile the relationship. We will not complain to another club member or friend about any problems we may be experiencing in our partnership, nor will we gossip about one another. We agree to work through the situation until a resolution is reached in order to completely resolve a matter.

6. HCC PARENT BOARD - A representative parent board will consist of a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 5 member couples, to be determined by the size of the group and interest in serving. This board will act to represent the general interests and desires of the club members as a whole, making final decisions in the best interest of the club. Both parents must be available to meet for 2-3 board meetings per year, in their second year with HCC and tournament experience. The parent board is elected by the existing club families (one vote per family), and can hold this position for up to 2 years before requiring to be re-elected to the board. The existing parent board will nominate a new couple, as needed, and the nomination will be confirmed by a majority vote by existing HCC club members (one vote per family). A club family is defined by those who have paid club dues and have signed the HCC Policies and Information Document.

7. HCC STUDENT LEADERS – The parent board will solicit nominations from active HCC Students for student leadership for the next year in the May time period for the next year.

8. CLUB POLICY CHANGES – The parent board will seek input from membership prior to making substantive changes to the HCC Foundational Document (i.e., club policies).

VII. DEBATE POLICIES AND PARTNERING

1. HCC supports both Team Policy Debate and Lincoln-Douglas Debate. Attendance at a debate camp is **mandatory** for novices prior to joining the HCC debate team. This is due the relatively abbreviated number of clubs (bi-monthly) prior to the beginning of the debate season. Families may request a waiver to be considered by the HCC Parent Board.
2. Novice debaters are strongly encouraged to participate in Team Policy debate. Therefore, attendance at a Team Policy Debate Camp is mandatory. HCC will advertise camps available in Texas on the website.
3. In choosing a debate partner, there are many things to consider. Partners learn how to work as a team to accomplish a common goal. They learn how to support one another, and how to resolve conflicts. When choosing a partner, personality, schedule, skills, goals, and family situations of the individuals involved should be considered. Strengths and weaknesses of each individual should be considered in order to help form teams that will be effective and work well together. The debate coach will give advice and consent for partnering, but because it is such a highly personal decision, it is left to the debaters and parents to decide partnerships.
4. Students and parents need to understand that agreeing to be a partner is a serious commitment. Partners depend on each other to work hard and do their best. They will spend much time together in researching and preparing their cases and doing round robins and tournaments. Partnering should be viewed as a commitment lasting a full debate season. If a team wishes to break up, they must first discuss it with their parents. If there is not a mutual resolution between both families, they must notify the Club leadership of their situation. If a team reaches a mutual decision to dissolve their partnership, they should respectfully notify club leadership of their decision. It is expected that partner dissolution will be mutual, not unilateral.
5. All attempts should be made to find a partner within HCC. If unable to find a partner within HCC, the member family may petition the parent board to approve a partnership outside of the HCC.

VIII. HCC TEAM POLICY DEBATE PARTNERSHIP

1. Parents and partners will sign a covenant document when team partners are determined. The content of the document are as follows:
 - a. We commit to work together as a team until the debate season is over.
 - b. We agree to attend club meetings faithfully, and practice and competitive tournaments as feasible.
 - c. We agree to help one another develop and improve speech and/or debate skills through mutual hard work, encouragement, and humble correction, when necessary. We commit to being open and willing to hear each other's suggestions and strive to make such suggestions with a kind and humble spirit. We understand we are not permitted to be sarcastic, unkind, harsh, or condescending in our manner of speech with one another.
 - d. As a partnership, we promise to not only be supportive of one another, but other club members throughout the year.
 - e. We commit to follow the guidelines in Matthew 5:23-25 and Matthew 18:15-17 when conflicts arise as explained in the code of conduct section.
 - f. Our families have thoroughly discussed our commitment levels and goals and agree to this partnership.
 - g. We commit to debating in at least one tournament and will agree on the tournament by the 1st of January.
 - h. Dissolving of this partnership will be mutual, not unilateral.

2. The parent board will distribute and collect the document.

IX. PARENT AND CLUB MEMBER ACKNOWLEDGMENT CLUB POLICIES

As a club member and parent, we understand and agree to abide by the guidelines outlined in this Club Policies Document and Participant Agreement and we commit to fulfill the stated parental or student partner responsibilities, to adhere to all club standards, and to support all club leadership in the enforcement of these guidelines. We agree with the NCFCA statement of faith and position statements referenced in the Mission statement. Any request for deviations from above stated policies or procedures will require prior approval from the HCC Parent Board.

Student Signature & Date
Email:_____

Parent Signature & Date
Email:_____ CP:_____

Parent Signature & Date
Email:_____ CP:_____

In order to register for 2022 – 2023 year, please return:

1. Club Policies and Information Document (Signed by both parents and all participating HCC students)
2. HILL COUNTRY COMMUNICATORS PARENT AND CLUB MEMBER RELEASE LIABILITY, PROMISE NOT TO SUE, ASSUMPTION OF RISK, AND AGREEMENT TO PAY CLAIMS (Signed by both parents) **(Waived at this time)**
3. Check for Club Dues made out to Hill Country Communicators (Page 3)
4. Mail To Hill Country Communicators, 1231 Mossy Hollow Road, Spring Branch, TX 78070