

All About Your Application to NHS

Where do I get an application?

Use the link listed on your invitation letter to access our website and download then type your application.

Who reads my application?

Members of the Faculty Council read your application. Teachers from several departments read and rate each section of your application and add up sub-scores to arrive at an overall score. I simply plug scores into our formula and that determines if you will be given an invitation to join or not.

What is Mrs. Dean's and Mrs. Pratt's job? Do they decide who is in or out?

We have absolutely no say in whether a student is or is not invited to become a member. Our sole job is to HELP YOU BECOME A MEMBER BY GIVING YOU THE BEST ADVICE POSSIBLE. We support you in this process and answer questions you may have.

The website says to read the By-Laws before applying. What are they?

The By-Laws are the major “rules” of National Honor Society, so to speak. One item of particular interest is the number of service hours that are required this year, so be sure to look at that before you make the commitment to apply.

How do I handle teacher recommendations?

Once you've made the decision to apply, the FIRST thing you should do is ask **two** teachers for recommendations. Do this BEFORE any other part of the application so teachers have plenty of time to complete the form. You can either ask the teacher in person (recommended) or ask them via a friendly, polite, and well-written email. If you ask in person (and they agree to give you a recommendation), you should tell them that you will follow up with an email that contains the link to the Teacher Reference Form. If you ask them via email, you can put the link in that email. **The link to share with your teachers is on our website and on your application!**

How do I write a professional email that will impress my teachers?

I was really taken aback last year by the number of strange and not-very-polite emails I received. When composing an email, be sure to take the time to fill in the subject line (maybe “National Honor Society recommendation”) and use standard formatting. What is standard? A greeting (“Hello Mrs. Dean”), some explanation of what you need and why (“I am applying to become a member of National Honor Society, and I am required to submit two teacher recommendations. Because I had you for <English> last year, I was wondering if you would be willing to fill out a recommendation form for me” and a deadline (“All recommendations must be submitted online by October 8.”). You should probably also include some type of request to let you know their intention (“If you could let me know as soon as possible if you are willing to do this, I'd greatly appreciate it”). Finally, you need a closing: “Thank you very much, Joe Student.”

If it seems like I'm stating the obvious, I can tell you from experience that I am not. Some students send emails to teachers like this: “hey mrs. p, I need a recommendation for NHS, can you do that for me? Here's the link. Thanks.” PLEASE NOTE THE CAPITALIZATION ERRORS (not to mention comma splices!). If you want to be a member of NHS, you should at the very least use appropriate grammar and conventions.

How do I make my application look as good as possible?

When you fill out the application, only use the fillable PDF. We will not accept handwritten or printed applications.

What if I'm having trouble filling in each section of the application?

As you fill in each section of the application, remember that you really need to self-promote. This is not the time to be shy!

For example, extracurriculars include not only sports or drama activities, but also marching band, clubs, student officer activities, any non-school affiliated after school activities (dance, gymnastics, travel sports, robotics clubs, participation in fun runs or 5Ks, etc.).

Many kids leave the leadership position blank because they haven't been elected as an officer. But think about other ways you lead: maybe you help run the church nursery, maybe you are a section leader in band, maybe you are an older member of a sport team and mentor younger players. Try to think about opportunities you have had to lead others.

Community service involves any service for which you don't expect to be paid. This may be formal community service at the Food Bank or Arctic League, but there are lots of other things kids do without expecting payment. Maybe you babysit younger cousins for free or tutor your younger siblings or friends. Perhaps you have donated blood or done yardwork or shoveling for neighbors. Anything you have done without expected payment can fit here.

It's possible that you have never had a job, and so you feel that you can't list anything under work experience. But presumably you have made the High Honor Roll most marking periods. That's an honor. Maybe you're a section leader in band (that's an honor!) or been a Student of the Month. Maybe you received a special award at a dance or gymnastics competition. Maybe you were part of a winning robotics team. Put it down!

What about the essay?

Lastly, you need to write the essay. **Keep in mind that the directions say to write an ESSAY, not a PARAGRAPH.** An ESSAY contains more than one paragraph. You can determine how many paragraphs are needed for yourself (there are different possibilities for sure) but understand that when many kids write an essay and you write a short paragraph, that doesn't exactly make your application stand out (at least not in a good way).

What about the “nuts and bolts” of the application?

Be sure that you follow all the directions regarding submission of your essay. You need to make sure you save a PDF copy of your application and save the document as a file titled Last Name, First Name. Then, email it to Mrs. Pratt at cpratt@horseheadsdistrict.com. Part of what you are scored on is your ability to follow directions carefully, and the Faculty Council absolutely notices details.

If you have ANY QUESTIONS AT ALL, please email or visit us in room 226 (Mrs. Dean) or 162 (Mrs. Pratt).