

National Honor Society

Helpful Hints for Filling Out The Selection Materials

1. Remember that the purpose is to sell yourself with humility.
2. If you are not sure about something about the selection packet or the process itself, ask. It is better to get your questions answered early than to find out later that they prevented you from being selected.
3. Your materials need to be typed and your name does not go anywhere on your selection materials. Instead, you will be using your school identification number. If you need it, it is on your schedule or the office can give it to you.
4. Membership in the Junior National Honor Society, or lack thereof, has absolutely no bearing on membership into the Niles High School National Honor Society. You are evaluated on your performance during high school only.
5. Errors detract from your selection packet. They also show that you do not meet the scholarship criteria for selection. Take the time to have someone else (preferably a teacher), read over your essays and the rest of the application. Look for typos, misspellings, poor grammar, and any other mistakes and then fix them. To the selection committee, errors look like that you did not care enough about being selected to take the time to read over your selection materials and may cause you to be not selected.
6. Follow all the directions on the selection packet and in the qualification forms. You need to have adult signatures for all of your community service and leadership experience. Remember that your whole packet needs to be typed. Signatures MUST be on the original sheets from the selection materials not on separate attached pieces of paper or other documents.
7. All community service & leadership hours must be documented on the National Honor Society forms and must be signed on those forms. Hours and signatures submitted on any other forms will not be accepted. See Ms. Thompson if you have questions about this policy.
8. The selection materials are due to Ms. Thompson's classroom (111) NO LATER THAN 7:45 am on Monday, March 5th, 2019. There are absolutely no exceptions to this policy even for circumstance beyond your control (e.g. car trouble, computer issues, needing a signature, etc...). If you are concerned about your application being submitted late, you may want to get it checked and turned in early. Any materials submitted after that time will not be considered for this selection cycle and will need to be resubmitted during the next cycle if you would like to be considered for selection at that time.
9. Lack of prior planning on your part should not constitute an emergency on anyone else's part. Therefore, DO NOT wait until the last minute to complete your packet and get the required signatures. Also, if you need a teacher to sign something for you, do not expect them to drop everything to help you. Plus, there is always a chance that the teacher may have a substitute the day you need the signature. Give yourself enough time for these contingencies.
10. When writing the essay portion, remember that you want to emphasize your contribution to the school and the community. The committee is not trying to determine if you are a nice person who treats your friends well. They are trying to determine whether you meet all four criteria for selection- scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Be specific in your answers and address these 4 characteristics within them explaining how you meet the criteria here at the high school and community by giving specific examples. Also, do not detract from yourself by mentioning your shortcomings.
11. Remember that your community service must be in an organized activity. This means that while helping your elderly neighbor down the street on your own is admirable, it does not count toward community service. However, if you were helping your neighbor as a part of a home care program, it would count. Babysitting and working summer camps for an athletic team are examples that the committee often questions. Also, just because another teacher, group, etc... believes what you have listed counts as community service, does not mean that faculty council feels the same. If you are in doubt, list additional hours. It is ok to have more than 15 hours, use something else altogether or reapply the next semester after completing your community service. Ms. Thompson has a pretty good idea of what the faculty considers to be community service so feel free to ask her as well.
12. Community service also should be in a variety of different organizations with different advisors. The faculty council is looking for well-rounded students who have diverse interests and are involved in a variety of activities. Parents cannot and should not be signing community service and leadership logs. If you have any questions about this policy, see Ms. Thompson.
13. The faculty committee does not count fundraising as community service UNLESS the money is being donated directly to a community charity such as the homeless shelter or the food bank. Raising money for sports teams, clubs, etc... does not count toward community service.
14. Service done for a class (Cadet Teaching Peer to Peer, etc...) does not count toward community service hours. Also student ambassadors can be considered as a leadership role but cannot be counted toward community service.
15. Remember that leadership means more than just participating in an activity or organization. You need to be in a leadership position within that organization. For example, being a member of student council does not necessarily count as leadership, but if you are a committee chair, it would. If you would like to use your role as team captain for a varsity sports team for leadership, be sure to explain in detail what you do for your team that shows your leadership skills. If all you do is start warm-ups, the committee probably won't view that as a good leadership position. Being a leader on a class project the committee often questions. In order for it to count as a true leadership position, your role would have to go above and beyond normal classroom expectations. Be sure to explain exactly how your role as the leader is more than just making sure a project, assignment, etc... gets done. What did you do to involve more than your classmates? How did you involve the community? See Ms. Thompson if you have more questions about possible leadership roles.
16. The faculty council uses teacher evaluations as a part of the selection process. Teachers are given a form to rate the candidates for selection as to their leadership, scholarship, and character. Those ratings are collected and tallied by the National Honor Society Advisor and a second form with a summary of the evaluation scores is given to the faculty council. On this form, candidates are identified only by candidate number not by student name. This is done to ensure that every candidate is evaluated fairly and without prejudice.
17. National Honor Society members are expected to be positive role models for the rest of the student body and represent Niles High School with integrity, character, and a positive attitude. Therefore, all prospective candidates are expected to follow the Niles Community School District's Code of Conduct and Behavior Expectations as outlined in the student planner given to each student at the start of the school year. Issues involving not following these student behavior expectations may be cause for non-selection.
18. Remember that if you are selected to be a member of National Honor Society you will have to maintain at least a 3.20 G.P.A., participate in fundraising and will have to complete 15 hours of community service each semester. If you feel you will not have enough time to meet these requirements, you may want to reconsider your application for selection.
19. Please keep in mind that the National Honor Society advisor acts only as a facilitator in the selection process and is not on the selection committee. Therefore, the advisor has no say in whether you are selected for membership. The selection committee is made up of a faculty council of various high school teachers and counselors and is rubric based. No students are on the committee.

20. When you turn in your selection material to Ms. Thompson, put them in the following order: essay page, community service, and then finally your leadership log. **DO NOT** staple them together or put them in a folder or "fancy" cover ☺. Just paper clip them together. Ms. Thompson has to photocopy the materials so they just get taken out and the rest is thrown away. Those pages are the only materials that should be included. **Your name should not appear anywhere on the materials, only your student ID number should be used.**
21. Finally, please remember that **selection is not guaranteed**. The faculty committee spends a lot of time reading and evaluating your selection materials. I realize that not being selected is very disappointing. However, **DO NOT GIVE UP!!** You can and should try again. You will have the opportunity for two weeks after non-selection notification to ask the National Honor Society Advisor for suggested improvements for reapplying. Selections occur both in the fall and in the winter of each year and both juniors and seniors are eligible. Learn from the experience and try to improve next time.

