

NPDL Mandatory Tournament Participant Forms

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CODE OF CONDUCT (ALL PARTICIPANTS)

The overarching goal of the Code of Conduct is to reinforce the appropriate and usually exemplary behavior exhibited by all persons participating in a National Parliamentary Debate League tournament and in other activities associated with the NPDL. All participants shall at all times conduct themselves with respect for themselves and others, in order to create a safe environment for all participants.

The NPDL is proud of the high caliber of its student-debaters. The NPDL and the debate community at large are committed to the guiding principles of honesty, integrity, respect, ethical conduct, and hard work in support of students in their roles as scholars, debaters, leaders, and community members. Participants represent not only themselves, but their school as well, and need to be welcoming to diverse viewpoints and experiences.

I. Expectations of Participants

A. Argument content and intent.

Expectation: Conduct that creates an intimidating or hostile environment is unacceptable, even if it purports to be part of an argument.

Comment: The overarching aim of academic debate is to teach, exhibit, and enhance reasoning skills, research abilities, and persuasive modalities. The competitive nature of debate rounds at the NPDL remains to persuade judges with superior argumentation, not to undermine one's opponents, the judge, or an audience.

B. Academic integrity and respectful conduct.

Expectation: Respond appropriately. In and out of round, demonstrate the highest ethical standards; this means maintaining integrity without compromising honesty; within the round, individual conflicts or differences may arise from time to time; please make every reasonable effort to

satisfactorily and mutually resolve the matter. If that does not resolve the issue, then take appropriate steps to make the equity committee aware of your concerns/violations.

C. Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment

Expectation: No participant shall suffer or cause discrimination or harassment during the course of, or in connection with, the NPDL on the basis of any protected characteristic.

Comment: Protected characteristics include but are not limited to age, color, religion, disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran's status, or any protected attribute identified by an applicable law, regulation, or ordinance. Participants are expected to maintain a high level of dignity and decorum in all communications. Inappropriate comments, emails, messages, or other in-person or online communications will not be tolerated.

Expectation: Violence or the threat of violence has no place whatsoever in academic debate. Bullying has no place in academic debate, and is prohibited. Debaters should not make arguments, or constrain a debate round in a way that forces their opponents to make arguments that offend community standards.

In accordance with the intent of a safe space, coaches, program directors, judges, and other individuals who may be (or who may reasonably be perceived to be) in a position to exert power or undue influence over other participants, and particularly over student-debaters, should be particularly aware of their responsibilities to avoid harassment or discriminatory actions.

Expectation: Check unconscious bias against certain types of arguments or the people making them, and to avoid attacking individuals for any reason.

D. Acceptance of differences

Expectation: Recognize that people you interact with at this tournament will be from differing backgrounds. Participants may encounter unfamiliar arguments. This should not detract

from their value and should be adjudicated or engaged with equally.

E. Extemporaneous argumentation

Expectation: After prep time for a given round starts, debaters should prepare by using (1) their own knowledge, and (2) publications that are available to all other participants, and used by the general public and/or non-debaters doing research in a given field.

After prep time starts, debaters should not review arguments prepared before prep time (e.g. their own previous cases or those of other debaters, argumentation “blocks,” case or argument outlines prepared before the start of prep time, or other documents created before the start of prep time for use by debaters during prep time). They should communicate with persons other than their partner only to the extent allowed by tournament rules.

Debaters may review any materials provided by the tournament during prep time, e.g. tournament rules, information or research materials provided by the tournament to both sides.

F. Spectator obligations

Expectation: Spectators should be quiet during and between speeches, except for customary audience reactions such as laughing at a joke, or knocking on tables before or after a speech. They should not disrupt or attempt to influence the debate, e.g. by presenting their own performance, or communicating with one or more debaters. Violation of this rule may result in negative consequences for both the spectator and a team participating in the round, as circumstances warrant.

G. Respect for the equity process

Expectation: Participants shall not abuse the equity process, interfere in an ongoing equity investigation, or provide false information to equity staff. No person shall retaliate against a person raising a grievance.

Comment: These are all themselves equity violations, and may be subject to remedies. The equity process should never be weaponized as a tool for competitive advantage, or to harm others.

H. Respect for judge decisions

Expectation: Adjudications should be respected.

Comment: No judge should be harassed or feel targeted for a decision they have made. The tournament's position is that while the judge is the immediate arbitrator of the round, should that decision be questioned, the protest committee should be consulted. Please follow protest procedures, know that mutual respect makes speech and debate accessible, and every reported incident will be investigated and properly addressed as appropriate to the circumstances.

I. Impartial adjudication

Expectation: Disclose and avoid judging conflicts in compliance with NPDL rules.

Comment: The NPDL has codified judge conflict rules in Article XIII, Section 4 of the Legislative Code. All participants should be familiar with the rules. A person should not judge a round if they have a listed conflict with one or more debaters in the round (or any other conflict that prevents them from judging the round impartially). If a debater learns that their round has been assigned a judge who has a listed conflict against judging the debater, the debater should advise tournament staff.

J. Generative Artificial Intelligence

Expectation: Generative Artificial Intelligence should not be used as a source or tool to write the content of speeches.

Comment: The use of GenAI to write parliamentary debate speeches undermines the educational purposes of debate and the extemporaneous nature of the event. Applications set to actively search—like Google AI Overview, Claude AI, and ChatGPT—may be used to guide students to ideas by providing real articles. However, students are prohibited from citing GenAI as a source and from copying verbatim or paraphrasing text directly from such GenAI tools in their speeches. A student using GenAI to write a significant part of their speech (e.g., most or all of one or more arguments) can be reported to the Equity Committee. Appropriate consequences may include 1) the committee bringing the violation to the attention of the judges, who would then consider whether to change their decisions based on it, and 2) the debater being disqualified from the tournament.

II. Procedure for Submission of Complaints

Equity issues related to a specific round may be raised during the round, and are ideally resolved in that context if appropriate. To the extent that participants with equity concerns are comfortable raising them directly with the persons who are the subject of those concerns, or asking coaches to have direct discussions, that is encouraged.

Any participant may contact equity staff (or other tournament staff) with a question about an equity issue.

If a participant wishes tournament staff to take a specific action about an equity complaint, they should submit an equity complaint form. This should happen as close in time to the underlying events as possible, but may be submitted at any time during the tournament. Tournament staff will provide all participants with a link to the equity complaint form. A person may submit an equity complaint form anonymously.

III. Equity Review Procedures

A. Investigation

Comment: Every reported incident will be investigated and properly addressed as appropriate to the circumstances. There will be no tolerance of intentional harm to another. After receiving an equity complaint form, equity staff will make an initial determination about whether any immediate action is necessary before the complaint is resolved. Unless informed otherwise by equity staff, tournament participants should continue their normal tournament participation until contacted by equity staff. The tournament will be suspended for the investigation and resolution of an equity complaint only if equity staff, in consultation with the tournament director, conclude that suspension is necessary to prevent imminent physical or emotional harm to participants.

B. Confidentiality

Expectation: Equity complaints are confidential. Participants in the process should not discuss them with persons outside the process for the equity complaint. Doing so may itself be an equity violation. Equity complaints may be shared with the NPDL Board.

IV. Outcomes

A. General principles

Procedure: The equity staff and the NPDL shall employ a presumption of positive intent and resolution based action. The twin goals of addressing equity violations are (1) to repair, to the extent possible, any harm caused by the violation, and (2) reduce or eliminate the likelihood of similar harm in the future.

In this spirit, the focus of the equity process is on promoting understanding and healing. Absent evidence of malicious intent, the equity staff will presume that inappropriate action was caused by ignorance rather than malice.

Equity complaints cannot retroactively alter round outcomes. The equity process is not intended to confer a competitive advantage or competitive benefit on those who have been hurt by a violation.

B. Equity decision factors

If the equity staff conclude that no violation has occurred, they will inform all parties and take no further action absent an appeal.

If the equity staff conclude that an equity violation has occurred, they will consider what remedy is appropriate. They will take into account all relevant circumstances, including

1. The nature of the harm caused by the violation.
2. The degree of harm caused by the violation.
3. The intent of the accused person(s).
4. The history of violations by the accused persons(s), if any.

5. Whether the violation appears to have affected the round outcome.
6. Any actions taken by the judge(s) to address the violation.

C. Remedies

Equity staff may a range of remedies, including

1. Issue a warning.
2. Report conduct to relevant authorities, including but not limited to a coach, affiliated institution and school administration, or law enforcement;
3. Recommend to the NPDL Board that an individual or individuals be disqualified from the tournament; and
4. Recommend to the Board that a participant be prohibited from participating in future NPDL-organized tournaments, or be removed from a position of authority under this Code.

V. Appeals

A decision of the equity staff may be appealed to the NPDL Board. If the coach or adult chaperone of a person involved in an equity complaint wishes to appeal, they should advise equity staff within one hour of being informed of the equity staff decision.

CONFLICT DISCLOSURE (DEBATERS AND JUDGES)

I have reviewed NPDL League Rules Article XIII, Section 4, Judge Conflicts, and I disclose the following institutional affiliations covered by that rule (schools, camps, clubs, etc.). I have marked affected schools, teams, or individuals as conflicts in Tabroom. (Write “None” if you have no conflicts)

I list the following individuals as conflicts for this tournament. I have also marked all listed persons as conflicts in Tabroom. (Write “None” if you have no conflicts)

LIABILITY AND MEDIA RELEASE

1. I release and hold harmless the National Parliamentary Debate League (NPDL), its board members, and tournament and event staff from all liability for any physical, emotional, psychological, or economic injury to my child (if signed by a parent or guardian) or me (if signed by a participant), or property damage or loss, in connection with participation in the tournament, and agree to indemnify NPDL, its Board Members, and tournament staff for any liability to third parties related to my/my child's participation in NPDL events, including but not limited to any liability related to the use of a chaperon who is not district approved. I agree to compensate the host school for any physical damage caused by the named participant.
2. I acknowledge that my child (if signed by a parent or guardian) or I (if signed by a participant) may be video recorded, audio recorded, and/or photographed during any NPDL tournament, and that these recordings and images may be publicly disseminated by the NPDL and its affiliates for educational and publicity purposes without compensation.

PARTICIPANT/PARENT SIGNATURE

I have read and agree to abide by the above Code of Conduct, and agree to the media and liability release. If I am a debater or judge, I have read and fully completed the disclosure of conflicts.

Participant Name:

Date:

Signature:

If participant is a minor, participant sign above, and parent/guardian sign also below:

Parent/Guardian Name:

Date:

Signature:

Parent/Guardian Email: