Speech & Debate Team

Handbook

2019-2020
Raider Speech and Debate 2019-2020

The sponsors, coaches and parent board of the 2019-202 Raider Speech and debate Team welcome you to what promises to be an exciting year of Riverwood speech and debate competition. This document contains information on the sponsors, coaches, the board, and the obligations and benefits of being a part of this academic team.

If you have questions about the team, please contact:

Laura Guill, Sponsor/Teacher, GuillL@fultonschools.org
Marjorie Bernard-Evans, Sponsor, bernardevans@fultonschools.org
Tommy Jordan, Community Coach, tommy.policy@gmail.com

The team cannot function without the support of parents; the team’s need for drivers, chaperones, judges, etc. relies almost exclusively on parental support. If you are not already working with the parent board, please contact Laura Guill or Marjorie Bernard-Evans to see how you can help.

Again, welcome and we look forward to working with each and every one of you!

Registration Materials Are Due August 28 for Varsity/JV and September 18 for Novice

Please read through this handbook carefully.

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All registration materials will be available at the Raider Speech & Debate Website https://school.fultonschools.org/hs/riverwood/Pages/Debate-Club.aspx –

Registration materials are due by:

Wednesday, August 28, 2019 for all Varsity & Junior Varsity Speech and Debaters

Wednesday, September 18, 2019 for all Novice Speech and Debaters

At that time all electronic forms, physical forms, and payment must be turned in to Mrs. Guill or Mrs. Bernard-Evans. Please remember to include a copy of both the front and back of the insurance card that covers your child. The insurance card is the most overlooked item, and the most important. In case of accident or illness, it serves as permission for your minor child to be treated – we cannot take them on any trip including local trips without the insurance card. Without it, hospitals will not treat your child until you can be contacted; if the situation is life threatening they will treat him/her, but your insurance company may refuse to pay.
Fees must be submitted by check made payable to RICS Speech and Debate. ***Fees are nonrefundable***

**Speech and Debate Options**
- Speech/Forensics Class
- After-School Practice (Tuesday and Wednesday, 3:30-5:00)

**Philosophy**
Competitive speech and debate opportunities are available to all students. Students choose to participate and choose their level of participation. A sincere effort will be made to provide appropriate opportunities to every deserving student at every level of competition. However, it is important to remember that speech and debate is a competitive activity, and the most successful students will be those that exhibit intelligence, hard work, determination, motivation, and natural skill. When travel opportunities are limited, the coaches will decide which students will participate in each tournament.

Participation on the Riverwood Speech and Debate Team is designed to yield the following benefits:
- Offer students an environment where knowledge and intellectual skills are promoted and reinforced -
  - Provide basic and advanced instruction for students in critical thinking, logic, argumentation, and persuasive speaking
- Provide the opportunity to work as part of a team of students and teachers/coaches, emphasizing mutual respect and support for the experiences of all participants
- Provide frequent practice and tournament opportunities
- Provide support for speech and debate activities (co-curricular and extra-curricular) in the state of Georgia

**Parental Support**
Parents are an extremely important resource to the Raider Speech and Debate Team. Whether volunteering to drive and chaperone at a tournament, working the Big Questions tournament hosted at Riverwood, or serving on the parent board, parents are vital – without parental support we simply would not be able to provide our students with the same opportunities and experiences. No matter what the level of involvement, we need your help! Please contact Laura Guill or Margorie Bernard-Evans to see how you can help! Parents are always welcome and encouraged to observe their child engaged in the activity.

**Tournament and Travel Procedures**
Students compete in speech and debate activities by preparing at school and then attending tournaments held at other schools. Students also help host a Big Questions tournament at Riverwood in October. Speech tournaments only run one day, while debate tournaments are usually two-day events that begin Friday afternoon and continue on Saturday until the late afternoon or evening. Some varsity debate tournaments extend to Sunday and Monday. Some novice debate tournaments are Saturday only.
Students may be invited to attend tournaments in Georgia, North Carolina, or Kentucky. Travel will usually be by car or bus. Occasionally, students will fly to a tournament.

Students may be responsible for registration fees, housing, travel, meals and material fees. These fees are reduced in part by fundraising, but costs, which may be substantial, do exist. We at Riverwood believe that money, however, should never be an impediment to participation; if assistance is required please speak to the sponsors privately to discuss possible arrangements.

Students should be on time to depart and return from tournaments. While we can tentatively establish return times, these times change on a moment-to-moment basis. Tournaments run notoriously behind schedule and our departure is often dependent on how successful students are at the tournament. If a Riverwood speech or debater has made it to finals, we cannot leave before the tournament is over, whereas we could leave early if all Riverwood speech and debaters are eliminated in the quarterfinals. While sponsors and coaches make every effort to inform parents in advance, it is **ultimately the child’s responsibility** to relay changes back to the parents. Phones are always available on campus and a number of students carry cell phones.

Parents will be notified of the tentative schedule of tournaments at the beginning of the year. No student is required to compete in any particular tournament with the exception of varsity debaters who qualify for the State Championship Tournament or the Tournament of Champions. Sign-up sheets are posted in advance in Room 2205 for students to sign up. These sign-up sheets indicate the **interest and intent** of the student to debate at the tournament. Once sign-up sheets have been taken down, students who have signed up have committed to attending the tournament. If a student must cancel because of minor illness, poor grades, family concerns, too much homework, other commitments, etc. the student will be responsible for non-refundable fees incurred by the team in securing that slot, including but not limited to: registration fees, hotel rooms, plane tickets, judging fees, and bus costs for the student **and his/her partner**. Additional consequences may also occur. Please see the section entitled consequences. Deaths in the family or illnesses warranting doctor intervention are excused from penalties. Because many tournaments limit the number of students we may bring (and sometimes they won’t tell us this number until a few days before the tournament), it may be possible that a speech or debater will not be able to attend the specific event that they sign up for. The sponsors will attempt to notify students of this situation as early as possible. Sponsor and coach decisions on tournament attendance are final.

There is a tournament information sheet given the week of the tournament providing specific information for that event. Tournament specifics include: location of tournament, approximate arrival and departure times, costs, transportation information, emergency contact information, and lodging specifics (if necessary). While we endeavor to provide contact phone numbers in advance, this is not always feasible. We encourage all students to carry a cell phone for such times. Sponsor’s, Coaches’ and chaperones’ cell phone numbers are will be provided and available. **The student is responsible for obtaining this information sheet and conveying this information to his/her parents in a timely manner.**

**Travel Eligibility**

Any speech or debater in good standing is eligible to travel at the local and state level. National travel is by invitation only. Sponsors and Coaches have the final decision on tournament attendance particularly when numbers require limiting attendance to a smaller number of students than have expressed interest in attending the tournament.
General Team Rules and Policies

1. Speech and Debate partner assignments are accomplished through student preference when possible. For junior varsity and varsity debaters, partner assignments are based on a combination of student preference, work ethic, skill, and personality. **Sponsors and Coaches, however, make the final decisions.** Those decisions are made for the benefit of both individuals and the team as a whole. If a student has a problem with his/her partner, it is his/her responsibility to speak with the sponsors/coaches privately. Complaining about one’s partner to others is considered rude and disrespectful. This may affect a student’s travel schedule.

2. Students are responsible for completing their schoolwork. Some tournaments require the team to leave before school is out on Friday. **It is the student’s responsibility to notify their teachers of absences at least two weeks prior to that absence.** Students generally have a minimum of three weeks’ notice of when they are going to a tournament. It is the student’s responsibility to do their work and study ahead of time so that conflicts do not occur when the tournament arrives. Debate work **should never** take precedence over schoolwork.

3. No student may miss a class that they are failing. The sponsors will obtain a copy of progress reports given to students. If a student has a failing grade in a class, they are not allowed to miss that class until a note is sent to the sponsors from the teacher of that class indicating that the student is passing. This note must be given to the sponsors at the time the student registers for a tournament. **There will be no exceptions.** If a student knows that he or she is failing a class and does not report this information to the sponsors, the student may be suspended from future travel.

4. While students are required to share evidence citations with other schools, **they may not trade or give anyone from another school the evidence itself.** Students also **cannot** tell anyone from another school about new arguments that Riverwood is developing. If anyone asks for the citations of evidence you have read in a debate, they must be provided. If evidence has not been read, citations are not allowed to be given.

5. Riverwood often brings in outside help so that students can have practice rounds and work with individual college speech and debaters and other speech/debate veterans. Students are expected to treat these volunteers with the same respect they do the sponsors.

6. Failure to adhere to these rules can result in **expulsion** from the team.

7. Trophies bring awareness of our team and its success to the rest of the school and the community. Continued support from the school and the community is essential to our success. As a result, trophies earned belong to the team and the school. Students may take trophies home from a tournament to show to their family, but on the next school day must bring the trophy to Mrs Guill or Mrs. Bernard-Evans to be put on display. At the end of the year, some trophies will be given back. The school does, however, keep all first and second place trophies from most tournaments, as well as semifinal and quarterfinal trophies from certain national tournaments. Individual awards, such as speaker awards, are an exception and may be kept by the student.

8. All school and Georgia Forensic Coaches Association (GFCA) rules will be enforced. In particular, please note that the Riverwood Speech and Debate Team has a zero-tolerance policy toward drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. You will be considered in violation of these rules if you are using these substances or are with someone who is using them. **If you are in a room where such substances are being consumed, you are as responsible as if you were personally using the substances. There is no discussion of this issue.** Riverwood sponsors/coaches reserve the right to search rooms and belongings as needed to enforce these rules.
9. As part of a competitive activity based on persuasion, it is important that speech and debaters display a certain level of professionalism. As such, Chattahoochee debaters are expected to follow the following dress code at all tournaments:

- **Boys**: khakis or dress pants, tucked-in button-down or polo shirt with a belt. (Ties and suit jackets are encouraged but not required.)
- **Girls**: dressy slacks, skirt or dress of a professional length, and professional blouse or sweater.

The final day of debates are considered dress down days. Students may wear jeans with their RICS Speech and Debate Shirt. **No SHORTS!!!**

**Travel Rules**

1. When staying in a hotel, sponsors/coaches will conduct a room-to-room check in the evening. Students may not leave their room after they have been checked in for the night. The penalty for violating this rule will be **suspension from at least three tournaments.** If the coaching staff is unable to determine which student left a particular room, all people in the room will be held responsible.

2. It is impossible for Riverwood speech and debate sponsors/coaches to visually supervise all students at all times. For example, when students are at tournaments, they are often scheduled in up to twenty different classrooms of the host school. It is therefore imperative that when we are away from Riverwood, a student must always be in the presence of another Riverwood speech or debater. This includes at tournaments, in hotels, at airports, etc.

3. No student from Riverwood is allowed to be in the hotel room of someone of the opposite sex unless a sponsor/coach is present.

4. Riverwood students are not allowed to go into any hotel rooms other than their own and only Riverwood speech, debaters and sponsors/coaches are allowed in Riverwood rooms.

5. While students are at speech and debate tournaments, they must behave as if they were at Riverwood. All rules that cover students’ behavior while at Riverwood, especially rules regarding drinking, smoking, etc. will be strictly enforced. If a student is found violating these rules, they will be sent home. It will be the parents’ responsibility to make and pay for said arrangements immediately. Students will face **disciplinary action from the school** in addition to severe consequences from the team, **including possible immediate expulsion from the team at the sponsors/coaches’ and administrator’s discretion.**

5. Lying to coaches about any potential violation of Riverwood Speech and Debate rules will increase the consequences for said violation. This includes lying about the behavior or rule violations of other students.

**Consequences for Infractions**

Failure to perform tasks or meet responsibilities is a serious concern. When a student fails to complete an assignment or drops from a tournament at the last minute, their behavior affects everyone else on the team, and in some cases, other schools and other speech and debate teams. Due to the severity of an infraction or its repeated nature, consequences may be assigned to students. The consequence should be commensurate to the infraction. Consequences may include but are not limited to:

- Payment of non-refundable fees
- Mandatory team duties
- Suspension from one or two tournaments
- Suspension from the team for one semester
-Permanent expulsion from the team
-Sponsors/Coaches’ discretion