

## **Portage Northern Forensics Team Handbook**

### **Welcome to Portage Northern Forensics!**

Being part of the Forensics Team is a privilege and an opportunity to grow as a communicator, performer, and team member. Our program is built on kindness, respect, dedication, and teamwork. By being a part of this team, you agree to uphold these values and follow the guidelines outlined below.

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### **Expectations**

#### **Respect**

- Treat teammates with kindness and support. Encourage each other to improve and work together.
- Show respect to coaches, judges, and competitors by listening attentively, providing constructive feedback, and demonstrating good sportsmanship.
- Respect tournament officials, bus drivers, and staff at all tournaments..
- Maintain a positive and professional demeanor both in and outside of tournament settings.
- During rounds, you are not to make fun of other competitors and must show the utmost respect. There is to be no talking about other people's pieces in a negative way. On tournament days, do not talk about them at all, even if you have something positive to say, as it can be misconstrued.

#### **Commitment & Communication**

- Attendance at POD meetings, weekly rehearsals, and team meetings is mandatory unless otherwise communicated.
- If you have other commitments (sports, clubs, jobs, etc.), that is completely okay, but you must communicate scheduling conflicts in advance.
- Be prepared for all rehearsals, meetings, and tournaments.
- Check team communication channels such as Google Classroom and our Team's Website, regularly for updates.

#### **Effort & Work Ethic**

- Work diligently on your pieces, accept feedback, and be open to improvement.
- Practice two to three times a week with different coaches.

- Practice outside of scheduled rehearsals such as with your friends, showing your parents, or rehearsing individually on the 3rd floor.
- Support your teammates by being an engaged and encouraging members of the team.
- If you do not break into finals or semifinals, you must go support your teammates in their rounds.

### **Behavior on the Bus & at Tournaments**

- Be respectful and responsible while traveling to and from tournaments.
  - Keep noise levels appropriate and avoid disruptive behavior.
  - Follow all school transportation rules.
  - If inappropriate behavior occurs, consequences may include removal as a captain or dismissal from the team.
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### **Rules & Consequences**

#### **Hotel Stays**

- While staying at hotels for tournaments, all team members must be in their rooms by curfew. If you wish to spend time with teammates, it must be in a public space such as the lobby or designated common areas before curfew.
- All team members are expected to respect hotel staff and property at all times. Any behavior that violates hotel rules or reflects poorly on the team will not be tolerated.
- If any incidents occur that do not follow these guidelines, a parent will be required to come and pick up the student immediately.

#### **School & Team Rules**

- Follow all Portage Northern school policies, including attendance and academic expectations. If you do not attend school on Friday, you may not attend the tournament on Saturday.
- Maintain eligibility by keeping grades in good standing. Grades will be reported to Ms. Perez weekly as well as eligibility in participating in rehearsals and tournaments.
- Any form of bullying, harassment, or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the team.
- Any use of illegal substances or violations of school conduct policies will result in immediate disciplinary action.

#### **Attendance Policy**

- **Excused absences** (illness, family emergencies, school-related conflicts) must be communicated in advance.
- **Unexcused absences** (missing rehearsal or tournaments without communication, lack of preparation) will result in consequences.
  - If you drop out of a tournament the week of a tournament, a \$20 fee will be required, as the school gets charged for any drops.
- Repeated unexcused absences may lead to sitting out of tournaments or removal from the team.

### **Social Media Conduct**

- Maintain a positive and respectful presence on social media.
  - Any negative, inappropriate, or disrespectful posts about teammates, opponents, coaches, or judges will result in disciplinary action.
  - Represent the team, school, and yourself with integrity online and in person.
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### **Captains & Leadership**

Captains are expected to set an example through their attitude, work ethic, and respect for others. Failure to uphold these standards may result in removal from a leadership role or from the team.

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### **Final Thoughts**

Being a part of the Forensics Team is about more than just competing—it's about learning, growing, and supporting each other. The biggest rule is **to be kind**.

By signing up for this team, you agree to abide by these rules and expectations. Let's make this season an incredible one together!