

Phoenix Debate



Registration Instructions 2023-24

To join the Phoenix Debate Team this season, you must complete all of the following steps no later than Thursday, September 21st, 2023 and payment of team dues by Friday, October 6th, 2023 @ 5 p.m.:

1. Completed online registration. Use the Google form provided on the debate team page of the Rock Ridge High School website.
2. Payment for annual nonrefundable dues (\$85) – please make this payment online at the Rock Ridge High School Payment Portal (SchoolCash Online) on the RRHS website.
3. Please read the contract (provided below) carefully and share it with your parents. You will be prompted in the online registration form to confirm that both you and your parents agree to the terms of the contract.
4. Make sure to pick up a hard copy of the universal field trip permission form and bring it home for your parents to complete and sign. Parents are asked to complete the form by Friday, October 6 and complete payment to ensure that you can compete in tournaments starting in October. Turn the form into one of the team sponsors.

Per school board policy 4-2, a student/family may request a reduction in fees due to economic hardship. Please notify Dianne Mercil at dianne.mercil@lcps.org and obtain a form on our main webpage. All requests will remain confidential.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Srinivasan, Mr. Greening, or Mr. Briscoe.

Thank you!

kevin.briscoe@lcps.org

timothy.greening@lcps.org

rama.srinivasan@lcps.org

ROCK RIDGE DEBATE TEAM CONTRACT 2023-24

Students and Parents,

Please read through the contract below and complete the acknowledgement on the online Google registration form. This signed contract is a required part of debate team registration materials. The contract communicates team expectations so that students and their parents can make an informed decision about whether or not to commit to joining the team for the year.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT DEBATE IS A COMPETITIVE VHSL ACTIVITY. DEBATE IS NOT A CLUB. DEBATE REQUIRES A SIGNIFICANT COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF BOTH STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS.

Please let one of the coaches know if you have any questions. We are happy to have that conversation up front so that you are fully aware of what is expected of each and every debater. Freshmen who decide not to join the team this year are always welcome to consider joining in sophomore or junior year as their schedule allows. Upperclassmen new to debate are welcome to join in their sophomore or junior year (and, for this season only, senior year). Even if you registered last year but did not earn at least 10 team points, you are welcome to re-register this year (an exception made for the covid pandemic).

All Rock Ridge debaters are asked to read and abide by the following as a condition of team membership:

- 1. Practices:** Debaters must attend and fully participate in all scheduled after-school practices during the regular season and in the postseason as needed in the event of qualification to regional, state, metro final, and/or national tournaments. Regular practices are held on most but not all Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the first three quarters of the year. The separate team schedule lists the specific dates. Debaters must be on time and remain for the entire session. Practices start promptly at 4:30 p.m. and wrap up by 5:30 p.m. Event captains will take attendance at each practice and monitor how debaters use their time for learning, research, case development, scrimmaging, and observation. Debaters are expected to make full use of their time at practice.
- 2. Excused Absences:** Debaters may miss up to three practices per quarter for legitimate reasons such as illness, medical appointments, and the occasional mandatory club meeting. To ensure that the absence is excused, debaters are expected to email one of their event captains at least 24 hours in advance of the absence. **Students who cannot attend on a regular basis due to other after-school activities should not join the team.** Attendance records will be maintained throughout the year. The exception is that students who compete in either a fall or spring sport may be excused from debate practices during the athletic season only. Students who plan to compete in a winter sport or who plan to do conditioning for another sport during the winter season should not join the team (we've tried this before and it just doesn't work for the student or the team). We will gladly accept \$85 donations to the debate team but we want each and every debater who registers to actually benefit from the payment of their non-refundable dues.
- 3. Resources:** We encourage all debaters to bring a laptop with them to practice for research and case construction. If we meet virtually for practice, you will need to access the link using an LCPS issued device. The team also has access to online evidence packets to help with research and case writing, although these are not the only resources that debaters should use. You will have access to our team Schoology site, where we will post important information and resources.
- 4. Tournament Registration:** Debaters who have worked diligently at practice and who have completed original drafts of both AFF/PRO and NEG/CON cases (or a bill/resolution and authorship speech in the case of Congress) may register with their coach for a WACFL regular season tournament by the Thursday of the week prior to that tournament (about 9 days in advance – see the tournament schedule). Plagiarism can result in dismissal from the team and submission of an honor code violation. **Please note that, due to the very large size of our team and space limitations at our debate tournaments, we cannot guarantee that everyone will have the opportunity to debate competitively even if they join the team.** We will try our best to ensure that each team member can compete in debate at least once during the season, as we want every team member to have that experience and build their confidence in debate. However, we want to ensure that tournament spots go to the debaters who are best

prepared and who have worked the hardest to represent our team in interscholastic competition. Due to recent restrictions put in place due to the pandemic, students may no longer participate as observers only.

5. Tournament Participation: Debaters who have successfully registered for a tournament must abide by all tournament procedures and expectations on the day of competition (usually on Saturdays). A separate travel memo will be provided prior to each tournament outlining important details and expectations. We will also provide something similar for any online tournaments. Failure to report to a tournament (in person or virtually) for which you are registered is a serious sportsmanship violation and can result in dismissal from the team. In the event of illness or emergency, you are expected to call/text your coach (number will be provided for each tournament) to let him or her know prior to on-site registration and no later than 8:00 a.m. the morning of the tournament. Public Forum debaters in this situation are also expected to contact their partners as soon as possible so they can decide whether or not to go ahead and attend as an observer.

6. Sportsmanship: All debaters must read the VHSL sportsmanship rules (available on vhsl.org) and must abide by them in order to maintain team membership. All debaters are expected to be positive ambassadors for Rock Ridge and are expected to treat all students and adults involved in debate with respect and consideration. Both WACFL and VHSL take sportsmanship very seriously. **Sportsmanship violations will result in dismissal from the team. Additionally, any violation of the Rock Ridge High School Honor Code may result in immediate expulsion from the team.**

7. Eligibility: In addition, all debaters must meet VHSL eligibility requirements in order to compete on the team. Students must meet residency and academic eligibility requirements throughout the year. These are explained on the VHSL web site. Students must maintain at least a “C” in each of their classes by the end of each quarter. Students must also be sure to attend school on any day when school is in session and the debater will be dismissed early for approved debate competition.

8. Team Points: All debaters must earn 10 team points through the season in order to be invited back to join the team in subsequent years. The team points and expectations sheet provided separately provides a list of how points can be earned for competitions and volunteering, among other activities. At least 5 points must be earned for competition, although exceptions will be made in certain cases if debaters are negatively affected by unexpected cancellations and quotas. Note that team points are separate from points earned as part of your automatic membership in the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA), which awards honorary recognitions for various levels of debate achievement. Debaters can earn team points to qualify for special recognition at our team awards banquet in May. Debaters may earn a varsity letter by earning at least 100 team points over the course of their debate career here at Rock Ridge.

9. PF/LD JV/Varsity Qualification: Returning debaters who have earned at least 10 team points during the season may be invited back for JV/Varsity competition in PF and LD debate. There will be a limited number of spots for returning experienced debaters in those events (32 PF debaters and 16 LD debaters). A finalized list of debaters invited to return to those events will be made public by June 10, 2024. The decision will be made by the event coaches in consultation with event captains and will be based on overall performance throughout the 2023-24 season. Any debater who has met team requirements but who does not make this cut for PF or LD will still be able to return to the debate team next season to compete in Student Congress or Policy debate which we are currently planning to pilot.

10. Parent Volunteers: With such a large team, we are highly dependent on the participation of our parents in order to ensure that as many students as possible can compete. We are resuming physical, in-person tournaments this year and hence, parents are asked to drive their debaters to these local tournaments (in the Loudoun/Fairfax County area). Parents (one per debater) are also asked to serve in one of the following ways during the season:

*judge at a debate tournament (training provided online) – each judge allows four Rock Ridge entries in a debate tournament to help meet our quota

*help to host a debate tournament (we will be helping to host WACFL Congress III on December 2, 2023!)

Students, please let the coaches and team officers know if you have any questions. We hope that you will consider joining the team if you decide that the expectations outlined above are manageable. Debate is a rewarding activity for those who have the time and dedication to pursue it fully.

DEBATE TEAM CONTRACT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, 2023-24

Students and parents, please acknowledge that you have read and agreed to this contract through the online registration form and turn in the universal field form to one of your sponsors by Thursday, September 21st, 2023. Make sure to also complete the online dues payment via SchoolCash Online and turn in the hard copy of the universal field trip form by Friday, October 6th, 2023. Please bookmark or print this contract for reference. Thank you!

You will find language like this on the online team registration form:

As a debater, I have read the expectations outlined above and agree to abide by all team rules and sportsmanship standards. I understand that rules and/or sportsmanship violations may result in my dismissal from the team.

Debater's Full Name (please print): _____

Debater's Signature*: _____

As the parent of a debater, I have read the expectations outlined above and will support my child and the team in their pursuit of debate as a competitive educational activity.

Parent's Full Name (please print): _____

Parent's Signature*: _____

*No signature required on the online registration form – your acknowledgements will substitute for signatures.