

Transferring Membership

Every year, members of NHS or NJHS are faced with the problem of moving to a new school. The question arises: Will my (the student's) membership in the Honor Society transfer with me? The answer is YES.

From the *NHS Constitution* (similar provisions are in the NJHS Constitution)

Article VIII. Section 6. An NHS member who transfers to another school and brings a letter from the principal or chapter adviser to the new school adviser **shall be accepted automatically as a member** in the new school's chapter.

Transfer members must meet the new chapter's standards within one semester in order to retain membership.

Source: NHS Constitution, 2008 edition, found at www.nhs.us/constitutions.

As one can read, the transfer of membership is automatic. This presumes, of course, that the member has been duly selected and inducted by his or her current school. There may be membership pins, cards, or certificates to support the transfer, but having a letter from the current adviser to present to the new chapter adviser is preferred. A sample letter is found at the end of this article.

The National Handbooks also include the following information for both students and chapter advisers:

Transferring an Active Membership

Article VIII, Section 6 clearly indicates that a student's membership transfers automatically when a member moves from one school to the next. Differing standards and procedures among chapters sometimes cause difficulty for students who transfer. Although the Constitution states that transfer members must be automatically accepted into the NHS chapter of the new school, the transferee may be unable to meet the new chapter's standards within one semester.

In the case where the cumulative GPA standard of the new school is higher than that of the old school (e.g., 3.5 at the new school, but only at 3.0 at the member's old school), then the transferee is granted membership and given a reasonable amount of time (e.g., at last one semester) to raise the GPA to the new standard. This transition period can be extended by the Faculty Council if it deems it appropriate.

In another example, if a junior NHS member transfers over the summer to a school that accepts only seniors into the National Honor Society, the junior, of course, could not meet the parameters of membership of the new chapter within one semester. In this case, the transfer student, while still a member, may find herself a temporarily-inactive member at the local level, until she falls within the new chapter's structure.

In all transfer cases, the local Faculty Council must accept the transfer membership automatically but is then charged with making a sound, professional judgment regarding the membership status of the individual following the transition period called for above.

It is the **obligation of the student member**, when transferring to a new school, to notify, in a timely fashion, the adviser of the new school's chapter of his/her membership. If transferring over the summer, students should inform the new school at the time they register for new classes; if during the school year, it is recommended that notification be made within 30 days of enrollment. Advisers can alert their school registrar or guidance office staff to be aware of new members entering school during the year. When meeting the transfer members, chapter advisers can require proof of membership in the former chapter. Such proof can be in the form of a membership card or certificate or even official designation on the school transcript, or independent verification sent from the former adviser to the adviser at the new school.
(*Source: NHS Handbook, 2005 edition*).

Candidate Status. There are times when students have been identified as candidates for membership at one school but they have not yet been selected nor inducted into the chapter. These students are *not* considered "members" of the Honor Society and therefore there is no membership to transfer. Such students are encouraged to seek out the chapter adviser at their new school to inquire about the standards (both the academic/GPA requirements as well as those for leadership, service, citizenship, and character along with the anticipated membership obligations of the new chapter) as well as the schedule of selection at their new school to determine when they may be eligible for consideration. Generally, having been a candidate has no bearing on considerations for membership at a new school.

Reminder: Transfers are allowed between one NHS and another NHS chapter or between two NJHS chapters. Membership in NJHS does *not* transfer into NHS. The candidacy and selection for each organization is undertaken separately, therefore an NJHS student in a school with grades 7-9, if transferring for 9th grade, may find himself no longer in an active NJHS chapter if moving to a new school with grades 9-12 where separate NJHS chapters are not permitted. Such students should pursue the suggestion noted above to inquire about the requirements for possible future membership in NHS at the new school.

In most cases, families have sufficient prior notice of their move to obtain the adviser's letter in plenty of time to facilitate a smooth transfer. Should such a move be undertaken suddenly, thus prohibiting the family from obtaining such a letter, we encourage new chapter advisers, if verification is called for, to make contact with the previous school's chapter adviser or principal to seek verification of membership. Advisers can also ask the transfer student's parents to undertake this request on behalf of their students.

Conclusion: We live in a very mobile society where transfers of membership are increasing in frequency. We hope that by following the suggestions in this document that the automatic transfer of active Honor Society membership can be undertaken with minimal trouble for all involved and that transfer members can return to active involvement in chapter activities at their new schools right away. Additional questions can be emailed to the national staff at nhs@nhs.us.

Sample Letter for a Transferring Member: NHS and NJHS Membership
Suggestion to use official school or chapter stationery

To: NHS Chapter Adviser and/or Principal
New School Name
New School Address
City/State/Zip
Alternatively, if the new adviser is not known, a generic “To Whom It May Concern” or simply the new school’s name as the heading is sufficient.

Fr: Old Chapter Adviser Name
Old School Name
School Address
City/State/Zip

Re: *Student Name*, Transferring Student

Dt: mm/dd/yy

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to inform you that [*Insert Student’s Full Name*], a student currently enrolled at [*Insert Old School Name*] is a member in good standing of our chapter of the National [*Junior*] Honor Society. Please accept him as a transfer member of your chapter as called for in the national constitution of the Honor Society, *Article VIII, Section 6*.

I am attaching a copy of our published Selection Procedures that includes the description of our criteria for membership (including our cumulative GPA used for the scholarship standard) so that you can determine whether [*Insert Student’s First Name*] meets the standards of your chapter. We have discussed with [*him/her*] that this letter should be presented promptly upon formal enrollment at your school so that active participation in your chapter can begin as soon as possible.

Should you have any questions about our chapter or [*Insert Student’s first name*]’s membership with us, please feel free to contact me at the address noted at the top or via the contact information provided below.

Sincerely yours,

[*Insert Adviser signature*]

[*Insert Adviser name, typed*]

Phone: [*Insert school phone number*]

Fax: [*Insert school fax number*]

Email: [*Insert relevant email address*]

Attachment: Selection Procedures for [*Insert Old School Name*]