Success Academy Middle School Scholar Talent Zero-Period and Wednesday Clubs Handbook

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Success Academy Middle School Scholar Talent Zero-Period and Wednesday Clubs Program!

We are excited for your scholar to begin their programming during the 2020–2021 school year!

Given the selection criteria, participating in a club is a privilege and a commitment; scholars must meet the behavioral, academic, and cultural expectations set by the school to remain eligible for club participation. We need your support to ensure that your scholar is reaching their greatest scholar talent potential in their chosen club!

Additionally, our competitive club team members for Athletics, Debate, and Chess are part of a select group of scholars at Success Academy. Team members are selected based on their talent and ability to compete with the best scholars within a given elementary school scholar talent area. We are so very proud that your scholar was selected for and will be participating in our competitive clubs; we celebrate their achievements with you.

Please read the standard club commitment expectations below to ensure that your scholar is prepared to join us this school year. In addition, each club may have its own set of expectations. These club-specific expectations are identified in separate sections throughout this handbook.

Your Scholar Commitment

We want our club participants to get the most enjoyment possible from participating in our elite clubs. We believe that a large part of this enjoyment is participating in all club-related activities. Therefore, all club participants must fully adhere to the eligibility criteria below. Commitment expectations may differ if we are operating clubs fully remotely or in person. These variances will be identified throughout this handbook.

Club Commitment

Scholars and families will be required to have a meeting with their school principal and club teacher/coach regarding their eligibility after three eligibility infractions per trimester. If a fourth infraction occurs in any of the following requirements, the scholar will no longer be able to participate in the club. In order to maintain participation in the club, the following should occur:

Behavior Expectations:
- All suspensions over one-day per trimester result in a conversation with the school principal and club teacher/coach to determine continuation in programming. For competitive teams, the Scholar Talent network lead(s) may also be included in the conversation.
- Demonstrate excellent sportsmanship and effort
Culture Expectations:
- No more than three of the following:
  - Unexcused absences (Excused absences include religious holidays, illness with coach/teacher notification, and tutoring) to club practices
  - Unexcused tardies to club practices
  - Late pickups after club practices

Academic Expectations for games / competition / tournament / performance eligibility:
- MS: Maintain 80% GPA.

Chess Team–Specific Participation Commitment
Scholars on their school’s chess team must participate in two-hours of practice every Wednesday after school, as well as a minimum of 8 internal weekend tournaments and 7 external weekend tournaments throughout the year. These Wednesday and Saturday practices will be conducted virtually for SY20-21.

Attendance at SA-hosted tournaments is critical to the success of the program, as each club is competing for a spot in state and national chess tournaments. Chess teams will compete in a series of SA-hosted tournaments, and will also have the opportunity to play in high stakes tournaments. Top-ranking teams will earn the opportunity to compete in state and national tournaments. See the section below labeled “Chess Club Eligibility Requirements for Participation in High Stakes Events” for state and national tournament selection criteria.

Scholars who compete in these events will be selected by their coaches in advance. Families will receive notification that their scholar has been selected.

Debate Team–Specific Participation Commitment
Scholars on the debate team must participate in every Wednesday club practice, as well as a minimum of seven Saturdays throughout the year. Scholars may request an excused absence as Debate coaches are flexible in accommodating scholars involved in other activities (athletics, dance, theater, etc.). However, these absences must be discussed and agreed upon by coaches in advance and will impact a scholar’s eligibility for travel / high stakes national tournaments.

All scholars are eligible to compete in all local tournaments, through their schools, particularly those sponsored by the Newark Debate Academy League. We strongly encourage debaters to attend tournaments regularly. Doing so will increase the likelihood that a scholar will be selected to participate in a debate travel tournament.

Athletics Teams–Specific Participation Commitment
We want to ensure that all of our athletes have enough time to warm up and prepare for practices (also referred to as “training sessions”). The following are the additional commitment requirements for our athletes.
Arrival
Players must arrive at least 15 minutes prior to their training session or game to use the bathroom, change, and mentally prepare. At the middle school, this means 7:15 am for 7:30 am - 8:45 am Zero Period practice Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Friday.

Scholars are also required to participate in Saturday tournaments and clinics. Tournaments and clinics generally last 2 hours. Start and end times for these practices will be provided to families once scholars are rostered into their respective school teams in September.

Late Arrivals
Players who are less than 15 minutes late will join the training session or game after the warm up. Players who are more than 15 minutes late will not be allowed to participate and will observe the practice or game from the sidelines.

Please also note that if your scholar is running late, you must text your designated coach with your estimated time of arrival. Parents should not call their coach during training sessions. Coaches are not able to take any phone calls while coaching unless it is an emergency. This allows our coaches to focus on the safety of our players. This also enables our players to maximize their practice time with our coaches.

Club Sportsmanship Expectation
We expect our scholars to demonstrate excellent sportsmanship and effort. Sportsmanship is demonstrated through fair and friendly behavior or treatment of others, inclusive of the opposing team. Any scholars or families with concerns should raise their concerns with their coach to manage.

Chess Team–Specific Sportsmanship Expectations
For scholars participating in virtual chess tournaments, sportsmanship expectations are outlined in the Unfair Play Policy.

Club Eligibility Requirements for Selection for Local, Travel, and High Stakes Events
For SY20-21, travel tournaments have been paused due to COVID-19 concerns. However, we will still be participating in High Stakes tournaments that are occurring online.

We believe that all scholars deserve the opportunity to participate in external chess tournaments, whether it be in person or online. Scholars who are selected to participate in these events are chosen not only on their ability to demonstrate adherence to the Success Academy academic and culture performance but also on their exceptional talent within their school community and network community.

Chess Club–Specific Participation
For SY20-21, travel tournaments have been paused due to COVID-19 concerns. However, we will still be participating in High Stakes tournaments that are occurring online.

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their ability to demonstrate adherence to the Success Academy academic and culture performance but also on their exceptional talent within their school community and network community.

For SY20-21, we expect there to be four High Stakes events that will be hosted virtually:

- Grade Nationals
- NY State Championships
- Girls Nationals
- Super Nationals

For Grade Nationals, we will bring 16 scholars to this tournament. School teams of three scholars will be selected to participate based on seventy-five percent of the scholars USCF published rating list as of November 1, 2020, as well as twenty-five of their lichess.org rapid rating as of October 21, 2020: We will only attend this event if held virtually this school year.

- The top team across the Network for 5-8
- Scholar must play a minimum of 6 tournaments by December 1, 2020, to be eligible for this event

For NYS Championships, we will bring the top team for each section based on an application submitted by coaches. This is a shared application process across ES/MS/HS. School teams will consist of five scholars per application:

- Scholars must play a minimum of 12 tournaments by February 1, 2021, to be eligible for this event
- Applications for the NYS Championship will use seventy-five percent of the March US Chess Rating and twenty-five percent of the lichess.org rapid rating as of February 17, 2021.

For Girls Nationals, we will bring 32 scholars to this tournament. School teams of three scholars will be selected to participate based on seventy-five percent of the scholars USCF published rating list as of February 1, 2021, as well as twenty-five percent of their lichess.org rapid rating as of January 20, 2021:

- Top two “12 and Under” teams across the network
- Top two “14 and Under” teams across the network
- Top two “16 and Under” teams across the network
- Top two “18 and Under” teams across the network
- Scholars must play in a minimum of 15 tournaments by April 1, 2021, to be eligible for this event

For Spring Nationals (Super), we will bring the top team for each section based on an application submitted by coaches. This is a shared application process across ES/MS/HS. School teams will consist of five scholars per application. Team’s will have the opportunity to submit an application for specific sections at the event. The teams with the highest team rating using twenty-five percent of a scholars lichess rapid rating as of March 17, 2021, as well as seventy-five percent of their US Chess April Supplement rating.

- Scholars must play in a minimum of 15 tournaments by April 1, 2021, to be eligible for this event

Debate Team–Specific Participation in Travel / High Stakes National Events

1 If the tournament is hosted in person, SA may choose not to participate if we are unable to travel
In addition to the standard club eligibility requirements for travel, debate team participants must also meet the following criteria:

- Compete in at least four local tournaments (Newark, UDL, or SA-based) prior to the travel tournament.
- Attend all Zero-Periods and Wednesday club sessions.
- Show commitment in practice and at tournaments.

Teams to travel or attend High Stakes National debate tournaments will be chosen across the following criteria weighted equally:

- Overall Rank from SADL Win/Loss %
- Overall Rank of SADL Average Speaker Score
- Overall Rank of SADL Sum Speaker Score
- External Tournament Team Attendance Rank

**Athletics Team-Specific Participation in Travel Events**
Scholars participating in MS competitive clubs for Athletics do not travel. Scholars who participate in the MS Selective Soccer program are part of the Network Soccer program and should reference the Network Club Handbook.

**Uniforms and Attire**
We are proud of our selective club scholars and their accomplishments. We want to share our pride in their achievements and want our scholars to look their best and ensure that they are safe when they participate in our clubs. We require all participating scholars to wear their Success Academy club uniform for every tournament and practice. The uniform and attire requirements for each club are described below.

**Athletics Uniforms and Accessories**

*Uniform*
Scholars must have the full provided SA uniform at all training sessions, even during remote practice, and during games once we are able to hold games again. Players will not be allowed to practice or play in any uniform articles not provided by our after school clubs.

*Jewelry*
Out of concern for all players’ safety, scholars are not allowed to wear jewelry during training sessions or games. If a player wears any jewelry during a session, a coach will ask the player to remove it and address the issue with a parent at dismissal.

*Glasses*
We encourage scholars needing corrective vision to consider prescription sports goggles or contacts if age-appropriate.

**Chess Uniforms**
Scholars will not have a chess uniform this year. Competitions are serious events and we expect our scholars to be dressed appropriately to mark the occasion. Even though the scholars will not always be on camera, chess scholars should wear appropriate clothing - collared shirts, button-down shirts, or
blouses with appropriate trousers (khakis or non-ripped jeans are ok) or skirts. Dresses are ok. Shorts are no longer allowed. Scholars may wear their SA uniforms, if they prefer.

For high stakes tournaments, scholars must wear their SA uniform on the last day of the event (Sunday).

**Debate Uniforms**
All scholars are required to wear their SA uniform or other professional dress to all tournaments, irrespective of whether or not the tournament is conducted online or in person.

**Parent Involvement**
We value parent commitment to our club participants and we provide parents with many opportunities to share in their scholar's club experiences.

**Parent Volunteers**
Parent volunteers may be needed from time to time to chaperone the scholars in weekend events, as well as travel events. Volunteering for a club event provides parents with the opportunity to see their scholars in action!

**Chess Club**
Each school chess program will host a parent event twice a year. Parents will be invited to socialize with their school’s chess community as well as learn more about their school's chess program. Parents are encouraged to take photos of their scholars playing online chess to share with their school community. However parents should **not** provide any assistance to their scholars during the online tournaments.

When we are able to travel or host in person tournaments, Parent volunteers may be needed from time to time to chaperone the scholars in weekend events, as well as travel events. Volunteering for a club event provides parents with the opportunity to see their scholars in action!

Parents may speak with an SA chess coach to request to volunteer at Saturday SA tournaments when we can host these events in person.

To qualify to chaperone an overnight trip, a parent must have volunteered in the team room at a Saturday SA tournament a minimum of three times.

**Athletic Teams**
Athletics programs do not require any volunteers or chaperones for MS Club Teams. However, we highly encourage your attendance at our school competitive events to cheer on our scholar and their team!

**Homework**
**Chess Club**
To ensure that our club participants gain the skill sets needed to compete, homework is provided to supplement after-school practices. Parents must be aware of all the required homework for our club scholars and ensure that scholars have completed it.
“TACTICS” are a series of moves in chess that “win material” from the opponent. Solving chess tactics puzzles are essential to scholar improvement in chess. The required tactics homework is done on the ChessKid or lichess.org website as follows:

- September through January: Ten Chesskid/Lichess puzzles a week
- January through June: Twenty Chesskid/Lichess puzzles a week
- Paper tactics will be assigned at coach’s discretion

**Debate Team**
Participation in a debate team requires completion of content-specific homework.

**Athletic Teams**
Participation in an athletic team does not require completion of content-specific homework.

**Competition and Tournament Day Expectations**
In person Competitions and Tournaments are currently paused to support SA Health and Safety guidelines. We want our club participants to gain as much experience as they can through their participation in competitions and tournaments. These experiences are invaluable in terms of building a scholar’s competitive skill set. We have designed our competition and tournament day expectations to maximize the enjoyment of your scholar and of the entire team.

**Chess Team**
The following are the competition day expectations for our chess team scholars:

- Scholars must attend 8 SA tournaments and 7 external tournaments
- Scholars must arrive on time for tournaments. Scholars arriving late may be dropped from the round.

The following are the competition day expectations for our parents:

- Parents/guardians are not allowed in the tournament hall after the first five minutes.
- Parents/guardians can wait in the designated classrooms for scholars to complete their competition rounds.

**Debate Team**
The following are the competition day expectations for our debate team scholars:

- Scholars must log onto the coach’s link and stay in the coach room until their first round. Failure to do so will result in being dropped from the first round. Scholars dropped from the first round can re-enter the tournament for all other rounds if they miss round one.
- Scholars must be in their SA uniform or professional dress.
- No “loser talk” is allowed at tournaments. We either win or we learn. Be respectful and professional with your coach, judges, and opponents.
- Report on time to all rounds. Teams will receive an automatic loss if they are more than 10 minutes late to each round.
- Debaters should not be interacting with parents/guardians or spectators unless instructed by the coach.
- Debaters should write down all feedback from judges and report it to the coach after the round.
- At the end of a tournament, after awards, they can log off of the virtual tournament.
The following are the competition day expectations for our parents:

- Parents/guardians are allowed to attend all debate rounds, except for the first SADL tournament, unless a team has requested not to have anyone in the virtual room.
- Parents/guardians may not speak, signal, side coach, or do anything to distract debaters while they are in round.
- Parents/guardians may speak with debaters after the round is finished and the judge has offered feedback.

Athletic Teams

All Athletic games and competitions are currently paused to support Health and Safety guidelines. The following are the competition day expectations for our athletes for when we are back in person:

- Playing time may be more or less than that of another player on the team and will be determined by the head coach. Playing time is based on attendance at training sessions and games, player attitude, player commitment level, and playing ability. SA Athletics Programs guarantee 100% playing time at every training session unless there are behavior/safety issues.

The following are the competition day expectations for our parents:

- From the beginning of warm-up to the final whistle and a debrief, players are with the coach and should not be interacting with parents/guardians or spectators unless instructed by the coach.
- If there is an injury, players will be examined by the medical crew (if applicable) or their coach. Parents/guardians may not enter the field nor the team-assigned area.
- Parents/guardians should wait 24 hours following the game to address any non-urgent concerns with the coach.

We are incredibly excited to have your scholar join our Scholar Talent Zero-Period and Wednesday Clubs. We look forward to working with you, your scholar, and our coaches in further developing your scholar’s already exceptional talent through their participation in our club programs.