

The Forum

Speech & Debate Club Handbook

Christian Communicators of America (CCA)

We are a local club that participates under the umbrella of CCA. We adhere to their policies.

CCA Mission and Vision

“The mission of Christian Communicators of America (CCA) is to assist parents who are home educating their children with the development of communication and critical thinking skills, equipping these children to be faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ by preparing them to give a defense of their faith to everyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is within them, and to do so with grace, seasoned with salt.”

CCA Vision

“To accomplish this mission CCA will provide opportunities for the above stated home educated children to participate in competitive speech and debate tournaments where an emphasis will be placed on excellence in speech, critical thinking from a Biblical worldview, and Christ-like character development. Students will be encouraged to recognize and develop their God-given gifts, to work as unto the Lord, to acknowledge God’s sovereignty in all events, and to give God the glory in all that is done.”

CCA Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God, and the final authority for faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16) We believe that there is one God, eternally existent, in one essence, yet three co-equal persons, the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4:4-6, Matthew 28:19, John 14:9-11, John 15:26). We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:16, Mark 8:27-29, Luke 9:18-20), His virgin birth (Luke 1:29-35), His sinless life (1 John 3:5), His miracles (Acts 2:22, John 3:2), His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood (Romans 3:25, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, 1 Peter 1:18-19), His bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-5), His ascension (Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-11), and His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, John 14:2-3). We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men; the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (John 5:28-29, John 5:24). We believe that all men are sinful by nature, and that salvation is the gift of God given to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22-24). We believe that we should live in such a manner as to not bring reproach upon our Savior and Lord (Matthew 5:16, Philippians 1:27). We believe it is our obligation as believers to witness by life and word to the truths of the Gospel and proclaim these truths to all mankind (Matthew 28:19-20).

CCA Code of Conduct

For Members of Christian Communicators of America (CCA), and those attending CCA tournaments:

1. The conduct of the leaders, parents, coaches, and participants who attend a CCA event or who associate themselves with CCA will be guided by Biblical principles.
2. Everyone associated with a CCA event will be treated with, and will treat others with, respect before, during, and after rounds, regardless of the outcome.
3. Language will be wholesome, and Christ honoring. No crude or vulgar language or conduct will be tolerated.
4. In order to show respect for the activity, opponents, and judges, professional

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that Scripture delineates only one specific meaning for the term “marriage”, that is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union (Gen 2: 18-25). We believe that the gender terms “man” and “woman” as used in Scripture refer to biological sex, as determined by a person’s chromosomes, and identified at birth by anatomy. We believe that God intends no intimate sexual activity to occur outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4), and that any sexual activity outside the bounds of such a marriage is sinful. We further believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

The Forum Leadership

We have lead debate and speech coaches and a head administrator with all parents being “coaches” during the season. At monthly parent meetings these lead parents will present the tasks that need to be done and everyone will work together to accomplish the needs of the club.

Student Categories

Competition Year defined: Competitors must be these ages as of January to complete in the Feb – May tournaments.

- **Varsity** students must be at least 13 and no older than 18 by January 1 of the competition year, and must not have graduated from high school.
- **Junior Varsity (JV)** students must be at least 9 and no older than 12 by January 1 of the competition year.
- **Junior** students must be at least 5 and no older than 8 by January 1 of the competition year. Juniors are not required to attend club, but they can still compete at tournaments.

Club Participation Policy

The Forum is a parent-run club. Each **Varsity, and Junior Varsity Student**, as well as at least **one** parent from each family is required to attend **all scheduled club meetings** (both parents attendance is strongly encouraged). As a team and family run club, absences affect every family. We ask that total absences (including illness) not **exceed**

4 per semester. Notification of absences must be submitted to Admin prior to the club meeting (as early as possible) so that the Coaches can plan club activities accordingly. Although illness and emergency may require last minute notification, generally Admin should be informed of planned absences no later than **two weeks in advance via email**. When considering planned absences for your family (vacation, etc.) please ensure that you keep some absences available for unexpected illness or emergency. Since we are families in community with one another, there is always room for grace when life happens. Communication to your fellow club members is crucial when you're needing extra time away.

Club Schedule Expectations

Please arrive 5 minute before start time.

Club instruction and activities will include 3 hours of directed content for debate and 2 hours for speech only in the Fall. During tournament season speech only will go for up to 3 hours.

Role of Member Parent Volunteers in Club Meetings

At least one parent from each family will be asked to serve in a teaching, feedback, or support role during club nights. As specific areas of service may vary due to club needs on a particular evening, parent flexibility and understanding during club meetings is appreciated. New parents will shadow before being asked to take on any role.

The Forum uses the term "Coach" to denote the lead instructors in our club and who the league recognises at tournaments; however, it is **truly each parent who will be coaching their student at home**. It is imperative that you learn along with your student, so that you will be prepared to assist them during the week. The website ccadebate.org is where we get most of our coaching material. Parents may be asked to lead various sections during club night.

Families with children too young to meet student membership requirements should plan for one parent to attend club with the older children and one parent to remain at home with the younger children.

Tournament Participation Policy

- All **Varsity Debate** students must participate in the debate Round Robin Tournament (in January) and compete in a minimum of 2 CCA Tournaments.
- All **Varsity speech only and Junior Varsity** students must participate in the Round Robin Tournament and compete in a minimum of 1 CCA Tournament.
- All **Juniors** must participate in the Round Robin Tournament and may choose whether or not to compete at CCA Tournament(s).

It is strongly encouraged that all The Forum families consider attending more than the required tournaments. Experience has shown that participating in fewer than three tournaments during the first year of Debate can limit a student's ability to fully grasp policy debate techniques even after significant preparation efforts.

Significant growth occurs at additional tournaments undertaken within the same season. Please note: Tournament participation is **mandatory** at The Forum hosted tournament(s). **BOTH parents are required to serve.** Please plan in advance to request absence from work or other commitments. Both parents are expected to be present for the entire day and evening on both Friday and Saturday of The Forum-hosted and co-hosted tournaments, regardless of the involvement of their student(s). These are best practices.

Round Robin Tournament is typically held on a regular Club night in January. The Debate Round Robin requires at least **one** parent with a Debate competitor and is typically held on a Saturday in January and lasts all day.

Families registering more than one student for any other tournaments are **required by CCA to register both parents** (if this is not possible, a replacement person such as a grandparent, older sibling, or family friend can fill this role). At these tournaments parents will be trained and will judge competition rounds at the tournament. The CCA tournament staff are parents just like us, who are taking off work to provide this opportunity for our kids. While at the tournament, we expect our club's parents to jump in and serve where needed to bless their kids.

Photography Policy

Parent volunteers and non-member adult volunteers give their express permission for the compensation-free use of their and/or their minor children's photograph(s), brief video clips, and first names for public promotion of the club and/or league. These images may be used in print or online publications, presentations, or websites. However, last names of individuals will not be attached to the photographs or video clips unless express written permission for a particular use is obtained.

Dress Code

We require a neat and tidy appearance at club nights. Starting Spring semester, students will be required to wear their tournament attire to club once a month, but not on a tournament week, so they can get used to speaking in those clothes.

DO NOT wear at any club meeting:

- Athletic shorts / Basketball Shorts
- Shorts shorter than the fingertips when hands are at your side
- Pajamas
- Spaghetti straps
- Muscle Shirts
- Low cut shirts
- Excessively tight clothing
- If skirt length falls above the knee, please wear leggings or shorts underneath
- Torn or ripped jeans
- No hats
- Clothing that presents the individual as the opposite gender.

Tournament Attire (From CCA Code of Conduct)

In order to show respect for the activity, opponents, and judges, **professional business attire is required for all CCA participants**. All clothing shall be modest.

- For young men, this means modestly cut business suits or blazers with modestly-fitted slacks, shirt, tie, and dress shoes. (Suit jacket is optional for Jr and JV boys.) Professional grooming for men includes being clean shaven or having neatly groomed beards and/or mustaches.
- For young ladies, this means modestly cut and modestly fitted pant or skirt suit (the hem line should fall **below the knee**), no form fitted shirts or exposed midriffs, and professional close-toed shoes. For Individual Events, dresses are permitted (the hem line should fall below the knee). Professional grooming for ladies includes hair, jewelry, and makeup.

Facility Use Policy

Club Meetings are held at a local church, which have graciously allowed us to use their facilities, so please do not call the church with questions about our meetings, our tournaments, or our activities.

Fees (Subject to Change)

1. Club fees

- a. The Forum charges a per-family fee of \$150 per year. This fee covers liability insurance, website costs, legal and financial costs, facility donation, general teaching supplies, and miscellaneous expenses. Fee is due by May 31st.

2. Tournament Registration

- a. All tournament registrations/fees are the responsibility of each family. These fees vary per family and are payable in the Spring to each Tournament registrar. **2023 fees per student were:** Debate \$35, Varsity Speech \$30 for the first event, \$5 for each additional event; JV: \$30, Junior: \$25. (2024 tournament fees will be released at a later date.)

3. Travel Costs (We are a travel league)

- a. Families are also responsible for hotel costs, but group rates often apply. (Occasionally, host housing with members of a local club can be made available for families who have need.) Tournaments may be in the states of: Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, or Michigan. Debate families should expect to travel to at least one tournament, though the work and effort and students warrant doing 3 tournaments. There are only 4 tournaments per season.