

O'SHEA SHIELD 2026



Guidelines

Debating

Tautohetohe

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Rules for the arrangement and conduct of Debates

(Based on the Secondary Schools National Debating rules)

1. Each team shall consist of three speakers.

2. The order of speakers and speaking times shall be as follows:

(Substantive speeches to be a maximum of 8 minutes with a bell at 1 minute, a bell at 7 minutes, and 2 bells at 8 minutes)

- 1st Affirmative

- 1st Negative

- 2nd Affirmative

- 2nd Negative

- 3rd Affirmative

- 3rd Negative

(Summaries - Maximum of 4 minutes with a bell at 3 minutes, and 2 bells at 4 minutes)

- 1st or 2nd Negative

- 1st or 2nd Affirmative

3. The warning bell will be a single ring of the bell (or similar device). Two rings of the bell will indicate the completion of allotted time.

4. For the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd speakers, there will be a bell at ONE minute (signalling to all the debaters that Points of Information are now allowed to be offered) and one bell at SEVEN minutes (indicating that no more Points of Information may be offered) and two bells at EIGHT minutes.

5. The conduct and control of the debate shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson. It is the Chairperson's duty to make the ruling on the Point of Order.
6. Speaking times shall be calculated by excluding any time taken up by Points of Order or any other interruption to the speeches. The clock is stopped during Points of Order but not during Points of Information.
7. No interjections from the audience or the teams will be accepted.
8. Points of Information are allowed, as follows:
 - a) Between the first and seventh minutes of a speaker's speech, members of the other team may offer Points of Information.
 - b) The purpose of a Point of Information is to make a short point or ask a short question of the speaker. It must be made in the form of a question.
 - c) A Point of Information should be brief, and no longer than 15 seconds.
 - d) Points of Information are an important part of the clash between the teams and enable speakers to remain a part of the debate even when they are not making a speech.
 - e) A speaker should offer Points of Information both before and after that speaker has given their speech.
 - f) The speaker has the absolute right to refuse to accept a Point of Information, or to accept it only at the end of the next sentence.
 - g) A speaker is obliged to accept some Points of Information, provided that they have been offered at reasonable times in the speaker's speech.
 - h) As a general rule a speaker should accept at least TWO Points of Information in their speech. However, a speaker who accepts a significantly greater number of Points of Information risks losing control of their speech.
 - i) Members of the opposing team should not offer an excessive number of Points of Information to the point that they are barracking. As a general rule each team member should offer between 2 and 4 Points of Information per speech and should not offer them within a short time of a previous Point of Information having been offered.
 - j) The response by the speaker to a Point of Information will be included in the marks for that speaker's speech.

- k) The offering of Points of Information will be included in the mark for the speaker offering points.

9. Points of Order may be made on the following grounds only:

- a) That the speaker or any other person present is conducting themselves in an unseemly manner.
- b) That the speaker is using personal abuse or offensive language.
- c) That the speaker is misquoting an earlier speaker on a material point in the debate.
- d) That the leader, in their reply, is introducing new material into the debate.
- e) That the speaker is introducing material clearly not relevant to the subject of the debate (e.g. comments on how the topic was selected).
- f) That any of the rules for the conduct of the debate are not being observed.

10. A Point of Order may be raised by the current speaker or by any other member of the two teams during the debate. **Please note that Points of Order are rarely used in modern debates.**

11. The Chairperson should rule on the Point of Order without debate but MAY, if they are in doubt, allow members of the two teams to speak briefly to the Point of Order, but the adjudicator may stop the discussion at any time.

12. The Chairperson must rule one way or the other on any Point of Order which has been properly raised.

13. When a Point of Order has been raised, the speaker shall resume their seat until the Chairperson has delivered a ruling. The person who has raised the Point of Order will stand to speak to the Point of Order if invited to do so by the Chairperson.

14. A Point of Order shall be allowed only if it is raised during or immediately after the breach.

15. A speaker whose remarks have been misunderstood shall not be permitted to make an explanation, except at the end of the speech in which they claim to have been misunderstood.

16. The adjudicator shall judge the debate fairly and impartially and disregard any prejudice of the audience. The adjudicator shall name the winning team and place the three best speakers in order of merit. As speakers are expected to end their speeches within the time allowed, adjudicators are expected to reduce the speaker's marks for undue running-over of time.

17. If suitable adjudicators who are familiar with Secondary Schools Debating Championships are unavailable, then call on the competing schools to provide a suitable adjudicator (*Delegates' Meeting, 2012*).
18. The adjudication sheet for 2024 is the Wellington Speaking Union Official Mark Sheet for secondary school debating (*Hui/Working Party, July 6th, 2017*)
19. The use of laptops/tablets is **NOT** permitted during speeches, in accordance with rules for NZ Regional Secondary Schools' Championships. Students may use mobile phones or stopwatches to monitor their speaking times during their speeches (*Delegates' Meeting, 2023*)

The Chairperson will invite each participant to introduce themselves briefly with a pepeha to the audience and adjudicators before the event begins, in the language that each student is most comfortable using. This introduction will not be timed and does not form part of the debating speech, or the adjudication of the event.

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Debating Moot and Draw 2026

“This House believes that the cost of humanity is placing too high a burden on society”

The debates will be run in TWO sections, with Section A beginning at 8.45am on Saturday, May 16th. Section B teams will be escorted to a holding room, where they will surrender their phones/devices to the supervising teacher. Section B will begin at 10.15 am.

The draw is as follows:

SECTION A

Affirmative	Negative
St Peter's College	St Patrick's College, Wellington
Sacred Heart Girls' College, New Plymouth	St Patrick's College, Silverstream
St John's College	Garin College
Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt (Team A)	Cullinane College
Hato Pāora College	St Catherine's College

SECTION B:

Affirmative	Negative
Bishop Viard College	Chanel College
St Bernard's College	St Joseph's Māori Girls' College
St Mary's College	Sacred Heart College, Napier
Francis Douglas Memorial College	Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt (Team B)

Marks and Awards

The adjudicators' marking schedules total 350 points. Trophies will be awarded to the Best Affirmative team and the Best Negative team.

6 points	Distinction award	Excellent standard	301+
5 points	Distinction award	High standard	266 - 300
4 points	Merit award	Good Standard	231 - 265
3 points	Merit award	Average standard	178 - 230
2 points	Participation award	Complete, below average	108 - 177
1 point	Participation award	Incomplete or inadequate	0 - 107