

BSHS FORENSICS

2020 – 2021 Handbook

Yearly Focus:

PATHOS



“Any great thinker ought not be an institution.” – J.P.S.

More Information/Primary Contacts:

Head Coaches: Kristy Bixler: kbixler@mcpsmt.org and Eli Brown: eb133239@umconnect.umt.edu ...
Or See Practice Schedule And Drop In!!! :)

BSHS Contact: 3100 South Ave W, Missoula, MT 59804 : (406) 728-2401

[NOTE: Please feel encouraged to reach out to the head coach (primary team contact) for more information regarding our practice schedules, networking platform, with any questions/comments/concerns, and IF YOU WISH TO JOIN!!! (The last option is highly encouraged: Before you ask, it is never too late.)]

Ethos: Actions of Excellence

1. Why?
2. What you do not believe yourself, you cannot impart upon another.
3. First principles first.
4. Be precise in your speech.
5. Have faith, for there is a lie to be told about everything.
6. Thought is semantic; action is pragmatic.
7. Everything in moderation, except excellence.

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Welcome to our 2020-2021 Speech and Debate Season! My name is Kristy Bixler, and I am the Head Coach for the Big Sky team this season. This will be my first year coaching, and I am looking forward to working with all of your students and a great season.

For those of you new to Speech and Debate, there are many events to choose from, some are singles events and others require partners. There is a complete list of events available at speechanddebate.org (please note, Montana does not have every event listed).

My coaching philosophy is to provide the best experience possible for all of our students despite the craziness of these COVID times. I will expect our students to attend all required practices, and to attend the majority of the meets our school participates in. Big Sky Speech and Debate has a long tradition of not only excellence in competition, but excellence in our student values and behaviors which I expect to be maintained.

I also want to emphasize that no student should be barred from participating in Speech and Debate due to financial concerns, participation in other fall or winter sports, or other circumstances. Please talk to me and we can figure out a way to make it work for your student! Speech and Debate is an exciting and wonderful opportunity for students and we want to encourage as many students as possible to join our team.

Because of the unique nature of school and extra curricular activities during COVID, we are still waiting to hear exactly what Speech and Debate will look like this season. We are working through several different possibilities, including what traditional travel competitions will look like, as well as virtual competitions. As soon as we have more information we will let you know. However, as for right now we are planning to proceed with our season as usual. This means we will begin to practice on October 19th, and the season will go through February. Our expectation is that students will attend all required practices, and will make an effort to be at every tournament.

I encourage parents to participate in a variety of ways, from fundraisers, to making decorations for our team, to volunteering at the Missoula Meet! We will be sending out lots of requests and reminders so be on the lookout. I am looking forward to working with your students and to a great season! If you have any questions feel free to send me an email.

Kristy Bixler
kbixler@mcpsmt.org

Tentative 2020/21 Schedule*

(This is a VERY TENTATIVE meet schedule, open to change at any time. Please do not plan on these locations until a final decision is received from MHSA. We wanted to provide some rough outline of what the season would look like!)

October 2020

|| Oct 19, 2020 : Start of the Season Meeting (Virtual) || Oct 20, 2020 : First day of practices (A-K Students) || Oct 22, 2020 : First day of practices (L-Z Students) ||

November 2020

|| Nov 9, 2020 : Proposed day for All Students in school-All students will attend practices together || Nov 23-27, 2020: Thanksgiving Break (Optional Practice) ||

December 2020

|| Dec 4-5, 2020 : First Meet of the Season! Billings || Dec 11-12, 2020 : Kalispell Tournament || Dec 18-19, 2020 : Helena Tournament || Dec 21, 2020 – Jan 3, 2021 : Winter Break (Modified Practice Requirements) ||

January 2021

|| Dec 21, 2020 – Jan 3, 2021 : Winter Break (Modified Practice Requirements) || Jan 15-16, 2021 : Belgrade Tournament || Jan 18, 2021 : MLK Day-No School || Jan 22-23, 2021 : Great Falls Tournament || Jan 22, 2021 : End of Semester (State Grade Check) || Jan 29-30, 2021 : State Tournament in Butte ||

February/March 2021

|| Feb 12-13, 2021 NSDA West Tournament (Missoula) || Feb 19-20, 2021 NSDA East Tournament (Billings) || DATE TBD: End of Season Banquet : 5:00pm - 7:00pm ||

*BSHS Forensics reserves the right to modify this schedule at any time within reason, to be adjudicated by BSHS.

Tentative 2020/21 Practice Schedule

Monday: || Remote School Day* : Work on Speeches/Evidence gathering on your own.
Virtual Team Meetings will be announced in advance

Tuesday: || Squad Practice** (A-K) : 3:30pm - 6:00pm ||

Wednesday: || Lunch Short Prep Meeting : 12:25pm – 12:50pm || Squad
Practice**(A-K) : 3:30pm – 6:00pm ||

Thursday: || Squad Practice**(L-Z) : 3:30pm - 6:00pm ||

Friday: || Squad Practice**(L-Z) : 3:30pm – 6:00pm ||

*Practice Schedule may change when/if Remote Learning on Mondays changes. We also may switch to full team practices. This will NOT mean that you have to come on a day you do not attend school, but that it would be an option.

**"Squad practice" indicates a range of times within which practice may occur, depending upon the event that the student chooses to participate in. The specific time may be somewhat variable, and will be set by the coach in charge of that event. I have provided the Debate/Short Prep Squad schedule for this season below, as an example.

Practice Requirements:

1. In order to maintain travel status with the team, students **must** attend a minimum of two practices a week beginning two weeks before the first tournament, or from the date of the first practice they attended.
2. In order to travel on the state team, students **must** consistently attend a minimum of two practices a week beginning two weeks before the first tournament, or from the date of the first practice they attended.
3. If contact is initiated by the student prior to failing to fulfill the requirement alongside reasonable extenuating circumstances, the coaching staff will remain open to requests for exemption.

Additional Participation Requirements

1. **Required Forms on Dragonfly** – Turned in to activities Secretary Karen Sweeney in the Main Office. Students will not officially be on the team roster until all forms are turned in, and students who do not have their forms turned in by the Monday before a tournament will be taken off the travel roster. Please fill out all forms in Dragonfly ASAP. The only form not required is the Physical Examination-you do not need to receive a physical!
 - a. Medical Information and Insurance

Both sides of this card must be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian in order for a student to get on the bus or compete. **Make sure to include medical insurance company and policy # information.** Insurance can be purchased at a discount through the school if needed.

- b. Risk Disclosure Agreement
- c. Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct
- d. Season Activities Code of Conduct - Students **DO NOT** have to have a doctor's physical.
- e. Concussion Factsheet
- f. Signed Handbook acknowledgement form

2. Required Fees – paid to activities Secretary Karen Sweeney in the Main Office. Fees should be paid at the same time as the 5 required forms are turned in, unless other arrangements are made with Karen. Pay your fees ASAP!! You will not officially be “on the team” until your fees are paid!*

- a. \$60 Participation Fee
- b. \$20 NSDA Membership fee for those who have not paid it yet.

*We may decide as a team to include a “white fee” of \$25 to purchase a team T-shirt or sweatshirt. We will inform you of this ASAP!!

3. COVID-19 Info-- In order to keep our team healthy throughout the season we will be following all protective and preventative measures that MCPS has decided upon. This includes but is not limited to: wearing masks during all practices (even while giving practice speeches), maintaining 6 feet of social distance, regular sanitization of practice spaces and commonly touched surfaces, and good hand washing/sanitizing practices. As of the beginning of the season, all tournaments will be held virtually but this is subject to change as the season progresses. If you have a fever, or other COVID symptoms please stay home from practice. We will try to accomodate illness and quarantines by allowing students to attend practice virtually if necessary.

4. Fundraising -- All team members are expected to assist in at least 1-2 team fundraisers during the year, which may include but are not limited to running the BSHS concessions stand during games, a team raffle, and other events organized by coaches and/or parents. Team fundraising is essential to running the team, as well as providing additional materials such as spirit gear and tournament snacks.

5. Tournament Dress Code -- Competitors are expected to wear professional clothes during two-day competitions. These guidelines have flexibility but, this generally means no tennis shoes, no open toed shoes, no jeans, no short skirts, and no blouses with revealing necklines, no distracting jewelry, makeup, or hair. Students DO NOT need to go out and spend a large amount of money on a new wardrobe. Instead, they should talk with their coaches and teammates to determine what clothes are most appropriate for their events. If you don't have the correct clothes, the Goodwill down the street is the best place to start looking. Many adults in life people buy professional clothes for a specific time and only use them once or twice, leaving lots of good clothes available. *For the one-day tournament(s) at the beginning of the season, the dress code will be relaxed to allow new students to observe what their competitors are wearing: no jeans, white sneakers or open toed shoes, or t-shirts.*

- 6. All Other Applicable BSHS and MHSB Handbook Guidelines** – Expectations maintained by the MHSB as well as BSHS apply to all students participating in any school sanctioned extracurricular event. As such, we encourage both students and parents to review the handbook(s) before signing the *Handbook Acknowledgement Form*, as the rules and regulations outlined there are also being acknowledged upon signing.

Travel Information

Even though Meets will be Virtual this year, some of this information is still relevant so please take a look!

- 1. Varsity & JV** -- The “Varsity” and “JV” travel teams and designations are very fluid and will change at each tournament. Varsity determinations depend on commitment to the team, competitiveness, and the coaches’ discretion. Typically, most students have the opportunity to compete Varsity at tournaments held in Missoula, Bozeman, and Kalispell. Beyond that, there may be some limits to whom can compete at the Varsity level. Varsity tournaments, including State, usually limit us to a maximum of 4 competitors in each event (or 4 teams in partner events), and 42 competitors overall. Varsity tournaments will be the ONLY time students may ever be asked to enter a different event for the sake of maximizing participation as well as competitive potential.
- 2. 2020-2021 State Travel Team** -- In mid-January, when choosing the 42 students selected for the 2020-2021 AA State Team, the coaches will set the roster based on who has best met the varsity expectations in addition to having the potential for competitive success at State. As such, there is the potential for limited selection at this point; however, if a student is not selected for the State Travel Team, they are *more than welcome* to still compete at NSDA qualifiers in February. In fact, it is encouraged!!!
- 3. Dropping a Tournament** -- Students must make a commitment to attend a tournament one week before the tournament. Coaches will assume that ALL team members are available to compete at ALL tournament unless they have had a prior discussion with their coaches or have an unavoidable conflict (a medical issue, family emergency, etc.). Additionally, any student who commits to attending a tournament and drops out the week of the tournament will forfeit the privilege to attend the next scheduled Varsity tournament. This is to ensure that no one claims a travel spot and then back out, depriving another student of the opportunity to compete.
- 4. Traveling** -- We will typically leave for tournaments on Friday mornings and return late Saturday evenings. Transportation is on buses provided by the district. The school will book and pay for the busses and the hotels in advance, but we will ask students to commit to attending a tournament a few weeks before in order to know how many hotel rooms to book, as well as to assist the tournament hosts in planning. The medical information cards are kept with the coaches at all times during tournaments. If your child should need medical assistance, we will take the appropriate action and will notify you immediately. If your child has specific health risks, medications they take, or dietary needs please make sure we are aware in advance. Because we travel as a team, if your child becomes ill and needs to return home, it will be your responsibility

to come pick them up. If your child has a fever or is exhibiting signs of being ill, please keep them at home.

5. **Food** -- Because tournaments are typically two full days, it is important that students take responsibility to stay well-fed and hydrated. They should eat breakfast at home, and we generally are provided breakfast at the hotel. That means that they should bring: **Food or money for 2 lunches and 2 dinners**. For those students who bring money, we will stop to pick up food on Friday, and, if decided upon by the coaching staff, again on Saturday evening. There will NEVER be a guarantee of this final stop, so students are HIGHLY ENCOURAGED to bring snacks or entire meals, depending upon food availability at the tournament. Concessions are also usually available at the schools, but the quality varies. The parents group often provides coolers with snacks and sandwich fixings for the tournaments, while the team generally brings water for students as well as bread for sandwiches.
6. **Parent Group** -- A robust parent group is essential to the success of Big Sky High School Speech and Debate as a team. The mission of the parent group is self-defined, but generally means supporting the students on our team during the year and especially at competition. For tournaments, the single largest contribution is helping to provide food and snacks for our students. Anyone interested in being a part of the parent group should email Coach Bixler at kbixler@mcpsmt.org or Coach Brown at eb133239@umconnect.umt.edu, or opt-in on the handbook acknowledgement form.
7. **“Remind” Texting Application** – We are no longer using the ‘Remind’ application for communication. Instead, a website has been constructed and students/parents may contact Coach Brown for additional sign up information (students/parents must be added to the ‘team’ on our new application)!
8. **Bullying and Hazing** - There will be ZERO tolerance for bullying, hazing, or harrassment of any kind on this team. This includes all forms of bullying including cyberbullying. We will treat all of our team members and competitors with respect in and out of rounds and practices. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to report any instance of bullying please EMAIL kbixler@mcpsmt.org. Email will allow us to have a record of any conversation if it becomes necessary. Thank you!
9. **PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM ON THE NEXT PAGE TO KRISTY OR ELI!!**

Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I agree to follow all of the rules and expectations set out in the 2020 - 2021 Big Sky Speech and Debate Handbook, as well as those applicable rules and expectations from **BOTH** the MHSA and BSHS handbooks.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Group

If you are interested in being a part of our parent group, please include your contact information below. While the coaches will already have access to parent/guardian contact information for safety reasons, families must opt-in for us to share that information with other families.

Name(s)	Student	Email	Phone # (cell or home)
_____	_____	_____	_____