

# SADA

South Australian Debating Association Inc

## **SCHOOLS' COMPETITION RULES & POLICIES**

(Updated March 2021)

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# SCHOOLS' COMPETITION RULES

## 1. Purpose

1.1 These rules govern the Schools' Competition.

## 2. Team entries

2.1 Team entries must be submitted by the due date nominated by the SADA. Late entries may be accepted at the discretion of the SADA.

## 3. Fees

3.1 The SADA may charge fees to enter the Competition. A school is liable to pay entry fees at the time of submitting its team entries, irrespective of whether it later withdraws teams from the Competition.

3.2 The SADA may charge other fees relating to the Competition, including without limitation for forfeiting debates or the late entry of teams.

## 4. Zones

4.1 The SADA may divide the Competition into zones.

4.2 If the Competition is divided into zones, each team will be assigned to a zone. A school may have teams in multiple zones.

4.3 Debates take place between schools in the same zone, except finals, which are inter-zonal.

## 5. Grades

5.1 There are five grades:

5.1.1 Junior;

5.1.2 Intermediate B;

5.1.3 Intermediate A;

5.1.4 Senior B; and

5.1.5 Senior A.

**5.2 Junior Grade**

Schools may field students in years 5-7 in the Junior Grade.

**5.3 Intermediate B Grade**

Schools may field students in years 8 and 9 in the Intermediate B Grade, which is intended for novice year 8 and 9 debaters. Teams in the Intermediate B Grade must not have more than two speakers who have previously debated in the SADA Intermediate B Grade or higher.

**5.4 Intermediate A Grade**

Schools may field students in years 8-10 in the Intermediate A Grade, which is intended for confident or experienced year 8s and 9s and novice year 10s. Teams in the Intermediate A Grade must not have more than two speakers who have previously debated in the SADA Intermediate A Competition or higher.

**5.5 Senior B Grade**

Schools may field students in years 10-12 in the Senior B Grade, which is intended for experienced year 10s, year 11 debaters who are less confident or inexperienced, and novice year 12s.

**5.6 Senior A Grade**

Schools may field students in years 9-12 in the Senior A Grade, which is intended for accomplished debaters who wish to debate at an advanced level.

5.7 These rules provide schools with flexibility in how they may structure teams. This is designed to facilitate students debating in an appropriate grade for their ability and to assist schools to field the largest number of viable teams. Schools are expected to structure teams within the spirit of these rules and not to stack teams with students who ought to be debating in a higher grade except where necessary (e.g. because of a lack of students).

**6. Teams**

6.1 Team composition must be consistent with these rules. Any breach of the rules will result in a team automatically forfeiting the debate.

6.2 No student may debate more than once in each round without the permission of the SADA Executive.

- 6.3 Each team participating in the finals must field speakers who have spoken in the team at least two times in the minor rounds. The SADA retains discretion to overrule this requirement.
- 6.4 Each team must be comprised of students enrolled at the school which the team is representing.
- 6.5 Each team must be represented by three speakers – no member of a team may speak more than once in a debate. In addition, the affirmative team is expected to provide a chairperson, and the negative team is expected to provide a timekeeper.

## **7. Round Nights**

- 7.1 Each team debates once per round, with the exception of 'byes'.
- 7.2 There are five rounds for all grades.
- 7.3 Each grade has a three round finals series.
- 7.4 Debates are held on Tuesday and Wednesday nights from 5.30 pm. Each round takes place over two weeks.
- 7.5 Round nights and finals are held at schools or alternative venues deemed appropriate by the SADA Executive.
- 7.6 Irrespective of the venue, schools are responsible for the behaviour of their own students, supporters, coaches, etc. The host school or venue is otherwise responsible for public safety and the provision of suitable amenities and facilities.
- 7.7 Debates must take place at the time, venue and on the date scheduled in the Schools' Competition Program; a team that is unable to debate as scheduled must forfeit the debate (see rule 12).

## **8. Format and Scoring**

- 8.1 All debates will be in the Australasian three-on-three format.
- 8.2 Each debate will be scored in accordance with the *SADA Guide to Adjudicating*, available from the SADA Website.

- 8.3 The result of a debate is that declared by the adjudicator (or the chair of a panel of adjudicators). In the event of an error in an adjudicator's score sheet (e.g. scores adding up to a tie), the result declared by the adjudicator prevails and the score sheet may be amended to reflect the adjudicator's intended result.
- 8.4 Debates must not be filmed or recorded other than by the SADA without the express permission of Schools' Chief Administrator or the President and the consent of the opposing team prior to the commencement of the debate.

## **9. Topics**

- 9.1 Topics are set by the SADA Topic Selection Committee, which consists of the Schools' Chief Administrator and Executive appointees.
- 9.2 All debates in the Junior Grade are prepared topic debates.
- 9.3 All debates in the Intermediate B Grade are prepared topic debates.
- 9.4 Minor round debates in the Intermediate A Grade consist of three prepared and two secret topic debates.
- 9.5 All Junior, Intermediate B and A Grade Finals are prepared topic debates.
- 9.6 Minor round debates in the Senior B Grade consist of two prepared and three secret topic debates. All Senior B Grade Finals are secret topic debates.
- 9.7 Minor round debates in the Senior A Grade consist of secret topic debates. All Senior A Grade finals are secret topic debates.
- 9.8 Any team from any school may be required to debate any topic.
- 9.9 Intermediate A, Senior A and Senior B Grade teams may only prepare a secret topic with three speakers and up to two reserve team members present.

- 9.10 Each team may take into the secret topic preparation room water, stationery, a dictionary and, if provided, the SADA Information Slide/Form.
- 9.11 Aside from the persons and materials referred to in rules 9.9 to 9.10, teams may not receive any other assistance or use any other materials to prepare for a secret topic debate, including electronic devices (which are not in any event permitted in the preparation room as a referred to in rule 9.10). A breach of these rules will result in the forfeit of the debate.
- 9.12 Secret topics will be released at the scheduled time for the release of the topic, even if all speakers are not present.
- 9.13 Where secret topic preparation time has concluded and it is revealed one team in a debate has prepared the wrong side of the topic, each team shall have a further twenty minutes of preparation time.

## 10. Speaking Times

- 10.1 The speaking times for each grade are as follows:

Grade	Bell Times	
	<i>Warning Bell(s)</i>	<i>Final Bell</i>
<i>Junior</i>	3 mins	4 mins
<i>Intermediate B</i>	4 mins	5 mins
<i>Intermediate A</i>	1 min, 5 mins	6 mins
<i>Senior B</i>	1 min, 6 mins	7 mins
<i>Senior A</i>	1 min, 7 mins	8 mins

- 10.2 If a speaker continues to speak significantly (approximately 30 seconds) after the final bell, the adjudicator will not take into account the speaker's matter after this time.

## 11. Points of Information

- 11.1 In all Intermediate A, Senior B and Senior A Grade debates, points of information may be offered to the speaker who has the floor by any speaker of the opposing team.
- 11.2 A point of information is a conditional interjection to be offered by debaters from the opposing team by standing and enunciating clearly the words 'point of information'. The speaker who has the floor must clearly accept or decline the offered point of information.
- 11.3 If the point of information is declined the offeror must resume their seat immediately.
- 11.4 If the point of information is accepted the offeror has a maximum of 15 seconds to ask a question or make a statement that is pertinent to the debate.
- 11.5 Points of information may only be offered between the:
- 11.5.1 one and five minute bells in an Intermediate A Grade debate;
  - 11.5.2 one and six minute bells in Senior B Grade debate; and
  - 11.5.3 one and seven minute bells in a Senior A Grade debate.
- 11.6 When the floor is held by a speaker, the only time during which any other speaker may speak so loudly that they are heard by the audience, is for the purposes of offering or delivering a point of information.

## 12. Forfeits

- 12.1 A team forfeits a prepared topic debate if:
- 12.1.1 that team's speakers are not present 15 minutes after the scheduled time for the commencement of the debate;
  - 12.1.2 it prepares the wrong topic, or the wrong side of the topic, and is unable or unwilling to re-prepare in 20 minutes; or
  - 12.1.3 it breaches rule 5;
- 12.2 A team forfeits a secret topic debate if that team's speakers are not present at the scheduled time for the commencement of the debate.

- 12.2.1 No time allowance is given for speakers who arrive late during the preparation time or where a team prepares the wrong side of the topic;
- 12.2.2 It breaches rule 9.11.
- 12.3 A team may voluntarily forfeit a debate by notifying the SADA, through the relevant school debating co-ordinator, as soon as it has decided to forfeit. Any team that forfeits a minor round debate remains eligible for finals.
- 12.4 To notify the opposing team and the SADA of the intention to forfeit, the relevant school coordinator must fill out the official forfeit form on the SADA Website.
- 12.5 Once the team has notified the opposing team and the SADA of the forfeit, the forfeit is effective.
  - 12.5.1 Schools should arrange forfeits as early as possible. The only forfeits arranged on the day or day prior to a debate should have been caused by illness or so forth.
- 12.6 The forfeit system is to be used in good faith. Schools should only forfeits for valid reasons, including: illnesses to multiple team members, involvement in school camps and compulsory activities, examinations, etc.

### **13. Duties of the Host School**

- 13.1 The host school must provide as many rooms as required to hold debates. It is the responsibility of the host school to assemble the furniture in these rooms ready for the debates. The Zone Steward will notify the host school as to the exact number of rooms to be opened.
- 13.2 Bathrooms for all genders must be opened.
- 13.3 Separate preparation rooms for each team with a secret topic debate must be available at the venue.

### **14. Team Rankings / Finals**

- 14.1 A team receives two points for a win and a bye, one point for a loss and zero points for a loss by forfeit.



- 14.2 The eight teams with the highest win/loss points in each grade at the conclusion of the minor rounds will advance to the finals.
- 14.3 Where there are two or more teams on the same number of win/loss points at the end of the season their ranking is determined by reference to their average total speaker points. A team's average total speaker points is calculated by adding together their total scores for each round and dividing that figure by the number of rounds in which the team actually debated.
- 14.4 Where there are two or more teams on the same number of win/loss points and average total speaker points their ranking is determined by reference to the teams' average net margins. The average net margin is calculated by adding together the margins by which a team won or lost each debate and dividing that figure by the number of rounds in which the team actually debated.

## **15. SADA Executive Discretion**

- 15.1 The SADA Executive has the discretion to vary the application of any of these rules as it deems appropriate, save that the Executive may not interfere with the result of a properly constituted debate.

# DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

## 1 Introduction

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Rules. The objective of the policy is to settle participants' disputes or grievances in a timely, fair and thorough fashion.

Anyone involved with the Competition may contact the Schools' Chief Administrator or the Zone Steward on duty to discuss any matter. Preferably, disputes will be resolved informally at this stage.

The Schools' Disputes Tribunal (**the Tribunal**) consists of two members of the Executive and the President, who shall chair the Tribunal. If any Tribunal member is the subject of the dispute they shall be replaced by another Executive appointee.

## 2 Formal Complaints

A formal complaint may only be made by the co-ordinator of debating or the Principal of a school. Formal complaints must be in writing and addressed to the Schools' Chief Administrator. The complaint must be made within one month of the event, unless the Tribunal grants an extension of time. The Schools' Chief Administrator will refer all formal complaints to the Tribunal for consideration.

Adjudicator Appraisal Forms are reviewed by the Vice President Administration to gain positive and negative feedback on adjudicators. An Adjudicator Appraisal Form may serve as a formal complaint provided that is made clear on the form.

## 3 Determinations

The Tribunal shall consider all complaints. On any motion, where the number of votes cast for and against is equal, the Chair shall exercise a casting vote. In making determinations, the Tribunal shall be bound by the Rules.

## 4 Remedies

The Tribunal may:

- (a) override any of the Rules;
- (b) suspend or expel an adjudicator;
- (c) reprimand an adjudicator or school; and
- (d) order any other remedy the Tribunal deems appropriate.

It should be noted that a) above shall only be used in the most extreme circumstances. The complainant may specify their preferred remedy but the Tribunal may elect to impose a different remedy from that requested. The Tribunal shall not interfere with an adjudicator's decision arising from a properly constituted debate.

## **5 Procedure and Appeals**

Usually complaints will be resolved on the basis of the written complaint and any accompanying written submissions. However the Tribunal may conduct further inquiries and receive additional evidence.

The Tribunal shall, where practicable, issue written reasons to be made available to the complainant and any third party the Tribunal deems appropriate. The Tribunal may elect to announce the result and provide written reasons later.

The Executive shall hear appeals from the Tribunal. An appeal is only permitted on the grounds that the Tribunal made a clear and manifest error or did not hear the complaint fairly. The full range of remedies provided for in this policy shall be available to the Executive. The Executive however shall not interfere with an adjudicator's decision arising from a properly constituted debate.

On the Executive, the members of the Schools' Disputes Tribunal and the subject of the complaint (if a member of the Executive), shall not vote on the determination of the appeal, nor in any procedural vote which may affect the outcome of the determination. Where one person holds more than one position on the Executive, that person shall only exercise one vote. On any motion, where the number of votes cast in favour equals the number cast against, the appeal shall fail.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## 1 Objective

The South Australian Debating Association Inc. (**SADA**) is committed to providing an environment in which students can debate issues of significance with respect, support and encouragement. The SADA is committed to staging events that are welcoming, inclusive and safe.

This code of conduct contains the policies and procedures that SADA deems necessary for creating a safe and positive environment. It also sets out how the SADA complies with its obligations under the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA). It applies to any person involved with the SADA, including SADA volunteers,<sup>1</sup> students, teachers, coaches, parents and spectators (**persons involved with the SADA**).

## 2 Risk management

Debating is a low risk activity for students. It is a group activity usually conducted in public, with many students, SADA volunteers, teachers and parents present. There is little to no physical contact between students and persons involved with the SADA. Any potential risk to student safety can be effectively managed and addressed by ensuring that persons involved with the SADA adhere to this code of conduct.

In certain circumstances, SADA volunteers may be alone with an individual student or small groups of students without teachers or parents present, including at interstate tournaments. The additional risks arising in this context can be effectively managed and addressed by ensuring that:

- the SADA volunteers are appropriately screened;
- there are sufficient SADA volunteers to supervise and support students; and
- students are made aware of the support available to them and are encouraged to seek that support in circumstances where they wish to do so.

## 3 Standards of behaviour

All SADA volunteers have an overarching responsibility to promote the safety and wellbeing of students and must comply with the standards of behaviour set out below.

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<sup>1</sup> 'SADA volunteers' includes the Executive committee, adjudicators and others engaged by the SADA (for a fee or as a volunteer) to provide services relating to debating or the SADA generally.

### **3.1 Standards that apply to all persons involved with the SADA**

Any person involved with the SADA is responsible for:

- taking all reasonable steps to create a child/student-safe environment and ensure the safety and wellbeing of others;
- treating everyone with respect, courtesy and honesty;
- raising all reasonable concerns about others' behaviour with the adjudicator or the Executive as soon as reasonably practicable;
- not engaging in any form of discrimination because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality;
- not engaging in any violent or rough physical contact, including games; and
- not engaging in bullying or harassment.

### **3.2 Standards that apply to all adults involved with the SADA**

Adults involved with the SADA (including teachers and parents) are also responsible for:

- listening and responding appropriately to student's views and/or concerns in relation to other students or adults including by raising them with the Executive as soon as reasonably practicable (where appropriate);
- responding quickly and fairly to any complaint made by any person involved with the SADA by raising it with the adjudicator or the Executive as soon as reasonably practicable;
- providing clear, honest and constructive feedback to students generally;
- ensuring that they do not develop any form of 'special' relationship with a student that could be seen as favouritism (including offering gifts or any special treatment);
- disclosing to the Executive, as soon as reasonably practicable, any significant pre-existing relationships with students (for example where a year 12 student was in a relationship with a year 11 student, and the relationship continued after the year 12 student graduated and subsequently became an adjudicator).

### **3.3 Standards that apply to SADA volunteers engaging in overnight supervision of children**

SADA volunteers engaging in overnight supervision of students must:

- carefully supervise and monitor the students at all reasonably appropriate times to ensure the continued safety of the students whilst in their care;

- have in their immediate possession all information relating to each student necessary to appropriately manage any emergencies that may arise (for example information pertaining to any medical conditions or parent/guardian contact details);
- be attentive to students' needs and sensitive to the fact that they may not previously have spent time away from their parents/guardians;
- be readily contactable and approachable by the students;
- minimise the amount of time spent alone with individual students (except where necessary, for example, to address confidential concerns);
- maintain detailed and accurate notes in relation to any incident or concern reported to them by a student or any other person and provide it to a member of the Executive as soon as reasonably practicable; and
- be familiar and compliant with any applicable codes of conduct of the relevant tournament or event.

#### **4 Raising concerns**

A person with concerns about any behaviour in relation to a SADA activity should first report them to the adjudicator or SADA volunteer responsible for that activity as soon as reasonably practicable. If that would be inappropriate or make the person reporting the concerns feel uncomfortable, the concerns should be reported to another member of the SADA Executive.

Serious concerns should be reported directly to the Executive as soon as practicable. The SADA website contains details of the allocation of responsibilities within the Executive. Concerns should be directed, in the first instance, to the relevant member of the Executive. If that would not be appropriate or if that member of the Executive is otherwise unavailable, then the concerns should be promptly reported to another member of the Executive.

The Executive will address and manage any concerns as appropriate in the circumstances as soon as practicable. The Executive will determine which of its members is best placed to address and manage any concerns on a case by case basis. Within the Executive, ultimate responsibility for the management of concerns rests with the President. If the President is unable to deal with the matter or it would be inappropriate for them to deal with the matter, responsibility rests with the Vice President.

## **5 Mandatory reporting**

If a SADA volunteer reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being subjected to abuse and/or neglect, it must be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) as soon as practicable. If a report is made to the Child Abuse Report Line, this must be communicated as soon as practicable to the Executive.

## **6 Relevant history checks**

All SADA volunteers who have regular contact with children (including State Team Coaches and adjudicators attending the National Schools' Debating Championships) must obtain, and provide a copy to the Executive of, a relevant history check from the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion prior to commencing duties with the SADA or, if already engaged by the SADA, as soon as practicable after the implementation of this code of conduct.

The following SADA volunteers do not necessarily have regular contact with children, but as a matter of best practice will be required to obtain relevant history checks:

- President;
- Vice President;
- Education Officer;
- Schools' Chief Administrator;
- IPSHA Competition Administrator; and
- Zone Stewards.

If the relevant history check raises any doubt about a candidate's suitability to work with children, the candidate will have an opportunity to respond and provide further information before the Executive decides whether the candidate can work with children.

The results of any checks are confidential between the candidate and the Executive and will not be disclosed to any person unless the person the subject of the relevant history check consents to its disclosure, or disclosure is required or authorised by law.

If a person is required to obtain a relevant history check under this code of conduct, a new check must be obtained every 3 years. It is the responsibility of that person to ensure a new relevant history check is obtained every 3 years and provided to the Executive. The SADA may conduct its own audit in relation to currency of relevant history assessments and prevent SADA volunteers from performing their duties until a renewed relevant history assessment is obtained.

## **7 Monitoring complaints and relevant history assessments**

The Executive will maintain a confidential file pertaining to complaints and mandatory reports made to it or the Child Abuse Report Line. The Executive will maintain a separate confidential file pertaining to the results of relevant history assessments. The President, Secretary or the Vice President will have possession of these files.

## **8 External assistance**

If a person is unable or unwilling to report concerns to the Executive, or otherwise feels uncomfortable in seeking support and/or assistance from the debating community, the SADA encourages them to contact:

- Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800;
- Lifeline: 131 114;
- Youth Health Line: 1 300 13 17 19;
- Parent Help Line: 1300 364 100; or
- in an emergency: 000.

## **9 Distribution**

Each year, this code of conduct will be:

- published on the SADA website;
- published in the Schools' Competition Rule Book and IPSHA Competition Program;
- sent to SADA volunteers; and
- sent to anyone attending the National Schools' Debating Championships as a representative of the SADA.

## **10 Review**

The Executive will review this code of conduct every 3 years. The Executive welcomes feedback via the SADA website or to any member of the Executive.

## **11 Endorsement**

Adopted by resolution of the Executive on 17 June 2018.