



# Rules and Regulations



- Each school may only enter one team of senior cycle or GCSE/ A Level students in the competition. By registering for the Concern Debates Programme, you have agreed to the terms and conditions and code of conduct set out by Concern.
- By entering the programme, you are agreeing to complete all three of the debates assigned in the league phase. It is not acceptable to drop out halfway through the competition, or forfeit your final debate if you have already lost your other debates, as this has a knock-on effect on your opponent's experience and may hamper their progress. 
- **Schools must submit consent forms for all students partaking in debates before they may begin to debate.**
- Each school will complete three league phase debates between October and January. From there the top 64 schools will progress to the knockout stages from January to May.
- If your school drops out of the programme for any reason you may not be allowed entry the following year.
- Each Concern Debates team is made up of four members. However, there is no upper limit on the number of substitutes and teams are free to rotate speakers from one debate to the next.
- Teachers, students and supporters must be respectful during the Concern Debates Programme. Respectful language must be used during the debates and during interactions with other schools.

- Teachers and students must respect the decision of the volunteer adjudicators.
- Concern will decide motions, team pairings, sides and fixtures for each debate. If dates have to be changed, the other school must be contacted to reschedule the debate and Concern must be notified immediately via **debates@concern.net** for ROI schools or **debatesni@concern.net** for NI schools.
- For face-to-face debates, the proposing team will provide the chairperson and timekeeper for each debate until Semi-Final stage.
- For online debates, each school will have a timekeeper in the room to ring the bell. Both timekeepers will complete the Timekeeping Sheet, calculate any penalties at the end of the debate and provide them to the Chairperson who announce any penalties before the video call ends.
- Concern will provide the Chairperson and timekeepers for the semi-finals and the All-Island final.
- Each participant speaks for 4 minutes and 30 seconds. The timekeeper rings the bell at 3 minutes and again at 4 minutes, 15 seconds. Anyone who speaks for longer than 4 minutes, 30 seconds incurs a time penalty of one mark per half-minute or part thereafter. 
- Debates must be completed in the given time frame.
- In case of any queries or complaints please email [debates@concern.net](mailto:debates@concern.net) or [debatesni@concern.net](mailto:debatesni@concern.net)

