

Important notice: This template should be reviewed by a qualified attorney and risk-management professional before public use.

Purpose

The purpose of this Coach / Volunteer Code of Conduct is to establish clear standards of behavior for all adults who represent, serve, support, volunteer for, coach, work with, or otherwise participate in National Federation of Middle School Sports programs, events, activities, school membership programs, championships, media activities, and related operations. NFMSS serves middle school student-athletes. Every adult connected to NFMSS must help create a safe, respectful, positive, professional, and development-focused environment for students, families, schools, coaches, officials, sponsors, partners, volunteers, and staff.

1 Professionalism and Conduct

- Treat all student-athletes, parents, coaches, officials, staff, volunteers, sponsors, and event personnel with dignity, respect, and professionalism at all times.
- Use positive, age-appropriate, instructional language and coaching methods.
- Model sportsmanship, integrity, and ethical behavior in all NFMSS settings.
- Represent NFMSS, your school, and your program with professionalism in person, in writing, and on social media.
- Follow all NFMSS rules, school policies, event policies, venue policies, and applicable laws.

2 Student-Athlete Safety and Well-Being

- Prioritize the physical safety, emotional well-being, and educational development of every student-athlete.
- Follow all NFMSS health, safety, concussion, heat illness, emergency action, and return-to-play policies.
- Report injuries, safety concerns, or medical emergencies through the appropriate channels immediately.
- Never allow a student-athlete to participate when doing so would create an unreasonable safety risk.
- Ensure that equipment, facilities, and playing conditions meet acceptable safety standards before activity begins.

3 Boundaries with Minors

- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with all student-athletes at all times.
- Avoid one-on-one interactions with minors that are not observable and interruptible by another adult.
- Do not communicate privately with minors through personal social media accounts, direct messages, or text messages without including a parent, guardian, or authorized adult.
- Do not transport a minor alone in a personal vehicle without written parent/guardian permission and organizational approval, except in a genuine emergency.
- Do not share sleeping spaces, locker rooms, restrooms, or private spaces with minors except as expressly authorized by policy.
- Avoid giving private gifts, showing favoritism, or engaging in any behavior that could be perceived as grooming or inappropriate.

4 Prohibited Conduct

- ✗ Bullying, hazing, harassment, intimidation, threats, retaliation, or discriminatory conduct of any kind.
- ✗ Physical abuse, corporal punishment, inappropriate restraint, or unnecessary physical force toward any person.
- ✗ Sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, grooming, exploitation, or any inappropriate sexualized behavior involving minors.
- ✗ Emotional abuse, public humiliation, degrading comments, or conduct that demeans student-athletes or others.
- ✗ Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or unauthorized controlled substances while serving in an NFMSS capacity.
- ✗ Unauthorized collection, use, or sharing of student-athlete personal information, medical information, or private data.
- ✗ Misrepresentation of credentials, eligibility, scores, statistics, or other information to NFMSS or event staff.
- ✗ Any conduct that violates applicable law, school policy, NFMSS policy, or that creates risk of harm to minors.

5 Reporting Obligations

- Report any suspected abuse, neglect, misconduct, grooming, harassment, boundary violations, or unsafe behavior involving a minor to NFMSS leadership, the school, or appropriate authorities immediately.
- Follow applicable mandatory reporting laws. Reporting to NFMSS does not replace any legal duty to report to child protective services or law enforcement.
- Report any arrest, charge, conviction, restraining order, sex offender registry listing, or suspension from another youth-serving organization promptly to NFMSS.
- Do not conduct your own investigation before making a required report to proper authorities.
- Non-retaliation: no person will be penalized for reporting a concern in good faith.

6 Sportsmanship and Competition

- Demonstrate and teach positive sportsmanship, respect for opponents, officials, and the game.
- Accept officials' decisions with respect, even when you disagree. Follow proper protest and appeal procedures.
- Discourage trash talk, taunting, excessive celebration, or disrespectful conduct by players, coaches, or spectators.
- Compete within the rules. Do not instruct or encourage student-athletes to cheat, break rules, or act unsafely.
- Win and lose with dignity. Model the behavior you expect from student-athletes.

7 Media, Communications, and Social Media

- Do not publicly post, share, or comment on student-athlete personal information, medical information, eligibility disputes, or disciplinary matters.
- Do not make public statements, social media posts, or media comments that misrepresent NFMSS, disparage officials, schools, families, or other programs.
- Obtain required consent before photographing, recording, or publishing images or videos of student-athletes.
- Use official NFMSS, school, or team communication channels for program-related communications.
- Be aware that public conduct, social media activity, and online behavior reflect on NFMSS and your school.

8 Consequences for Violations

Violations of this Code of Conduct may result in verbal warning, written warning, removal from an event, suspension, termination of coaching or volunteer role, revocation of credentials, notification to the school or school district, notification to law enforcement or child protective services, or other action deemed appropriate by NFMSS. NFMSS reserves the right to take immediate action when youth safety, organizational integrity, or event safety may be at risk.

Agreement and Signature

By signing below, I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to follow the NFMSS Coach / Volunteer Code of Conduct in its entirety. I understand that failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in removal, suspension, termination, reporting to appropriate authorities, or other action deemed appropriate by NFMSS.

PRINTED NAME

ROLE / POSITION

ORGANIZATION / SCHOOL / TEAM

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

SIGNATURE

DATE

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