



**BEST PRACTICES FOR  
COACHING STANDARDS**

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1. Qualifications
  - a. High school coaches are required to know the following:
    - 1) Development of coaching philosophies consistent with school, school district, and governing board of a school district goals.
    - 2) Sport psychology: emphasizing communication, reinforcement of the efforts of pupils, effective delivery of coaching regarding technique and motivation of the student athlete.
    - 3) Sport pedagogy: how student athletes learn, and how to teach sport skills.
    - 4) Sport physiology: principles of training, fitness for sport, development of a training program, nutrition for athletes, and the harmful effects associated with the use of steroids and performance-enhancing dietary supplements by adolescents.
    - 5) Sport management: team management, risk management, and working within the context of an entire school program.
    - 6) Training: certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid, including, but not limited to, a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of concussions and

the appropriate response to concussions and signs and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest and appropriate response to sudden cardiac arrest.

- a) Removal from coaching due to lack of sudden cardiac arrest training.
  - 7) Knowledge of, and adherence to, statewide rules and regulations, as well as school regulations including, but not necessarily limited to, eligibility, gender equity and discrimination.
  - 8) Sound planning and goal setting.
  - b. Education Code Section 35179.1
  - c. Coaches at other grade levels are recommended to have the same knowledge base.
  - d. Additional requirements for coaches who are not full-time employees
    - 1) Background checks to determine any offenses referenced in Education Code sections 44010, 44011, or 44424;
    - 2) Tuberculosis risk assessment
    - 3) Armatus Molestation Prevention training
    - 4) Agree to follow all applicable school board policies
    - 5) Agree to and sign a “Code of Ethical Conduct;”
    - 6) Completion of a Volunteer form, as applicable.
2. Proper Supervision
- a. Coaches and/or supervisors attend practice and/or competition to supervise students
    - 1) All coaches must be at least 21 years of age.
      - a) Coaches at least 25 years of age are recommended for older students of the opposite sex.
    - 2) Coaches are to instruct student athletes in school and team rules, their responsibilities in conduct towards others and school property.
    - 3) Coaches should exercise close control over the athletes.
      - a) If an athlete is not seen, the athlete is not being supervised.
  - b. Transportation
    - 1) Each bus should have at least one staff member or chaperone other than the driver.
  - c. Overnight Trips
    - 1) Adequate supervision is to be provided on all school-sponsored trips and that there is an appropriate ratio of adults to student athletes present on the trip.

- 2) Each coach or chaperone is to be assigned a group of student athletes for the duration of the overnight trip.
  - 3) Students are to be accompanied by the designated coach or chaperone at all times other than when in their hotel room.
  - 4) Eating establishments and other places of interest and entertainment should be appropriate for the age of the student athletes.
  - 5) Room checks should be scheduled throughout the night.
  - 6) Adults should never share a room with an athlete while on overnight trips.
3. Athlete Safety
- a. General
    - 1) Coaches have a duty to exercise care to protect student athletes from reasonably foreseeable dangers by controlling the conduct of student athletes.
    - 2) Coaches are to instruct student athletes in school and team rules, their responsibilities in conduct towards others and school property.
    - 3) Safety Alerts
      - a) Coaches are expected to stay up-to-date on all safety alerts that are publicly announced by equipment manufacturers, sport governing bodies, or any other organization associated with their respective sports.
    - 4) Emergency Plan
      - a) Each coach is responsible for adhering to the school or district emergency medical plan whenever dealing with serious injuries occurring in athletic facilities.
  - b. Safety Equipment
    - 1) The school or district is to provide all required and necessary safety equipment.
    - 2) Coaches are to properly instruct players in the safe use of equipment.
    - 3) Instructions for safe use and maintenance of safety equipment can be obtained from the equipment manufacturer
  - c. Drug Abuse
    - 1) Coaches are not to provide alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products to student athletes.
    - 2) Coaches are not to suggest, provide, or encourage any athlete to use non-prescription drugs, anabolic steroids, or any substance to increase physical

development or performance that is not approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, Surgeon General of the United States, or American Medical Association.

- 3) Coaches shall intervene whenever students use alcohol or other illegal drugs while on school property or under school jurisdiction.
  - 4) Coaches who have a reasonable suspicion that a student may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs shall immediately notify the principal or designee.
  - 5) District drug policies
    - a) Refer to District Board 5131.6, Alcohol and Other Drugs.
    - b) Refer to District Board 5131.63, Steroids.
- d. Concussions
- 1) See VCSSFA Best Practices for Concussion Management
    - a) <http://www.vcssfa.org/RiskControl/BestPractices/tabid/2068/Default.aspx>
  - 2) In addition to certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid, coaches are to have a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of concussions and the appropriate response to concussions.
    - a) Concussion training may be fulfilled through entities offering free, online, or other types of training courses.
    - b) Free online training can be found on these websites:  
<http://nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>
  - 3) Concussion and head injury information sheet
  - 4) Restrictions on full contact practice
  - 5) Removal from activity
  - 6) Return to Activity
  - 7) Education Code sections 35179.5, 49475
- e. Sudden Cardiac Arrest
- 1) See VCSSFA Best Practices for Sudden Cardiac Arrest Management
    - a) <http://www.vcssfa.org/RiskControl/BestPractices/tabid/2068/Default.aspx>
  - 2) In addition to certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid, coaches are to have a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest and appropriate response to sudden cardiac arrest.

- a) Training is required initially after July 1, 2017, and every two (2) years thereafter.
  - b) Coaches can be suspended from coaching any athletic activity if completion of the training is not kept current.
  - c) Free online training can be found on these website:  
<http://nfhslearn.com/courses/61032/sudden-cardiac-arrest>
- 3) Sudden Cardiac Arrest information sheet
  - 4) Removal from activity
  - 5) Return to Activity
  - 6) Education Code sections 33479 et seq.
- f. Heat Illness
- 1) Adequate hydration (water)
    - a) Water or sports drinks should be readily available to athletes during practice.
    - b) Athletes should avoid drinks containing stimulants such as ephedrine or high doses of caffeine.
  - 2) Gradual acclimatization
    - a) Intensity and duration of exercise should be gradually increased over a period of 7-14 days
    - b) Protective equipment should be introduced in phases
  - 3) Rest periods
    - a) Water breaks should be given at least every 30-45 minutes.
    - b) Breaks should be long enough to allow athletes to ingest adequate volumes of fluid.
  - 4) Shade
    - a) Rest breaks should occur in shade whenever possible.
- g. Other Health Concerns
- 1) Allergies
  - 2) Asthma
  - 3) Blood exposure
  - 4) Musculoskeletal injuries

- 5) Skin Disorders (such as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA))
  - h. Athletic Safety and Health Resources can be found at [cifstate.org](http://cifstate.org) under the “Sports Medicine” tab
4. Respect for Others (CIF)
- a. Players
    - 1) During practices and games, coaches are to remain under control during interactions with players and assistant coaches.
  - b. Other coaches and opponents
    - 1) Engage in the pre- and post-game handshake.
    - 2) Celebrate victory respectfully.
    - 3) Give credit to opponents.
  - c. Officials
    - 1) Be open to idea that the official is correct.
    - 2) Civilly question calls.
    - 3) Coaches are not to call the officials names.
  - d. Sportsmanship
    - 1) Establish and model fair play and proper conduct.
    - 2) Maintain consistency in requiring all players to adhere to the established rules and standards of the game to be player.
      - a) Reward athletes on your team who behave as good sports.
      - b) Discipline athletes who behave as poor sports.
    - 3) Coaches are not to recruit athletes from other schools.
    - 4) Refrain from use of profanity, vulgarity, and other offensive language and gestures.
  - e. Teach principles of Pursuing Victory with Honor
    - 1) Trustworthiness,
    - 2) Respect,
    - 3) Responsibility,
    - 4) Fairness,
    - 5) Caring,
    - 6) Good citizenship.

## 5. Constructive Criticism and Reprimand

- a. Use discretion when providing constructive criticism and when reprimanding players.
  - 1) Be Positive
    - a) Provide positive reinforcement along with any negative comments.
    - b) Instruct athletes what to do rather than what not to do.
  - 2) Bring evidence
    - a) Game and practice film shows mistakes and correct procedures.
  - 3) Provide opportunity to improve
    - a) Once feedback has been given, provide the student athlete another chance to show that they improved.

## 6. Discipline

- a. Coaches should follow district policy when correcting behavior such as tardiness, excessive absences, and other behavioral problems.
- b. Coaches are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of student athletes.
  - 1) No form of physical discipline is acceptable.
  - 2) This prohibition includes hitting, pushing, slapping, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by student athletes.
- c. Coaches are prohibited from using additional physical actions, such as extra calisthenics or running laps as behavior correction.
- d. Refer to District Board Policy 5144, Discipline.

## 7. Bullying, Hazing, and Emotional Verbal Abuse Prevention (Praesidium)

- a. Bullying
  - 1) Bullying is exposing a person to abusive actions repeatedly over time.
    - a) Bullying typically involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
    - b) Examples:
      - Direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving;
      - Verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling and spreading rumors, harassment, intimidation;
      - Written material, such as cyberbullying;

- Social isolation or manipulation.
- 2) Neither coaches nor students should engage in any form of bullying.
  - 3) Coaches are to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
  - 4) Coaches who witness acts of bullying are to take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so.
  - 5) Bullying prevention applies to coaches and student athletes on school grounds, while traveling to and from school, during lunch period, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.
  - 6) Refer to District Board Policy 5131.2, Bullying.
- b. Hazing
- 1) Hazing is actually a form of bullying.
  - 2) Hazing is any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.
    - a) Hazing usually involves:
      - Power differential between those in a group and those who want to join a group, or between senior and junior members of a group,
      - An intentional initiation rite, practice or "tradition."
    - b) Examples:
      - Forced activities for new recruits to "prove" their worth to join;
      - Forced or required consumption of alcohol or distasteful food;
      - Requirements to endure hardships such as staying awake, physical labor, running while blindfolded, etc.;
      - Beatings, paddlings, or other physical acts;
      - Illegal activities such as requirement to steal local items as part of a scavenger hunt.
  - 3) Neither coaches nor students should engage in any form of hazing.
  - 4) Coaches are to immediately report incidents of hazing to the principal or designee.
  - 5) Coaches who witness acts of hazing are to take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so.



- 6) Hazing prevention applies to coaches and student athletes on school grounds, while traveling to and from school, during lunch period, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.
- c. Emotional Verbal Abuse
  - 1) Verbal interaction is for instructional and motivational purposes.
  - 2) Coaches should refrain from and not allow their student athletes to engage in verbal discourse that denigrates others.
8. Physical Contact
  - a. Students and parents should read, sign, and return the “High School Athletics Physical Contact Acknowledgement” form.
  - b. Skill or Strategy Corrections
    - 1) Coaches should never physically yank or pull a player into a proper position.
    - 2) Players should be asked to demonstrate proper position or the coach should stand in a proper position and ask the athlete to get into that position.
    - 3) When correcting physical form for skill or strategy execution, the coach shall first ask the athlete for permission to touch the athlete for the purpose of showing the athlete a correct placement or angle of an arm or other body part in the performance of a skill.
      - a) Such contact shall be minimalist and full body contact is never appropriate.
  - c. Practice
    - 1) Coaches should avoid practicing with student athletes, when physical contact is involved.
      - a) Coaches should never practice with or touch an athlete of the opposite sex.
  - d. Congratulating an Athlete
    - 1) When congratulating an athlete for a good performance, the coach must make it clear that a high five is appropriate but that it is not appropriate for a coach and athlete to hug.
  - e. Comforting or Consoling an Athlete
    - 1) When comforting or consoling an athlete who is visibly upset or injured, the athlete may be patted on the shoulder or head (when culturally appropriate) but never embraced.

## 9. Social Interaction

### a. Electronic and Social Media

- 1) All communications from coaches regarding team activities and participation in the program are to be directed to parents or guardians including voice messages, e-mail messages, and text messages.
  - a) If direct contact is allowed by parents or guardians, the parents or guardians are to be copied.
  - b) Coaches should refrain from private, personal, on-going electronic conversations with students.
- 2) Team websites and social media
  - a) Team websites and social media are to be separate and distinct from personal websites, blogs, and social media of coaches.
  - b) Team websites and social media should protect student privacy.
  - c) All parents should be invited to participate in team social media accounts.
  - d) Team websites and social media should be monitored to prevent social bullying, airing grievances, or gateways for predators.

### b. Relationships

- 1) Romantic, Dating, or Sexual Relationships
  - a) A coach may never enter into any romantic, dating, social, or sexual relationship with a student athlete.
- 2) Social Prohibitions and Sexual Abuse
  - a) Coaches are prohibited from:
    - Spending social time or engaging in social media with an individual student-athlete or a group of student-athletes outside the team environment.
    - Engaging in any unwelcomed quid pro quo sexual activities with any student-athlete or potential student-athlete.
    - Creating a hostile environment by engaging in sexual harassment activities.

### c. Team Gatherings

- 1) Separate parent or guardian permission is required for all team gatherings that are in addition to regularly scheduled practices and games or competitions.
  - a) Approved permission forms:

- Field Trip or Excursion Authorization and Medical Treatment Authorization, SFA 2010, or SFA 2010S, or
  - Voluntary Sports/Athletic Event or Activity, Informed Consent and Liability Release, Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk.
- b) Exception: Awards banquets or ceremonies held on the school campus.
- 2) Coaches should not have team gatherings at their home, unless adequate supervision, including parents, is provided at all times student athletes are present.
- 3) Other off campus locations should be appropriate for the age of the student athletes.
- d. Other Contact
- 1) Coaches should avoid giving student athletes a ride home from practice,
- a) Observe the Rule of Three:
- One adult and at least two student athletes,
  - One student athlete and at least two adults.
- b) If such a situation becomes unavoidable, be sure to have the athlete call their parents or guardians informing them when you are leaving and when you expect to arrive
- 2) Coaches should never have students stay overnight in their home.
- e. Undue influence
- 1) Coaches are not to exert undue influence on athletes to take lighter academic course(s) in order to be eligible to participate in athletics.
- 2) Coaches are not to exert undue influence on an athlete's decision to enroll in an athletic program at any post-secondary educational institution