

TIPS FOR ETHICAL BOUNDARIES & COACHING RELATIONSHIPS

- Know the rules & regulations of your school and state athletic association.
- Understand the laws and mission regarding sexual harassment, bullying, and hazing.
- Model the very characteristics you expect of your students. Appropriately control emotions and avoid cursing. Teach and practice with students how to respond to adversity and loss.
- In most cases, refer students to school professionals (counselors, therapists) with certain personal issues. Most coaches are not trained in these areas!
- When meeting with a student to discuss emotional topics (i.e., playing time, role on team, etc.), have another coach with you.
- Define when and how parents and students should communicate with you. Otherwise, it may become all-consuming.
- Define the non-negotiables for students and parents. For example, the following are not up for negotiation: playing time, role on team, other students and their role, strategies, substitutions, game schedules. Topics we are happy to discuss: how your child can improve, mental and physical treatment of your child, concerns with your child's behavior.
- Define for students cyber image and digital citizenship expectations. Put it in writing!
- Establish safe & professional electronic communication practices (i.e., texting, email, Facebook, etc.) with your students. Consider using such vehicles sparingly and for information such as bus departure time, or a change in the schedule. Emotional and personal topics must be handled face-to-face and not alone. If students are permitted to text or email on any topic, this could become problematic for the coach.