Communication Tips

Coaches should take care when communicating with players. Remember that words, as well as actions, can easily be misinterpreted. Be sure to write as if you expect everyone to read it and to maintain appropriate boundaries in all written communications.

DO…

♦ Copy parents on all written and electronic communications.
♦ Communicate to all team members rather than individuals (e.g., send group emails).
♦ Keep communications team-focused.
♦ Contact your supervisor (the pastor, principal, or PAR) if you receive any inappropriate correspondence.
♦ Consider the age of the players when deciding upon which communication method to use.

DO NOT…

♦ Send text messages to individual players.
♦ “Friend” students on Facebook or any other social network. No one under 13 should have a Facebook account.
♦ Share details about your personal life with players.

US Conference of Catholic Bishops
SAFE ENVIRONMENT MANDATES
All Coaches Must Comply

1. Attendance at a VIRTUS – “Protecting God’s Children for Adults” workshop
2. Sign a Code of Conduct
3. Authorize a Criminal Background Screening

VIRTUS – “Protecting God’s Children for Adults” The VIRTUS program for adults is a three-hour live awareness session. During the session adults are taught that to protect children you must have continuous awareness and be vigilant. This awareness session makes trainees understand the signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five empowerment steps one can use to prevent child sexual abuse.

Diocese of Brooklyn
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310 Prospect Park West
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718-965-7300 X2107
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The Diocese of Brooklyn
Maintaining Boundaries

‘Maintaining boundaries’ means respecting the personal space of others. Maintaining boundaries protects young athletes as well as adults.

Certain ways of expressing affection are more appropriate than others. As coaches, we need to be aware of the differences and to maintain appropriate boundaries at all times.

Appropriate

- Side or Shoulder-to-Shoulder hugs
- Handshakes
- High Fives or Fist Bumps
- Verbal praise
- Pats on the shoulder, back or head (where culturally appropriate)

Inappropriate

- Lengthy embraces; kisses
- Comments about physique or physical development
- Showing affection while in isolated areas
- Holding children on your lap
- Massages; tickling; wrestling; piggy back rides.

Setting the Tone

It is the responsibility of the coach to exhibit professional behavior in all interactions with players, parents, other coaches, referees, and fans. Be mindful of your attitude during practices and games. You are a Catholic role model and as such, you are responsible for your behavior as well as the behavior of your players, their parents, and fans.