

COACH CODE OF CONDUCT

Handshake America (HA) will coach high school student-athletes to help them achieve their goals for success in life. Each year Handshake America staff shall convey these standards in writing to all coaches prior to their first contact with their student-athlete. Staff shall review these standards verbally, as well, with rookie coaches coaching for the first time.

Handshake America serves youth. Our coaches teach valuable lessons with each word and especially with their conduct. Adult misconduct with youth carries serious consequences. Because Handshake America cares that its volunteers have healthy relationships with the youth they serve, it has established these standards.

1. Young people look to adults for examples of appropriate behavior. HA coaches must use appropriate language and model honorable behavior, such as respect, integrity, honesty, and excellence. Profanity or sexualized language or jokes are inappropriate around students. Violating state law regarding interactions with youth, e.g., providing them alcohol or illegal drugs, is forbidden.
2. Coaches must take particular care when touching youth. Most people understand the difference between appropriate touching, like a handshake or pat on the back, and touching which is sexual or disrespectful. Coaches must also consider how any physical contact may be perceived.
3. Interactions with students must both be appropriate and appear appropriate. Volunteers will spend most time with groups of students, although occasionally one-to-one situations may occur. Prior to any one-to-one interaction, a HA volunteer generally should ensure another adult is present or aware of the situation.
4. Coaches are responsible for the quality of interactions. Students often find it difficult to state discomfort or objections. Coaches must be especially sensitive to physical and verbal cues that youth provide.
5. Coaches are responsible for teaching the program: success and the 5Ps. Coaching is expected to be delivered during the sessions and one-to-ones as directed in the coaches manual . If you are unable to complete the entire program for any reason, contact your Region Leader or Coach Lead immediately (contact information is available in the Coaches Room on the website).
6. Coaches agree to and understand that any photos taken by Handshake America during sessions or events may be used for marketing or promotional purposes.

These are examples only, not a comprehensive list. Other actions not listed could result in suspension or dismissal as a coach.

Handshake America takes all complaints of misconduct seriously. Credible allegations of misconduct will be promptly investigated by the appropriate authorities. During any such investigation, the HA coach will be placed on leave. If an investigation determines misconduct occurred, it will result in the immediate and permanent dismissal as a HA coach. If the HA coach misconducts himself/herself, he/she must notify your Region Leader or Coach Lead immediately.

Any HA staff member or coach who reasonably suspects misconduct must report these suspicions immediately to the Region Leader or Coach Lead. Coach acknowledges understanding the Handshake America Code of Conduct by agreeing on the digital coach application.