

## CHECKLIST FOR COACHES WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

### 1. PRIOR TO SEASON MEETING WITH PARENTS AND YOUNG ATHLETES

- Meet with parents and young athletes to formally introduce yourself and welcome them to the team.
- Set a positive tone for the season through identifying team goals and establishing overall expectations.
- Describe your leadership style and teaching philosophies. Provide specific examples.
- Review team policies, rules, communication strategies, practice schedules, equipment requirements, etc.
- Review philosophies on playing time, team strategy, and decision making.
- Explain how all young athletes will be treated fairly but must always act in the best interests of the team.
- Define personal conduct expectations for young athletes and parents.
- Establish personal conduct expectations regarding treatment of teammates, officials, coaches, opponents, and fans.
- Spend time with the parents of each young athlete to learn more about their child.
- Positively engage with each of the young athletes to identify personal goals and to learn more about them.
- Initiate a positive relationship with parents and develop ways they can be involved and supportive during the season.

### 2. PRIOR TO MEETING WITH PARENTS TO DISCUSS A CONCERN

- Avoid conversations with parents before or after a game regarding personal matters or in-game decision making.
- Encourage in-person and private meetings on non-game days with parents seeking time with a coach.
- Ask specifically the purpose of the meeting and try to accommodate a date and time as soon as possible.
- Reflect on your interactions with the young athlete and identify all areas that could be of a parental concern.
- Ask yourself if you have acted in the best interests of the young athlete and if there are ways in which you can improve.
- Gather your thoughts and personal observations as well as ask for additional insight from the coaching staff.

## **2. PRIOR TO MEETING WITH PARENTS TO DISCUSS A CONCERN CONT.**

- Prepare notes on whether the young athlete is adhering to the personal conduct expectations and team rules.  
Review the young athlete's interactions with teammates, coaches, fans, and officials.
- Honestly assess the young athlete's performance through key observations, facts, and statistical evidence.
- Revisit philosophies on playing time, team strategy, and decision making to make sure there aren't any inconsistencies.
- Practice for the meeting by running through your narrative as well as various scenarios and responses.
- Establish reasonable goals for the meeting that properly reflect the best interests of the young athlete.

## **3. DURING THE MEETING WITH PARENTS TO DISCUSS A CONCERN**

- A willingness to have an open and civil dialogue with concerned parents.
- Kindly ask prior to the meeting if the parents would have any objection to note taking by the coach.
- Initiate a warm and constructive tone to the conversation.  
Thank the parents for their time and allow them the opportunity to speak freely.
- Listen closely to the parents' concerns as well as use nonverbal cues in a positive manner.  
Never interrupt and allow the parents to complete their thoughts and sentences.
- Once the parents have finished speaking, kindly respond in a polite manner. Respect is a two-way street!
- Directly address each of the parents' concerns in a thoughtful and honest manner based on facts and observations.
- Review the philosophies and rules that were discussed during the preseason meeting and refer to accordingly.
- Never reference another child or parent in the meeting. Stay completely focused on the young athlete in question.
- Don't emotionally respond to accusations, comparisons, hearsay, and rumors. Always stick to the facts!
- Even though differences of opinion may develop over the course of the conversation, always remain calm.
- Always avoid name calling, yelling, and profanities. They immediately escalate an already stressful situation.
- If appropriate, ask the parents for their recommendations on how to improve the current situation.
- Collaborate on the next steps going forward and maintain open lines of communication.
- No matter how pleasant or unpleasant the conversation, always leave on civil terms.

#### **4. AFTER THE MEETING WITH THE PARENTS AND THE NEXT STEPS**

- Send some form of thank you correspondence to the parents (e-mail, text, note, etc.).
- Highlight the key points of the conversation as a reminder of the next steps.
- If necessary, set up another formal meeting for a progress report on the next steps.
- Establish informal check-ins at times convenient for all parties involved just to touch base.
- Carefully monitor the young athlete's progress and overall happiness.

#### **5. MIDSEASON MEETING WITH PARENTS AND YOUNG ATHLETES**

- Meet with parents and young athletes in the middle of the season for an update.
- Provide an update on performance, achieving team goals, policies, rules, etc.
- Updates on playing time, team strategy, and decision making.
- Provide an update on communication strategies and personal conduct.
- Review personal conduct expectations regarding treatment of officials, opponents, and fans.
- Meet individually with each of the young athletes for an update on personal and team goals.
- Provide an update on how they are positively engaging with each young athlete.
- Review strategies implemented to positively engage with parents to date.
- Carefully monitor the young athlete's progress and overall happiness.

#### **6. END OF SEASON MEETING WITH PARENTS AND YOUNG ATHLETES**

- Meet with parents and young athletes at the end of the season.
- Opportunity to say thank you to everyone and celebrate team accomplishments.
- Meet individually with each of the young athletes and provide them with a final evaluation.
- Provide the same evaluation to the parents and explain it to them in detail.
- Offer recommendations for parents and young athletes in terms of skills to work on in off season.