



## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Between Coach and Parent/ Parent Communication Plan**

#### **AREAS OF COMMON AGREEMENT BETWEEN COACHES AND PARENTS**

The purpose of the interscholastic athletic program at Shaw High School, Muscogee County School District is to provide an area in which students can learn and grow in meaningful way that are not always possible in the classroom setting. Everyone involved in the program, including our coaches, athletes, parents, and administrators, is committed to doing all he or she can to provide a positive athletic experience for each participant. Our ultimate success in achieving this goal will be measured by our ability to establish lines of communication. Through good communication, people feel valued and understood, even if complete agreement is not always reached.

Parenting and coaching are both challenging endeavors. Clearly, coaches and parents have at least one strong, common bond. They share concern for the wellbeing of each athlete. By establishing mutual understanding, parents and coaches are better able to accept the actions of the other in order to provide a greater benefit to each athlete.

We are all about the complete education of our students. Part of the process of growing up is learning to handle your own difficult situations. If a conflict of misunderstanding between an athlete and coach occurs, learning to resolve it is an important educational experience for the athlete. How the parents react greatly impacts the magnitude of the crisis and significantly determines the perspective of the athlete. If mom and dad rant and rave and further compound the problem by criticizing the coach, the athlete may receive the wrong message and develop inadequate strategies for personal conflict resolution.

Parents should react slowly. In reality, how many athletes go home to present and even-handed descriptions of the day's events? All children tend to exaggerate at times, leave out part of the story, or present a skewed version of an incident. Taking responsibility for your part in a conflict is a learned skill. It requires maturity and honest self-reflection. Athletes vent frustration at the dinner table expecting mom and dad to take their side of the issue. Thoughtful parents, however, realize that they were not present at practice to see how their child behaved, interacted with the coach, or to evaluate his or her skill and effort. Concerned thoughtful parents always seek more information before drawing conclusions.

The most productive long-term help a parent can give a child in an awkward situation with a coach is to teach a model the skills of conflict resolution. Help your child resolve his or her own differences.

When a student successfully deals with difficult interpersonal conflicts, he or she learns and grows. Supportive parent help their athlete learn the valuable lesson that athletics can teach, even the "tough lessons" that may be difficult for everyone involved.

Of course, a parent always retains the right to intervene on behalf of their child. We have established a few ground rules to help make parental intervention less contentious and more productive. Adhering to these communication principles has proven so effective that we encourage each parent to carefully read the following guidelines. Coaches and parents all want the athletic experience to be positive and educational for each athlete to the greatest extent possible. That does not imply that roadblocks along the way in the form of interpersonal conflicts are necessarily always negative. They are growth opportunities when parents and coaches work together.

## **Communication with Coaches**

### **The Parent/Coach Relationship:**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your children. This begins with clear communication from the coach.

#### **Communication You Should EXPECT From a Coach:**

1. The coach's philosophy.
2. The expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad.
3. The locations/times of all practices and games.
4. Any team requirements (i.e. fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning).
5. The procedures followed in the event that child is injured during athletic participation.
6. Any discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation.

#### **Communication Coaches should EXPECT From Parents:**

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and or expectations

**It is important to understand that there may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes.**

**At these times discussion with the coach is encouraged.**

#### **Concerns That Are Appropriate to Discuss With Coaches:**

1. The physical and mental treatment of your child.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

**It is difficult to accept that your child is not playing as much as you may hope. However, coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for the team and all involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things in the following paragraph must be left to the discretion of the coach.**

### **AREAS OF CONTROL THAT BELONG TO THE COACH, ALONE!**

**Issues NOT appropriate to discuss with coaches.**

1. Playing Time
2. Position (S) played, lineups, team strategy ETC.
3. Play calling, offensive and defensive strategies and style of play.
4. Other student-athletes: Matter regarding other students.

## Shaw Communications Procedural Guide

Whenever a question, concern or complaint arises regarding an athletic situation, we have found the following line of communication very effective in resolving issues.

### *Chain of Command*

#### **Coach**

Sport specific

#### **Athletic Director**

Mr. Fred Maynard, Maynard.Frederick.G@muscogee.k12.ga.us

#### **Principal**

Mr. Michal Barden, Barden.Michael.S@muscogee.k12.ga.us, 706-569-3638

1. Player coach communication first –

2. Start with the source – Talk directly with the coach, in private, face to face, away from practice site or game area. A telephone call may be necessary to arrange an appointment. E-mail, voice mail, letters are good methods but NOT effective for communicating information. By their nature they tend to distance coaches and parents.

**MAKE AN APPOINTMENT!** Sitting down and listening to both sides is far more productive in reaching a mutually satisfying resolution. Our coaches are expected and encouraged to meet with individual parents to discuss concerns that affect that parent's child. Our coaches are NOT EXPECTED to meet with groups of parents to discuss issues of concern.

***Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during or after a practice or contest. (Use the 24 hour rule). These can be emotional times for both the parent and coach.*** Our coaches are not expected to endure verbal physical abuse from parents. **MAKE AN APPOINTMENT!** Help teach your child the skills of mature conflict resolution.

3. If necessary and if your concern is with a SUB-Varsity coach, start with the source. The next level of communication then would be with the head coach of the Sport/Program.

4. If Necessary, talk with the Athletic Director. A meeting may be arranged with the concerned parties to discuss the issue. Getting everyone involved together in the same room to communicate openly resolves most issues

5. If Necessary, talk with the Assistant Principal – This can be initiated by the Athletic Director

6. If Necessary, talk with the Principal

**ALL COMPLAINTS MUST BE HEARD AT THE LOWEST LEVEL BEFORE INTERVENTION BY A HIGHER AUTHORITY CAN OCCUR.**

**This system works very well – please abide by it. However, the next level arbitrator will always be will to meet with a complainant if sub-level discussions do not accomplish their intended purpose**