

# 2019 Code of Civility

## PREAMBLE

The capacity of lawyers to wage legal battle against each other while treating the law and each other with courtesy and respect was noted by William Shakespeare in *The Taming of the Shrew*: "And do as adversaries do in law, strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends." (*Act 1, Scene 2*). That quote is emblazoned on the wall of the Dauphin County Courthouse, where it serves as a reminder to those who practice law there that the while our disputes may be of the highest import and intensity, we ought always to conduct our profession responsibly and respectfully.

That we can fight for our clients and disagree over the law without being disagreeable is a major lesson for mock trial participants, and the students' success at that goal is a principle measure of both their success and their character. So, too, is the conduct of the competition a measure of the success of the attorney and teacher coaches at inculcating those values that transcend the individual wins and losses and constitute the ultimate and most meaningful ends of education.

The following principles are designed to assist students and coaches in how to conduct themselves in a manner that preserves the dignity and honor of the judiciary, the American legal system, and the Pennsylvania Statewide High School Mock Trial competition. These principles, which are modeled from the Pennsylvania Code of Civility, are intended to encourage students and coaches to practice civility and decorum and to confirm the Statewide High School Mock Trial competition's status as an event at which courtesy and civility are observed as matters of the highest importance.

The conduct of students and coaches should be characterized at all times by integrity and personal courtesy to the fullest sense of those terms. Integrity and courtesy are indispensable to the practice of law and the orderly administration of justice by our courts. Participants in the Statewide High School Mock Trial competition should model those character traits in every aspect of the competition. Uncivil or obtrusive conduct impedes the fundamental goals of the competition, undercuts the educational purposes to which it is directed, and saps the fun for the teams who have worked so hard to participate.

The following principles are designed to encourage students and coaches to meet their obligations toward other teams and volunteers involved in the Statewide High School Mock Trial competition. It is expected that students and coaches will make a voluntary and mutual commitment to adhere to these principles. These principles are not intended to supersede or alter the Rules of Competition, nor shall they be used as a basis for scoring or disputes under the Rules of Competition. In cases of severe or repeated abuse, they may, however, be grounds for removal from the competition and/or denial of registration for future competition. Teams and their coaches and advisors may wish to review Rule of Competition 1.2 in this respect.

## STUDENTS' AND COACHES' DUTIES TO OTHER TEAMS AND VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN THE STATEWIDE HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION

1. Students and coaches should treat all participants in the Statewide High School Mock Trial competition, including coordinators, judges, scoring judges, teacher coaches, attorney coaches, Bar Association staff, other volunteers and other students, in a civil, professional and courteous manner at all times. These principles apply to conduct during and outside of competitions.
2. Students and coaches should speak in a civil and respectful manner in all communications and arguments.
3. Neither students nor coaches should engage in any conduct that diminishes the dignity or decorum of the courtroom or the Statewide High School Mock Trial competition.
4. Students and coaches should abstain from making disparaging personal remarks or engaging in acrimonious speech or conduct toward coordinators, judges, scoring judges, Bar Association staff, opposing teams, coaches, or participants in the Statewide High School Mock Trial competition and shall treat everyone involved with fair consideration.
5. Students should abstain from making frivolous and excessive objections and from taking any other actions which are disruptive to the trials.
6. Students and coaches should refrain from acting upon or manifesting racial, ethnic, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or any other bias or prejudice toward any participant in the Statewide High School Mock Trial competition and should act to correct such bias or prejudice in others.
7. Students and coaches should be punctual and prepared for all competitions.
8. Students, when in a trial, should make all remarks only to the judge and never to opposing counsel. When in the courtroom, students should refer to opposing counsel by the professional title of "attorney" or "counsel(or)" and/or by their last names.
9. Students should show respect for the court by proper demeanor and decorum. During trials, students should address the judge as "Your Honor" or "the Court" or by other formal designation. Students should begin an argument by saying "May it please the court" and should identify themselves as part of each argument.
10. Students and coaches should understand that volunteers, including but not limited to judges, scoring judges, coordinators, Bar Association staff, teacher coaches, attorney coaches, and other students, are an integral part of the Statewide High School Mock Trial competition and should treat them with courtesy and respect at all times.
11. Students and coaches should strive to protect the dignity and independence of the judiciary and American jurisprudence, particularly from unjust criticism and attack.
12. Students and coaches should accept the decisions of the judges as representing their best effort to adjudicate the matter before them based on merit and/or the best interests of the competition as a whole.
13. Students and coaches should be cognizant of these principles and should bring these principles to the attention of other students and coaches when appropriate.