Appendix B: Examples of Prohibited Conduct and Boundary Violations

The following examples are provided to help participants recognize behaviors that may violate the *FIRST*® Youth Protection Program or ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct. These examples are illustrative and not exhaustive.

Conduct should always be evaluated based on its impact on youth safety, appropriateness, and alignment with Youth Protection expectations.

Abuse, Endangerment, and Explicit Misconduct (Prohibited Conduct)

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited and must be reported immediately:

- Physical abuse or use of force against a youth participant.
- Sexual activity, sexual contact, or any sexualized behavior involving a youth participant.
- Making sexually explicit comments, jokes, or sharing explicit content.
- Encouraging or engaging in illegal activities with youth participants.
- Providing alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, or controlled substances to youth.
- Threatening, coercing, or intimidating a youth participant.
- Deliberately humiliating, shaming, or degrading a youth.

Grooming and Exploitative Behaviors (Prohibited Conduct)

These behaviors may indicate attempts to build inappropriate relationships:

- Attempting to form a special or exclusive relationship with a specific youth.
- Giving gifts, money, or privileges to a youth participant without transparency.
- Gradually introducing inappropriate topics (e.g., sexual content, personal relationships).
- Seeking emotional dependency or positioning oneself as the youth's "only support".
- Encouraging secrecy in interactions ("don't tell your parents/coach").
- Isolating a youth participant from peers or other adults.
- Repeatedly seeking one-on-one time outside normal team activities.

Boundary Violations (Primary Prevention Focus)

Boundary violations are behaviors that may not be intended to harm but create risk, confusion, or inappropriate dynamics.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

FIRST standard: interactions should be observable and interruptible

- Meeting alone with a youth in a private or non-observable space.
- Remaining alone with a youth participant after others have left.
- Offering private lessons, rides, or meetings without transparency.

COMMUNICATION VIOLATIONS (INCLUDING TEXTING AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION)

Includes: texting, email, DMs, Discord, social media, gaming platforms

- Private texting or messaging with a youth participant unrelated to team activities.
- Communicating late at night or in a manner inconsistent with team expectations.
- Using disappearing messages or private channels that limit visibility.
- Moving conversations from group/team platforms to private conversations.
- Sharing personal contact information in a way that bypasses transparency.

PHYSICAL BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

- Unnecessary or prolonged physical contact (e.g., hugs, touching).
- Physical contact that is not appropriate for the setting or age.
- Initiating physical interaction that causes discomfort or confusion.

FAVORITISM AND SPECIAL TREATMENT

- Singling out a youth for special attention, roles, or opportunities.
- Allowing one youth access to spaces, resources, or privileges others do not have.
- Creating the perception of a "favorite" participant.

EMOTIONAL BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

- Sharing personal problems or seeking emotional support from a youth.
- Relying on a youth participant for personal validation or advice.
- Engaging in overly personal or intimate conversations.

Non-Program-Related Interactions

- Spending time with youth participants outside team activities without transparency.
- Inviting youth to personal events, homes, or trips unrelated to *FIRST* activities.
- Engaging youth in activities unrelated to program, education, or career development.

Secrecy and Concealment

Secrecy is a key indicator of risk

- Asking a youth to keep interactions secret.
- Concealing communications or meetings from parents, guardians, or other adults.
- Avoiding established team communication channels.

Misuse of Position or Authority

- Using a coaching or mentor role for personal, financial, or relational gain.
- Leveraging influence to pressure youth into decisions or behaviors.
- Offering advantages (e.g., leadership roles, travel opportunities) in exchange for personal attention.

Event and Travel-Related Risks

- Sharing hotel rooms with youth participants (outside approved arrangements).
- Transporting a youth alone without proper authorization and transparency.
- Failing to follow supervision expectations at events.
- Allowing youth to be unsupervised in unsafe environments.

Digital and Online Conduct Risks

- Interacting with youth through personal social media accounts in a non-transparent way.
- Engaging in private gaming or online interactions without oversight.
- Sharing inappropriate content, including violent, sexually explicit, or otherwise age-inappropriate material.
- Failing to maintain professional boundaries in online spaces.

Peer-to-Peer Misconduct (Youth-to-Youth)

Adults are responsible for addressing and reporting these concerns. While not always adult misconduct, these behaviors must still be addressed:

- Bullying, harassment, or exclusion.
- Inappropriate physical or verbal behavior between youth.
- Sharing explicit images or messages.
- Coercion, pressure, or intimidation.



Failure to Follow Youth Protection Requirements

- Failing to complete required screening or training.
- Ignoring supervision expectations.
- Not reporting known or suspected concerns.
- Interfering with or discouraging reporting.

Patterns and Escalation

Individual behaviors may not always indicate misconduct on their own; however, patterns of behavior may increase risk and should be reported.

Examples:

- Repeated private communication.
- Increasing exclusivity with a youth.
- Gradual escalation of boundary violations.

When to Report

Certainty or proof is not required to report. Concerns should be reported when:

- A behavior appears inappropriate or raises concern.
- A pattern of boundary violations is observed.
- A youth expresses discomfort or concern.
- There is uncertainty about whether conduct is appropriate.

MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADULTS AT ALL TIMES, REGARDLESS OF A YOUTH PARTICIPANT'S BEHAVIOR, MATURITY, OR PERCEIVED CONSENT.