



Guidance for Physical Contact with Athletes in the Coaching Environment

Coaches have the important responsibility of teaching and modeling skills for student athletes and ensuring the learning occurs in a manner that fosters a safe and comfortable environment. Below you will find guidance for deciding when and how to physically assist students in the coaching environment:

- Whenever possible, verbally explain skills or exercises and demonstrate what the move looks like without the assistance of another person.
- When it is necessary to demonstrate with another person, it is advisable that two coaches demonstrate the skill or two experienced athletes demonstrate the skill rather than a coach and an athlete.
- If it is necessary for the coach to physically assist the athlete in making adjustments, the coach should explain and ask the athlete for permission. Consent and personal boundaries are important concepts that we want to model for our students. If the athlete is not comfortable, find an alternate method for demonstrating the adjustment.
- Ensure that all physical assistance is provided when other students/coaches are present. Physical adjustments should never be provided when a coach and an athlete are alone.
- Be cautious about engaging in high contact skills with students. Interactions that bring a coach into direct contact with the student's body have the potential of causing discomfort or being misinterpreted.
- Physical assistance that brings the coach in contact with an athlete's intimate body parts is never acceptable.

If you have any questions, please talk with the athletic director at your school or contact Debbie Joa, Prevention and Protection Coordinator, at 503-399-3061. Additional information about appropriate staff-student and volunteer-student boundaries is available on the [District website](#).