

mathleague.org Conduct Standards

Overview

We believe that all human beings deserve to be treated with dignity and fairness. mathleague.org expects all participants at our events – students, staff, coaches, volunteers, and parents – to act in accordance with the core values of respect and integrity. Our conduct standards seek to apply these values to our math contests, educate participants about their meaning, and create procedures for handling violations.

Respect: mathleague.org and all participants commit to providing a safe environment for all, free from bullying, harassment, intimidation, or any other form of demeaning behavior. No participant may, by word or action, create a hostile environment for another individual or group of people. This applies regardless of whether the effect was direct or indirect, intended or unintended.

Integrity: All participants must take responsibility for ensuring that contests are conducted in a spirit of fairness and honesty. Participants must abide by contest rules, as an unfair advantage to one student disadvantages other students. In the spirit of sportsmanship, everyone should help to ensure that the contest environment is free from disruptions or any other distractions that would interfere with another participant's experience.

Prohibited Conduct

Minor violations of the conduct policy include (but are not limited to):

Profanity: Nothing that would not be allowed in a PG movie should be said where a student may reasonably be expected to hear it. If it's something people commonly refer to as "the [some letter]-word", it is not to be spoken around students.

Minor disruptions: Given that we have very young children at our elementary contests, we sympathize with their difficulty in sitting quietly, but if a student is being extremely distracting to others we will need to intervene. If possible, proctors should ask a disruptive student to move elsewhere, but if that solution is not effective the student may be subject to sanctions as outlined below.

Interference by adults: Adults are also expected to avoid causing noise or other distractions while students are testing or listening to instructions. Parents, coaches, and other volunteers must not interfere in the orderly operation of the contest by causing disruptions or undue delay, or by otherwise preventing the contest organizers from doing their job effectively.

Testing violations: Students are expected to follow proctors' instructions and mathleague.org rules, remain silent during instructions and during non-team tests, refrain from using calculators or other aids when not expressly permitted, not look at other students' test papers, stop writing when time is called, hand in all answer sheets promptly after time is called, properly identify their answer sheets, and refrain from any form of communication or interaction with other students during tests where such interaction is not expressly permitted.

Violations of person or property: Everyone has a right to be secure in their person and their property. As such, participants are expected to refrain from unwelcome physical contact with other participants or with their personal effects. Minor violations might include, for example, tying someone's shoelaces together as a prank or "borrowing" someone's calculator without that person's consent. More severe infractions that may rise to the level of theft or violence are addressed in the "major violations" section below.

Major violations of the conduct policy include (but are not limited to):

Cheating: Participants must not intentionally violate contest rules in order to gain an advantage over others. This could include, for example, using calculators on non-calculator rounds, copying work from other students, or allowing others to copy one's work. Note that some items on this list overlap with "testing violations" above, and the distinction between a major and minor violation depends on whether the violation was intentional.

Bullying: Participants are not to engage in any conduct targeted at a specific individual or group, with the intention or effect of making them feel unwelcome, demeaned, intimidated, threatened, or unsafe.

Harassment: Participants are not to engage in any intentional behavior that creates a hostile environment for any individual or group, whether this effect is intended or not (note that a major violation requires only that the behavior be intentional, not that the specific effect be intended). Harassment may overlap with "hate speech".

"Hate speech": Participants are not to engage in any behavior that intentionally targets or demeans anyone based on any actual or perceived aspect of their personal identity, including but not limited to: race/ethnicity, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, socioeconomic status, disability or other medical condition, or mental ability. Note in particular that the identity of the perpetrator is irrelevant.

Major disruptions: Participants are not to engage in behavior that causes serious disruptions to the continued operation of an event (e.g. pulling fire alarms or calling in bomb threats).

Threats/violence: Direct threats, intimidation, and physical violence are prohibited.

Illegal activity: Any behavior that violates the law, including theft and property damage, is prohibited.

Drug use: Even if legal in the relevant jurisdiction, the use or possession of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs is prohibited at mathleague.org events.

Weapons: Even if legal in the relevant jurisdiction, possession of firearms or other weapons is prohibited at mathleague.org events.

Consequences

Violation of any of these rules may result in sanctions against the offending individual and potentially the team or school represented by that individual. While it is important that these rules are enforced in order to maintain the integrity of our contests, we are also committed to protecting the dignity of our participants and making sure sanctions are not unduly harsh or unfairly applied. In order to ensure that due process is preserved, mathleague.org will establish a Review Board consisting of not less than three members that will convene when necessary to handle appeals and adjudicate reported violations that are not handled on the day of a contest by the contest director.

Possible sanctions: Depending on the severity of the violation, sanctions given to participants may include a warning, disqualification from a particular test, disqualification from all tests on a given day, instructions to leave the premises, or a ban from future contests for a specified duration. Individual proctors may only issue warnings. The contest director may issue disqualifications and instruct participants to leave the contest site, but may not issue any sanction that extends beyond the day of the contest.

Sanctions that extend beyond the day of the contest, such as bans from future contests, may only be imposed by the Review Board, and only for major violations. These sanctions will only be imposed after an opportunity for a hearing as described below. If a contest director requests sanctions beyond what may be imposed on the day of the contest, the contest director shall file an incident report with the Review Board, which will then investigate the matter in a timely fashion. Any other party with knowledge of a violation of this Code should inform the contest director if the contest is in progress or inform the Review Board after the contest, and the matter will be investigated in a timely fashion.

Due process and appeals: Contest directors should seek to apply the lightest sanctions possible while ensuring the integrity of the contest. Many first-time minor violations can be addressed with a warning, although certain types of violations may require a student to be disqualified or removed from one or more events in order to make sure the contest is fair for everyone else. If a sanction is imposed that would result in a student being disqualified from a test or unable to take a test, the student or the student's coach may immediately announce their intention to appeal. In that event, the contest director shall allow the affected student(s) to provisionally take the tests (sequestered individually or with their team if the contest director deems it necessary) and shall file an incident report with the Review Board. The provisional tests will not be included in the results announced the day of the contest but may be reinstated by the Review Board depending on the outcome of the appeal. In the event of an appeal or a possible sanction extending beyond the day of the contest, the Review Board will attempt to contact the sanctioned party to arrange a hearing before issuing a ruling. At this hearing, the sanctioned party will be given the opportunity to speak on their behalf and to present any relevant evidence. The decision of the Review Board is final, although at its discretion the Review Board may reconsider any decision upon request of the sanctioned party if new evidence becomes available.