



Mock Trial Handbook

TITLE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 1.001 APPLICABILITY. This handbook applies to all mock trial members and teams supported in whole or in part by the Judge Barefoot Sanders Law Magnet budget unless specifically excluded by this handbook.

Sec. 1.002 Coaches

Coaches:

Don A. Gonzalez

Traelon Rodgers

Hailey Moore

Naudia Terry

Chloe Hawkins

Suki Nijjar

Sec. 1.003 Executive Board

Executive Board:

Our organizational leadership structure models that used by most college mock trial programs. Mr. Gonzalez will appoint all members to the E Board. Here are the positions:

- President – **Cati Cruz**: overall student leader of the BIG Team for internal matters
- Vice-President of Operations – **Aaditya Peddi**: responsible for helping Gonzalez with entries, paperwork and overall organization of the team
- Y&G President – **Karen Corpeno**: YG student leader of all YG matters with mock trial and greater community
- Y&G Vice-President – **Paige Wright**:
- Vice-President of Marketing – **Rita Barrios**: responsible for recruiting and retaining members; this includes planning next year's recruiting video
- Treasurer – **Jaxon Ryder**: responsible for fundraising and our student activity fund
- Secretary – _____: responsible for notes at E Board meetings and assists the VP of Operations as needed
- Committee Chairs
 - Courtroom Manager. – **Jorge Iniguez**: responsible for the care and tidiness of the courtroom
 - Mentoring – _____: responsible for matching mentors to mentees and mentorship activities
 - Tutoring – _____: responsible for matching tutors to tutees and organizing tutoring sessions
 - Social – **Iya McCormick**: responsible for organizing social events (e.g. birthdays and end of year)

TITLE 2. CORE VALUES

Sec. 2.001 **CHARACTER** – Students competing on the LAW MAGNET MOCK TRIAL TEAM (“The Team”) are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards, both in the classroom and in competition. Unethical behavior by one person reflects upon the entire team and our school. ***A good reputation is difficult to earn and easy to lose.***

“Character is doing the right thing when no one is watching.” (J. C. Watts)

Both attitude and behavior should reflect good character. Members of the team should conduct themselves in a professional, mature manner always. Any issues that arise should be taken directly to Mr. Gonzalez.

Sec. 2.002 **PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE** – Hard work and self-discipline are essential to success. Talent is no substitute for dedication to the current task, to the team or to self-improvement. The only way to reach your potential is to continually strive to do your best; to be better. You will never be asked to give more than your best, but anything short of that will be challenged. You will be encouraged to be the best version of yourself.

“Comparison is the thief of joy.” (Theodore Roosevelt)

You will not be compared to anyone else, and we expect you not to compare yourself to any current or past member. You need only compare yourself to your past self.

Sec. 2.003 **SCHOLARSHIP** – Although Mock Trial can be one of the best classrooms of learning, your academic work comes before Mock Trial. You are responsible for any work missed when you attend a tournament, scrimmage, or trial advocacy workshop. You should plan with your teachers in advance. Mock Trial and academics can be great complements to one another if you have a balanced set of priorities. Consequently, you are expected to maintain a Bullet Journal™ as a system for organization, planning and prioritization.

“Begin with the end in mind.” (Stephen Covey)

Members who fail a class will be placed on academic probation and ineligible to compete. Multiple failures will result in removal from the team. This is not a social club; it is a competitive, academic team. If you cannot remain academically eligible you cannot compete.

Sec. 2.004 **UNITY** – Team unity is an essential component of The Team. For us to function as a team, we all must accept and work with each other. All directs, crosses, openings, closings, and strategies produced by a member of the team becomes part of The Team war chest. Please respect the property of the coaching staff and other members of team, such as trial notebooks, supplies, notes, etc.

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.” (Michael Jordan)

Arrogance and ingratitude will not be tolerated. Varsity members are expected to share their expertise and experience with the younger team members. This includes but is not limited to leading novice practice sessions.

Sec. 2.005 **LEADERSHIP** - Leadership is not about titles or positions; it’s about influence. To that end you must be servant leaders. See a need, fill the need.

“Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Sec. 2.006 **OWNERSHIP** – Stop the blame game and accept responsibility for your actions. If you consider yourself a leader then everything is your responsibility. Own your mistakes and failures. When necessary, let Mr. G know or your team leader. Work on learning from the failures and getting better. Be humble AND courageous. Check your ego at the door.

"Be the change you want to see." (Gandhi)

"Implementing Extreme Ownership requires checking your ego and operating with a high degree of humility. Admitting mistakes, taking ownership, and developing a plan to overcome challenges are integral to any successful team." (Jocko Willink)

For more on this read the [summary](#) of Extreme Ownership by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin. Better yet [read the book](#).

Sec. 2.007 **RESPECT** - Individuals should refrain from bad-mouthing other team members, especially to members of other programs. Furthermore, we will not tolerate any other demeaning language. This includes such language used via any form of electronic or social media.

"Treat people with dignity and respect, even if you don't agree with them." (Michelle Obama)

Sec. 2.008 **TRANSPARENCY** – We don't hide problems or sweep things under the rug. We own our team issues, and we handle them internally. We don't instigate drama or air our issues to people outside of the Team. We will create a system for dealing with Team grievances. We do not let things fester. We bring them into the light.

"You have to be transparent, so you no longer cast a shadow but instead let the light pass through you." (Kamand Kojouri)

We do not make "closed door" deals. We don't plan subterfuge. We address our concerns openly and candidly. Furthermore, we take care of each other's concerns. If we know a teammate is hurting, we offer them help or seek help for them.

Sec. 2.009 **WELL-BEING** – We expect you to take care of yourself and maintain balance of life. There are five main aspects of personal well-being: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual. We expect you to get adequate rest (sleep), especially when we are at tournaments. We also expect you to eat properly and at tournaments the coaching staff will dictate what you eat to insure maximum performance.

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others." (Cicero)

We understand that the rigors of our academic program and the competitive circuit can be stressful. To that end, we encourage you to implement personal practices to nurture your emotional and spiritual needs. One practice we expect is for you to maintain a daily Gratitude Log in your Bullet Journal™. Furthermore, be cognizant that you have many resources available to you, especially your coaches in helping you deal with stress.

Sec. 2.010 **COMMUNICATION** – We expect you to communicate with the coaching staff and each other. Remind will be used for class work. During tournaments and scrimmages, we will use group texts. Remember when communicating information to Mr. G (e.g., absences, conflicts, etc.), it must be made via email, Remind or text.

Leaders cannot succeed in life without communicating effectively. It's not enough for them to just work hard; it's not enough to do a great job. To be successful, you must learn how to really communicate with others, and that means learning how to connect with them. (John C. Maxwell)

We must remember when communicating with each other that we don't all share the same perspectives or even meaning of words. Finally, be mindful of your tone and facial expressions. They often speak louder than your words.

TITLE 3. TOURNAMENT RULES

Sec. 3.001 **District Rules** - Dallas ISD school rules always apply. Violation of any policies will be handled by the coaching staff and then appropriate school district officials as warranted. Any policy violation may result in immediate suspension or removal from the team in addition to normal disciplinary procedures.

Sec. 3.002 **Drugs** - Tobacco, alcohol, or non-prescription drug use will not be permitted. Violation of this rule will result in immediate involvement of school district personnel. Violation of this rule will result in suspension from the team. The coaching staff should be apprised of any prescription drug use occurring during the tournaments.

Sec. 3.003 **Mutual Respect** - Respect for coaches and team members will be always maintained. Refrain from profanity, vulgarities, and offensive language or humor.

Sec. 3.004 **Intellectual Property** - No trading of team intellectual property or strategies without permission by Mr. Gonzalez.

Sec. 3.005 **Hotel behavior** – all Mock Trial members will be expected to follow the in-room and the lights-out curfew set by the coaching staff. At no point in time are LAW MAGNET Mock Trial members allowed in the hotel rooms of Mock Trial members from other schools without the permission of the coach. LAW MAGNET Mock Trial members are also not allowed in hotel rooms of the opposite gender. Mock Trial members should remember to keep their hotel rooms relatively clean. Hotel housekeepers are not paid to clean up your massive pile of papers and pizza boxes.

- (a) All charges at the hotel (phone, room service, and movies) must be paid by the students before check-out.
- (b) Hotel room assignments are non-negotiable – these will be printed on your travel itineraries.
- (c) Promptness is key. Arrive 15 minutes before scheduled time if we are leaving from school. It is your responsibility to be on time – do not rely on a wake-up call from the hotel. STUDENTS WILL BE LEFT BEHIND IF THEIR TARDINESS JEOPARDIZES OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM.

Sec. 3.006 **Safety Procedures** - (ex. Wearing a seat belt) should be followed on all modes of transportation. Always adhere to the driver's expectations. Students will not be allowed to ride in vehicles that are not part of the team travel unless they have written consent from their parents.

Sec. 3.007 **Court Attire** - Follow dress guidelines. Typically, tournament attire is required through the awards ceremony. Men should wear dress shirts (with collars), nice slacks, belts, dress shoes, and ties. Ladies should wear professional skirts, dresses, or pant suits. Proper hygiene (showering, deodorant, etc.) is expected.

Sec. 3.008 **Tournament Rules** - All tournament host rules must be followed.

Sec. 3.009 **National Qualifiers** - Students that qualify for national contests will be required to attend those tournaments. Please check your calendars accordingly.

Sec. 3.010 **Cancellation or No Show** - Students who cancel from a tournament or fail to appear after signing up for the tournament will be responsible for any fees that accrue because of that cancellation or expenses that have already been allocated.

Sec. 3.011 **Consequences** - Any violation of the above rules will result in appropriate discipline, such as phone calls to parents and suspension from the team.

TITLE 4. COURTROOM RULES

Sec. 4.001 **The Bench** - Respect Mr. Gonzalez' work area (regardless of how much you think it needs to be cleaned). Students are not to walk behind the judge's bench or use his computer equipment without his explicit permission.

Sec. 4.002 **Behavior** - The Courtroom is not a social gathering spot. There will be no running, screaming, fighting, etc. in the Courtroom. Please refrain from sitting on the tables – there are plenty of chairs. Once class begins, no earbuds or music playing. The only exception is when instructed to do so for tournament prep or when it relates to the lesson.

Sec. 4.003 **Cleanliness**. Mr. Gonzalez is not your butler. Please clean up after yourselves. Individuals who leave food and trash will soon see those privileges revoked. Do not leave schoolbooks and assignments on the Courtroom tables. Food is allowed but use common sense. Make use of the coasters and lost and found.

Sec. 4.004 **Clothing** – the Courtroom is not a locker room. Please make sure to take home your clothes every day. You will comply with the dress code as interpreted by Mr. Gonzalez. You are “the face” of the Law Magnet and you will be held to **higher standard**.

“It’s not what you preach; it’s what you tolerate.” (Jocko Willink)

Sec. 4.005 **Trial Notebook Storage** – I know storage is scarce in the Courtroom. Please try to find a place out of the way for your trial notebooks. Everyone should have received a high-quality notebook at the mock trial camp. Varsity trial notebooks should be behind in the Football. Novice trial notebooks should be kept by the students. You are to clean up your trial notebooks immediately after practice or scrimmages. This means refiling exhibits, etc. **GET INTO THIS PRACTICE & YOU WON'T LOSE EXHIBITS OR OTHER EVIDENCE.**

Sec. 4.006 **Copies**– The coaching staff will provide copies of the case problems when they drop. First drafts will be doubled-sided and as we get closer to competition (and scrimmages) we will produce two-sided copies. Please do NOT use school printers to print your own copies.

Sec. 4.007 **Computers** – All Dallas ISD rules regarding computer use will be followed. We will have a team Google Drive created by Mr. Gonzalez with individual team sub-folders and general folders. You are NOT to create your own shared drives. Any previous drives are no longer to be used.

TITLE 5. Tournament Schedule & Important Dates

Event	Location	Date	Time
Y&G Case Release	YMCA Texas	September 1, 2026	TBD
State Bar Case Release	Texas High School Mock Trial Competition	October 1, 2026	Midnight
Dallas Bar Association Mock Trial Clinic	George Allen Courthouse	November 7, 2026	8:00 am - Noon
District 5 Youth & Government	Duncanville HS	November 7, 2026	7:00 am – 8:00 pm
Law Magnet TFA Debate & Mock Tournament	Townview	January 8-9, 2027	TBD
Dallas Bar Association - DallasISD Regional Mock Trial Prelims	George Allen Courthouse	January 23, 2027	7:00 am – 8:00 pm
Dallas Bar Association - DallasISD Regional Mock Trial Quarters	George Allen Courthouse	January 38, 2027	5:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Dallas Bar Association DallasISD Regional Semi-Finals & Finals	George Allen Courthouse	February 6, 2027	8:00 am – 1:00 pm
Youth & Government State	State Capitol Austin, TX	February 25-28-2027	All Day
Texas Bar Association State Mock Trial Competition	George Allen Courthouse	March 3-6, 2027	7:00 am – 8:00 pm
UIL Sprint Meet – District	Skyline High School	TBD	7:30 am – 5:00 pm
National Mock Trial Competition	St. Louis, MO	May 13-15, 2027	All Day
Championship Mock Trial Academy	TBD	July 12-18, 2027	All Day
National Judicial Competition	TBD	July 26-28, 2027	All Day

Varsity members will begin after school practices when the case(s) drops. We will begin novice practice the week activity buses begin to run (Tuesdays and Thursdays).