

WHAT PARENTS AND VISITORS SHOULD KNOW

- Parents and all guests are referred to as visitors.
- Plan to meet with your student's teacher coach to find out about practice schedules, transportation to/from the competition, snacks for practices, snacks/lunch for the competition, dress attire for each student, travel plans, where to meet for the competition, competition schedule, etc.
- Parents and visitors are welcome to attend the competitions. Teams will be provided a maximum number of 24 "visitor" badges to watch their respective teams. Competing students, teacher coach(es) and attorney coach(es) will have separate "team" badges. Visitors cannot view any round without the matching visitor badges which will be noted with two coded letters, e.g. "AB." (The codes mean nothing. It is a system in place to keep the teams anonymous from the presiding judges, scoring judges, and opposing teams.) Visitors will receive visitor badges from the lead teacher coach after the lead teacher coach has registered the team on the day of the competition. All badges are expected to be returned at the end of the competition.
- The team's school, to the extent possible, is to be kept confidential from the scoring judges. Visitors are not to wear or bring school names, logos, or colors on any items brought into the courtroom. Also, the teams and their visitors should only identify themselves by their assigned team codes for the competition, not by the school name.
- Seating may be limited in various courtrooms throughout the state. What this means for visitors is sharing of name tags may be required for everyone to be able to see his/her student. Visitors can share nametags by only having guests in the courtroom to watch either the Prosecution/Plaintiff OR Defense side depending on their student's performing side.

For example, Johnny will only be performing for the Defense side, but the Prosecution/Plaintiff side is currently performing. Parents and visitors associated with Johnny would sit out this round if space were limited, so that parents and visitors of the students on the Prosecution/Plaintiff side could watch. The same courtesy should be extended when sides switch, should that courtroom present space constraints.

- Know that teachers will receive the order of the performing sides for the first round seven business days prior to the competition. This announcement should help visitors know which round they can attend and better plan for space constraints. However, if teams drop out during the seven business days prior to the competition, agendas **WILL** change prior to the competition OR even on the morning of the competition should a team "no show." **The agenda is always subject to change.**
- Everyone is asked to respect the arrival times, competition round times, breaks and lunch time by never being late. Students need to be in their respective courtrooms 15 minutes prior to each round. Many of the courthouses require security to operate the metal detectors for the competitions, which requires additional time for gaining access into the building. (The more pockets, purses, brief cases, bags, etc. that have to be examined, the longer the entry time.) It is suggested that the lead teacher coach have a bag for all things that students absolutely need to bring in the courthouse and the students bring nothing other than their notes. This will speed up entry into the courthouse.

- Should a visitor arrive late, there will be staff to assist in finding the appropriate courtroom to which their school is assigned. However, entering or exiting the courtroom should only occur during transitional periods taking place in the courtroom. For example, enter when a witness is getting on or off of the witness stand and not during an opening, direct, cross, or closing. **It is highly suggested that each team have one person stand outside their courtroom and assist in making sure that late arrivals or people that leave during the trial only enter and exit during transitions. This will ensure that there is less distraction for the students during the trial.**
- An agenda with “approximate” times is provided to the lead teacher coach in advance and on the day of the competition to share with visitors. Know that these times are “approximate” and that a round could end earlier or later than estimated, thus causing subsequent breaks, lunch, rounds and awards to be impacted by this shift in time either earlier or later. Even if the round a visitor views ends “on time,” all teams must wait to begin the next round until all teams have completed the same round.
- If a visitor knows in advance that s/he is only coming to see the one round his/her student is performing in, plan to arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the “approximate” start time to ensure a seat in the courtroom as times are not “fixed” and can vary. Visitors planning on arriving for only one round are strongly encouraged to leave their cell phone number with the lead teacher in case the agenda changes on the morning of the competition.
- Visitors are not allowed to move around in the courtroom during a trial or participate in the trial in any way to include asking about remaining time, signaling, passing notes, raising disputes, or arguing a dispute on behalf of the student(s).
- It is strongly encouraged that cell phones are not brought to the courthouse and/or Mock Trial facility. Some courthouses prohibit the possession of cell phones and they will be confiscated by security personnel. Should a cell phone be permitted into the courthouse, it is asked that all cell phones be turned off while in the courtroom.
- Video cameras may be used during the competition only with the consent of the host facility, the presiding judge AND with the consent of the opposing team. The presiding judge will ask for consent from both teams prior to beginning the trial. Flash pictures may NOT be taken during the competition at any time. (In the past, some teams have nominated one parent from a team to film all of the rounds and share the video with everyone on that team following the competition.)
- The SC Bar promotes each competition statewide and sends press releases to all media outlets. Look for promotion of each school’s participation in the local newspaper close to the competition dates. Media may be on site at a competition.

- Teams assigned to each regional competition are notified in advance in the event that there are an odd number of teams participating in a given regional competition that require a team to become a “bye” for each round. See information about a bye round in the rules section of the Mock Trial Competition Handbook.
- In general, there are very few, if any, restaurants within walking distance of the competition locations. It is strongly suggested that students stay on the competition grounds and visitors either bring prepared food for lunch or opt for take-out in the area that is brought to the students.
- The length of the competition day will vary by region depending on the number of teams.
- The presiding judge will allow for a five (5) minute recess prior to the closing statements. Everyone behind the bar **CAN** leave the courtroom at this time, but may not communicate with any of the team members in front of the bar. All students in front of the bar are to remain in the courtroom in front of the bar with non-communication with anyone behind the bar. Students in front of the bar may talk amongst themselves. Visitors that leave during the break risk not being able to re-enter the courtroom in the event both teams are prepared to start their closing arguments prior to the end of the five minute recess. The purpose of this recess is for students to prepare their closing arguments, the gallery of visitors needs to stay absolutely silent.
- Any concerns, issues or feedback discussed with the Mock Trial regional and/or state coordinator is to be solely made by the lead teacher coach and/or the lead attorney coach. Any communication not from the lead teacher coach or attorney coach is considered to be in non-compliance and is subject to rule 3.9 (Communication with Mock Trial Coordinator and Rule 6.4 (Reporting a Rules Violation - Outside of the Bar). These rules are in place before, during, and after a competition.
- There is closing assembly at the end of the competition day and visitors are welcome to attend. This is when the most effective attorney and most effective witness from each round nominated by the judges will be announced and the assembly will conclude with the announcement of the teams that will advance to the state competition. It is strongly encouraged that everyone is in the assigned meeting area for the closing assembly **at least thirty minutes prior** to the start time in case the awards preparation happens sooner than planned. Attorneys, teachers, students, and visitors do not want to miss the closing assembly.
- Teams advance from each of the regional competitions to the state competition. Should a visitor's student advance to the state competition, plan to meet as a team with the Mock Trial coordinator following the closing assembly to discuss the details of the state competition.
- Teachers and visitors should block their calendar for the state competition in case their students advance to this level of competition, even if it is a first year team. Should a team be selected to advance to the state competition, it is very important that the team stays together when advancing to the next level of competition. Should the team not be able to advance to the state competition due to not enough team members available on that competition date, the school forfeits their slot.