

## **Judge Expectations and Behavior Guidelines**

**These guidelines apply to National History Day in Minnesota Regional/District contests and the Minnesota State History Day contest.**

### **The Judge's Role**

The History Day program, students, and teachers rely on judges as a critical part of the educational process. As a judge, you will:

- Sign up in advance on the website.
- Attend a judge orientation the day of the event.
- Work with a judge team of two or three to review projects and interview students.
- Select the strongest projects to advance to the next level of competition.
- Provide detailed written feedback about each project you view.

### **Expectations**

A brief orientation at the start of event event will cover the fundamentals of judging as well as contest logistics. The following judge expectations may or may not be covered in detail, but include:

#### **Event Attendance**

- Let us know as soon as possible if your schedule changes and you are unable to judge.
- Arrive on time to all events for which you sign up and stay until the judging process is completed.
- Attend the judge orientation at the start of the event.

#### **Student Interactions**

- Pay careful attention so you can evaluate well. Students have worked for months on their projects and are looking forward to this opportunity to share their work. Judges should avoid distractions such as personal phone calls, texts, etc. during the event. Judges may not bring minor children that they need to supervise to the event.
- Use a friendly tone of voice and positive language.
- Be aware that touch that you might find comfortable may make others feel uncomfortable and that there are cultural differences to appropriate touch. No one should be touched in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Watch for the student to initiate appropriate touch, which might include a handshake, high five, or fist bump.
- If a student, fellow judge, or event spectator needs first aid, contact a staff person immediately.

#### **Fairness and Respect**

- Alert History Day staff to any conflicts of interest, including students you know personally or schools with which you have close relationships.
- Set aside personal bias for or against topics. Judge each project based on the merits of the information that the student presents.
- Act in a manner that is appropriate and respectful. Remember the age of your audience. Some students are as young as 6th grade and may be nervous to discuss their work. Ask questions which prompt students to provide information, and be patient if they are shy or anxious.
- You have a right to be respected. You do not have to suffer offensive language or hostile behavior from a student or a fellow judge.

At no point will judges be expected to be alone with student participants.

- Judges work in teams of two or three people.
- Rooms are open to the public when judges are interacting with students.
- Teachers, parents and/or guardians have the option to be in the room or in the vicinity during the judging interactions.

### **Unacceptable Judge Behavior**

Minnesota History Day's highest priority is to run a fair contest that is educationally beneficial to the student participants. Judge behaviors that interfere with these goals will be investigated and may impact a person's ability to judge at future contests. Behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

- Discrimination against a student, including on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, marital status, familial status, or status with regard to public assistance
- Excessive use of phone, text, supervision of children, etc. that distracts a volunteer from judging.
- Failure to provide written feedback to students through the NHD comment sheets.
- Use of loud, abusive, or otherwise harassing language directed towards students, fellow judges, History Day staff members, or mentors.
- Departing in the middle of a presentation or from the event without completing results (unless for a medical or personal emergency).
- Repeated failure to follow contest procedures, such as ranking based on non-official History Day criteria, providing oral critiques during the interview, or showing unfair bias for or against certain topics.

### **Addressing Judge Behavior**

Judges are volunteers who believe in the value and mission of our program. We assume that judges have the best intentions in all contest interactions. Our goal is to fairly investigate and counsel judges when behavior is deemed inappropriate. In the rare case that a judge behavior is flagged by a staff member, mentor, student, teacher, or fellow judge, History Day staff will take the following steps:

1. Discuss the issue with relevant parties, which may include students, teachers, fellow judges, History Day staff and/or mentors.
2. Follow up with judge. Record the issue in the judge's file for future reference.
3. Judges who have more than one incident may be required to meet with Minnesota Historical Society staff before volunteering again.
4. Judges who have repeated incidents of unacceptable behavior, or a single incident of egregious unacceptable behavior, will be placed on a "Do Not Invite Back" list and not allowed to volunteer for Minnesota History Day again. A judge will be notified of this decision via postal mail.

**Please Note:** History Day reserves the right to immediately remove a judge in cases of egregious unacceptable behavior.

**Please contact Minnesota History Day staff with any questions about these guidelines.**