



ELMHURST SWIM TEAM POLICY CONCERNING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

The Board of Directors has adopted this policy concerning electronic communications after review and consideration of USA Swimming's model policy to implement rules concerning electronic communications. The policy must be reviewed with and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults affiliated with the club. Elmhurst Swim Team has been governed in the past by the USA Swimming electronic communication policy and it will continue this policy until registration for 2015-16 opens. On and after the opening of registration for the 2015-16 season, the following policy will apply. The Board of Directors and the coaches have the responsibility to implement the electronic communications policy.

Electronic Communication Policy of the Elmhurst Swim Team

PURPOSE

The Elmhurst Swim Team (the "Club") recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

GENERAL CONTENT

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- drugs or alcohol use;
- sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- the adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
- inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures

Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.



Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: “Is this communication something that someone else would find inappropriate or unacceptable in a face-to-face meeting?” or “Is this something you would be uncomfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient’s parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?” If the answer to these questions is “yes” then the communication is one that likely should not occur. This is so, even if you believe most people would see no problem in the communication.

Beyond these questions, with respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is **Transparent**, **Accessible** and **Professional**.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club’s records. Whenever possible, consider including another coach, team-related adult or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility. Coaches engaging in electronic communications with children may be required to provide the Secretary of the Board the username and password information for accounts that are utilized for electronic communications with athletes and their families.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity not only of a Club staff member but also of an athlete on the team.

If your communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

EDUCATION OF ATHLETES IN ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Club has determined not to educate swimmers in their use of electronic media. They will be informed of this policy and the parents of the athlete should initially make the determination of whether their child should be involved in electronic communications. Thereafter, the Club believes that the parental role (and not a team or coaches’ role) is paramount. The Club will only intervene when conduct implicates this policy.



FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

The Club allows the development of official Facebook page, blog through the Club website and Instagram that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters. The Club does not permit coach or staff use of MySpace (or other sites or profiles that contain known direct or indirect links to websites that would reasonably be considered age-inappropriate for team members) for team purposes due to the variety of profiles and possible concerns for the use of a website with such a wide variety of interests that may be outside of parental controls.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information. Nevertheless, the Club recognizes that coaches also have relationships with athletes and their parents that arise from outside the Club—such as for school, volunteerism and other coaching. Coaches are encouraged to keep as clear a line as reasonably possible between and among their different roles.

TWITTER

Best Practice: The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter. Athletes may retweet a coach’s message.

TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. Rarely is texting utilized, but it may be critical in communicating in certain instances where other means fail. If a coach’s or athlete’s phone allows, a two-deep policy of texting both the athlete and a parent might be attempted. This two-deep effort is not always possible on occasions when contact lists are not available or when cellular contact information changes. It is only a recommended step.

EMAIL



Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7am and 9pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied. Parents and athletes must keep their email contact information current. Responses are encouraged so that the coach has confidence that the parent has read the email. Emails through the website or Team Unify are common. These emails are broadcast to a larger population and need not be copied to others or abide by the time restrictions.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing to the Club President that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication. Please note that the Club will not partake in efforts to communicate other than through means exercised by the Club in relation to other members in similar situations.