

# GILLS Parent Information

Revised: 08/01/18

## Welcome

Welcome parents to the Great Illinois Swimmers (GILLS) Winter Season! GILLS is an age group competitive swim club. We are a member of USA Swimming (USAS) and sanctioned by Illinois Swimming Inc. (a local swim council of USAS). Our club is a non---profit organization run by its elected Board of Directors and supported by its member families. The mission of our team is to provide every member an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success at his or her level of ability, from novice to international competitor. We have coaches who are professional, educated, and experienced in competitive swimming.

## Coaches

Head Coach	Shawn Walsh	coachshawn@gills-swim.org
Assistant Coach	Kelsey Brittain	coachkelsey@gills-swim.org
Assistant Coach	Anthony Bartolotta	bartolotta.anthony@gmail.com
Assistant Coach	Amber Wood	amberleighwood66@gmail.com
Assistant Coach	Colleen Palermo	gillscoach27@gmail.com
Assistant Coach	Cullen Stine	cullen.stine9@gmail.com
Assistant Coach	Jake Villasenor	jakevillasenor@gmail.com

## Board Members

President	Mike Lynch	Michaellynchjr@yahoo.com
Vice---President	Chris Galietta	vp@gills-swim.org
Treasurer	Gina Sherman	treasurer@gills-swim.org
Secretary	Lauren Hammerschmidt	secretary@gills-swim.org
Publicity	Aimee Schatz	PR@gills-swim.org

## Pool Address

Andrew High School 9001 W. 171<sup>st</sup> Street, Tinley Park, IL 60487

## Mailing Address

GILLS  
PO Box 54  
Tinley Park, IL 60477

## Communication

Most communication from GILLS is conducted **via email**. Please watch your email for information and updates. Check the website calendar also for updates.

## Website: [www.gills-swim.org](http://www.gills-swim.org)

Our website contains all information regarding GILLS. After you have registered you will receive an email with login instructions for our website. Once you have logged in, you will be able to:

- View the calendar for practice times
- View your child's swim times and compare them to standards (Regional, State, etc.)
- Order your swimmer equipment and spirit wear

- Sign your child up for dual meets
- Sign up for volunteer positions throughout the season through the **Job Sign Up** tab on the events page
- Read the GILLS FAQ's
- Find addresses for other pools that the GILLS may have a meet at

### **Winter Registration Fees\***

*(\*Please note, new and transfer swimmers will be evaluated by coaching staff on a day set by the club). At that time the coaches will make a decision as to what practice group they are placed in based on their ability. The GILLS coaching staff reserves the right to turn away any swimmer they feel is not ready for a competitive swim team.)*

- \$430 First Swimmer in family (K thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- \$380 Each additional swimmer (K thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- \$95 Each High School Swimmer (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, counted separately from family swimmers)
- \$77 USA Swimming Membership (Insurance and Registration paid once per year)
- \$50 District 230 Pool Rental Fee/per swimmer(paid once per year)
- \$20 Concession Donation Fee/per family
- \$100 Volunteer Fee/per family *(this fee will be charged to your credit card at the end of the season if you do NOT complete your volunteer requirement set by club.*
- \$10.00 Transfer Fee will be assessed at registration for any swimmers transferring from another club, *(fee charged by USA Swimming to process)*

### **Concession Donation Fee**

All age groups including High School Swimmers will be required to pay the Concession donation fee. The money collected for this is used to purchase all food and beverages for the concession stand throughout the season.

### **District 230 Fees**

All swimmers including High School Swimmers will be required to pay the District 230 Pool Rental Fee.

### **Volunteer Requirements**

Parental involvement is essential for our club to function. All pre-k thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade swimmers' families are required to volunteer **for home swim meets/events. This number of volunteer requirements will be set by the club at the start of each season.** If the meets/events obligation is not fulfilled your credit card will be charged \$100.00. At the end of the season if you have completed your volunteer requirements your account will be noted and you will not be charged the \$100 fee.

### **Pentathlon**

If your swimmer(s) swim in the GILLS hosted ISI - Pentathlon (typically held the second Saturday in November) you will be required to work a 4-5 hour shift while your swimmer is swimming. This is **NOT** counted towards your meet/event volunteer requirement. An additional concession donation may be required for Pentathlon as well.

## Conference

If your swimmer(s) are invited to swim in the Conference meet you may be required to volunteer even if the meet is not held at our pool. This is **NOT** counted towards your meet/event volunteer requirement.

## Refunds

GILLS offers a two-week trial period for **NEW** swimmers only (swimmers that have never be registered with USA Swimming before). If your swimmer wishes to drop out of swimming you must notify the coaches and email the Board at [secretary@gills-swim.org](mailto:secretary@gills-swim.org). GILLS will only refund the registration fee and the concession donation fee of new swimmers. **The USA Registration Fee is non-refundable.**

## Payments

Registration fees and installment payments, are to be made during the online registration process via credit/debit cards only. All other additional fees throughout the season for example ISI Swim meet fees, GILLS wear etc. will be charged to your credit card. If your family signs up for these additional ISI Swim Meets all additional fees will be invoiced on the first of the month and your credit card will be charged.

## Financial Responsibilities

Your registration fees cover pool fees, coach's salaries, membership fees, meet administrative fees, as well as other operating expenses. The team may conduct one mandatory fundraiser each season in order to keep our fees at a minimum. Fundraiser information to be announced.

## Volunteer Commitment

**This season, each family is required to fulfill a minimum of 3 – 4 volunteer jobs.** Volunteers will be needed to time at the meets, help organize the swimmers, concessions, clean up and locker room monitoring. **\*Please note\* --- While adult volunteers are allowed on deck to volunteer, siblings and other non--- swimmers are not permitted on deck at any time!**

Additional volunteer opportunities include timers for ISI meets, helping at team events and helping at the end of season party. GILLS will be hosting a mandatory informational Parent Meeting. Once the meet schedule is posted on the website you will be allowed to sign up through the Events tab under Job Sign Up.

Volunteer jobs requiring additional training are USA Swimming Officials. Please contact a board member if you are interested.

## Fundraising commitment

If deemed necessary GILLS may conduct one mandatory fundraiser per season. The money you raise helps keep our fees to a minimum as well as enabling GILLS to purchase equipment.

## **GILLS Team Sponsorship**

Advertising your business on the GILLS website is available (click on 'advertise here' on main page of website for more information)

- - \$99/yr Plus Ad Plan
- - \$499/yr Premier Ad Plan
- - \$999/yr Premier+ Ad Plan

Please email Aimee Schatz at [PR@gills-swim.org](mailto:PR@gills-swim.org) if you are interested in fulfilling your fundraising commitment by purchasing an Ad Plan on the GILLS website.

## **Team Gear and Apparel**

### **PRACTICE**

Each swimmer will need a practice swimsuit (no two piece suits for girls), a swim cap, and at least one pair of goggles. All swimmers should bring a water bottle to practice in order to stay hydrated and a swim bag to carry their equipment in. Please see the list of equipment needed for each group.

### **EQUIPMENT NEEDED**

**ALL GROUPS: Kickboard, Fins, & Pull Buoy COPPER & GOLD GROUPS: Kickboard, Fins, Hand Paddles, Pull Buoy & Snorkel**

### **MEETS**

Each swimmer will need: **GILLS team suit**, swim cap (mandatory for girls), two pairs of goggles (in case one pair breaks), 2 towels.

**PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILDS THINGS!! SUITS, GOGGLES, and CAPS get mixed up easily!!**

## **General Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

All swimmers and families are to enter and exit the pool through the main entrance (the South doors). Swimmers are expected to be on deck, ready to swim by the time stated on the calendar, otherwise they are considered tardy.

Parents for safety reasons, children should not be unattended in any other areas inside or outside of the school. Please make sure your child enters the pool area and leaves the pool area in your care. The coaches are not responsible for the child when he or she leaves the pool area.

Parents are expected to be on time when dropping off and picking up their child. Swimmers should arrive and depart within 15 minutes of their practice time. For later practice, you must pick up your children by 9:15pm at the latest.

## **Swim Meets**

Most swim meets run in the following order: Medley relay, freestyle, breaststroke, individual medley, backstroke, butterfly, & freestyle relay. Events are broken down in the following age groups 6 & under, 8 & under, 9---10, 11---12 & 13---14. Boys and girls swim separately. In most meets swimmers can compete in a maximum of 2 individual events and 2 relays.

**Sign up for meets online:** Login to your GILLS account. View meets under the MEETS & EVENTS tab. Select Attend/Decline to sign up your swimmer(s). Swimmers are encouraged to swim in dual meets. Registration for dual swim meets will close 4 days prior to the meet. If you do not Attend/Decline by the registration deadline your swimmer will be unable to participate in the meet.

### **Cannot Make a Swim Meet**

In the event your swimmer is sick or cannot make the swim meet do one of the following things:

- 1.) If the online registration window is open please login to your account on change your swimmers status to decline.
- 2.) If the registration window is closed. **Call/Text Coach Shawn at (312) 622-1836.**

**LATE for Swim Meet: If you are running late for a swim meet call or text Coach Shawn at (312) 622-1836.**

If swimmers do not arrive to the swim meets on time they will be scratched and will not be able to participate. If they are scheduled to swim in a relay and they do not notify the coach that they are late or unable to attend, the other swimmers in the relay will not be able to swim either.

### **Locker Room Policy**

Parents are not to use the facilities in the locker rooms. Public bathrooms for parents are located in the hallways east of the pool. We discourage parents from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a same sex parent. If this is necessary, parents should let the coach or administrator know about this in advance. Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. The USA Swimming Athlete Protection Policies prohibit the use of such devices in the locker room or other changing area:

**305.3** *Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.*

### **Types of Meets**

**Intrasquad Meet---** Swimmers from our own team compete against one another in a mock meet at Andrew. This meet helps new swimmers and their parents become familiar with the workings of a dual meet. *Coaches determine which swimmers compete in the specific events.* There are no additional costs to swim in the Intrasquad Meet.

**Dual Meet –** Swimmers from our team compete against swimmers from another team. *Coaches determine which swimmers compete in the specific events.* These meets can be home (Andrew Pool) or away (opposing team's pool). Swimmers are allowed to swim in a maximum of 2 individual events and 2 relays per meet. There are no additional costs to swim in Dual Meets.

**Conference Meet** --- GILLS is in the South Suburban Swim Conference. At the end of the season, each division (Red, Blue and Gold) holds a championship meet. The team's overall finish determines which division the team will compete in next season. *Coaches determine which swimmers will compete based on best swim times during the season.* Please expect to pay an admission fee.

**ISI Meet** (Illinois Swimming, Inc. Meet) – During the season, GILLS will participate in large weekend meets hosted by swim clubs in Illinois and surrounding states. *Parents can sign up their swimmer for specific events of their choice. Parents may want to discuss their child's participation in these meets with the coaches.* Additional fees are charged per event. Meet packets will be available for review in order to determine date, time, session, and event sign up. Please read the meet packet for information on location of meet, day/session times, costs, events, number of events allowed to swim, and other pertinent information. These meets will be listed under the Meets & Events tab on the website.

### **Regional/State Meets**

Swimmers can qualify to compete in Regional and State Championship meets. There are required times for participation in these meets. Time standards and explanations can be found on our website under the Time Standards tab.

### **Swim Meet Ribbons**

Swimmers will receive ribbons for dual meets unless they are DQed. If in the event a swimmer is DQed, no ribbon is given. Ribbons are given for 1st-6th place in individual events. Relay ribbons are given for 1st-4th place with the exception of a DQ. If any member of your relay team gets DQed, no one in that relay gets a ribbon. That is why it is imperative the swimmer communicates with the coaches after each event for feedback. These will be available about 2 weeks after each meet; and can be picked up in the swim office. Each swimmer will have a folder with their name where their ribbon(s) will be placed. ISI Meet ribbons may or may not be handed out at the discretion of the host team.

### **Concessions**

A concession stand will be available at all GILLS Dual Meets at home. Parent volunteers will be needed to run concessions. Sign---up will be available online prior to each event.

### **USA Swimming and Illinois Swimming, Inc. Registration**

All GILLS swimmers are required to register with USA Swimming (USAS) and Illinois Swimming, Inc (ISI). This is covered by your \$77 USAS/ISI registration and insurance fee. The USAS and ISI memberships are valid September thru September.

As a USAS member, your swimmer's achieved times are tracked on the USAS website. You can create an account on the website to view their times. This is the official database that tracks all swimmers times and are the times used to determine qualification for championship meets.

Sanctioned Meets are meets that are approved through Illinois Swimming, Inc. These include dual meets, ISI meets, and championship meets.

## **GILLS SWIMMER CODE OF CONDUCT**

Swimmers are what makes the Greater Illinois Swimmers (GILLS) so great. But in order to establish a team with high standards, our athletes must excel not only in the water but in life. GILLS seeks to establish guidelines in order for the organization to run successfully and to assist in setting boundaries for each swimmer. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) and athletes to understand and abide by the code, and of the coaches to fairly enforce the Swimmer Code of Conduct. Also, as privileged guests of Andrew High School, we must conduct ourselves appropriately or risk losing this privilege.

1. Swimmers are expected to behave and treat all coaches and other swimmers with respect during practice and swim meets. A swimmer that is disruptive to other swimmers can be dismissed from practice or the swim meet.
2. Swimmers are encouraged to participate in weekly practices. Failure to participate in regular practices may disqualify them from the next swim meet.
3. Swimmers are expected to arrive at practice and meets on time with all of their necessary equipment. They will be expected to stay for the duration of the practice/meet unless the coach has been given prior notification.
4. Swimmers are required to clean up after themselves at both practices and meets including the pool deck and locker room areas. After practices and meets swimmers should be able to gather their belongings and leave on time.
5. Swimmers should report any improper behaviors in the lockers rooms to the coaching staff or a board member.
6. Swimmers must notify the coaching staff in advance if they cannot attend a swim meet. Failure to notify the coaching staff of your child's absence may disqualify them from the next swim meet.
7. Swimmers must notify the coaching staff if they will be late for a swim meet or if they need to leave early from a swim meet. Failure to notify a coach may disqualify them from the next meet. If a swimmer arrives late for a meet, it will be at the Coach's discretion whether the swimmer will compete.
8. Swimmers are required to remain in the team's assigned area during meets. Older team members are expected to be good examples for the younger swimmers.
9. Swimmers must conduct themselves appropriately while in the locker rooms. The school has a strict policy of **NO** CELL PHONE USE in locker rooms! Violators will be subject to dismissal from the team.
10. Swimmers must attend a mandatory swimmers meeting each season-date to be determined.

**The following is a list of behaviors that will NOT be tolerated and maybe subject to immediate termination or disciplinary action(s):**

1. Theft, disrespect, destruction, or degradation of people, places and or object;
2. Bullying (See Bullying action Plan);
3. Abusive language;
4. Drug use other than those prescribed by one's physician;
5. Physical contact with another swimmer, coach or parent with the intent of harm or abuse;
6. Alcohol or tobacco use;
7. Sexual misconduct and or harassment;
8. Damage to Andrew High School Facility or any other facility, or equipment; and
9. Bringing any type of weapon to swim practice, meets, etc. A weapon is defined as a gun, knife, etc.

GILLS observes a "3 strike" rule. Any swimmer who violates the Code of Conduct policy 3 times will be dismissed from the GILLS Swim Team. The coaches and board members of the GILLS Swim Team reserve the right to dismiss any swimmer at any time if the swimmer's actions are serious in nature. There will be NO REFUNDS to any swimmer dismissed from the GILLS Swim Team.

**GILLS PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

The following Code of Conduct is for parents and spectators to abide by at every practice, meet, and/or team function.

Parents will abide by the following:

1. Will maintain self-control at all times and will understand my role of being part of the GILLS Team.
2. Will show support for not only my child, but for all GILLS swimmers and the team itself, and will demonstrate good sportsmanship.
3. Will not coach or instruct the team or any athlete at a practice or meet (from the stands or any other area).
4. Will not interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
5. Will not criticize, name-call, discredit or use abusive language or gestures directed towards the GILLS organization, coaches, officials, the board, and/or any participating athlete or fellow parent.
6. During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials will be directed to a member of our coaching staff, NOT the official. (This should be done at a pre-planned time with coaching staff, not during meet)

7. Will email or phone the coach for a parent/coach meeting if coaches are unavailable to speak before or after practices.
8. Will assist my swimmer(s) to understand the importance of following the GILLS Swimmer Code of Conduct.

## **GILLS BULLYING POLICY**

USA Swimming clubs are required to have an action plan to address bullying. Great Illinois Swimmers (GILLS): Action plan to address bullying

**PURPOSE:** Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at GILLS and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The GILLS Swim Club is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or athlete/mentor.

### **Objectives of the Club's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:**

1. To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all board members, coaches, parents and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all parents, swimmers and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
4. To inform parents and swimmers how to report bullying.
5. To spread the word that GILLS takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

**WHAT IS BULLYING?** The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7.

Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- I. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- II. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- III. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- IV. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this

section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).

**REPORTING PROCEDURE:** An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

**HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING:** If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, we STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene. If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED using the following approach:

**FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED:**

1. First, we get the facts.
  - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
  - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
  - c. Listen without blaming.
  - d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
  - e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.
2. Then, we determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.
  - a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
  - b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
    - What is the history between the kids involved?
    - Have there been past conflicts?
    - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the

targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.

- Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
- d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

### **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED:**

#### 3. Support the kids who are being bullied

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input.

It may help to:

- i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
- ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

#### 4. Address bullying behavior

- a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied.

For example:

- i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
- ii. Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- d. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
  - i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
  - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.

- iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
  - e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
    - i. Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
    - ii. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
  - f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good
5. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.
- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
  - b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
  - c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start."
  - d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
  - e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

Source: [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov) – a federal government website managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

*USA Swimming clubs are now required to implement an electronic communication policy. The policy must be reviewed with and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults affiliated with the club.*

### **PURPOSE**

The GILLS 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 GILLS acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, we also realize 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 appropriate or acceptable in a face to face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable 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?"

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

*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, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

*Professional:* All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of GILLS. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

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.

## **FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES**

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.

GILLS has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can "friend" for information and updates on team related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

## **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.

## **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.

## **REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

[www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect)

## **TEAM TRAVEL POLICY for GREAT ILLINOIS SWIMMERS - GILLS**

*The following is a model travel policy, provided to assist USA Swimming member clubs in developing their own policies. Club and LSC travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.*

**Purpose:** Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete to athlete misconduct. During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar.

Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by the club or LSC.

### **Section 1: USA Swimming Required Policies**

Club and LSC travel policies must include these policies. These items are Code of Conduct stipulations in the USA Swimming Rulebook.

1. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club. (305.5.D)
  2. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming administered criminal background check. (305.5.B)
  3. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (305.5.A)
  4. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (305.5C) **Section 2: Policy**
1. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.

2. Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
3. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
4. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
5. To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
6. A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
7. Team or LSC officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
8. Team or LSC officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
9. Curfews shall be established by the team or LSC staff each day of the trip.
10. Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
11. The directions and decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
12. Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
13. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
14. The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate club or LSC leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.

### **Section 3: Other Policies**

The following, organized by topic, is a bullet point list of additional travel policies.

#### *Safety*

1. Additional guidelines to be established as needed by the coaches;
2. Supervised team room provided for relaxation and recreation;
3. Respect the privacy of each other;

4. Only use hotel rooms with interior entrances; and
5. Must wear seat belts and remain seated in vehicles;

### *Behavior*

1. Be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and others in hotel;
2. Be prompt and on time;
3. Develop cell phone usage guidelines;
4. Develop computer use guidelines including social media;
5. Respect travel vehicles;
6. Establish travel dress code;
7. Use appropriate behavior in public facilities;
8. Establish two different curfews – in own rooms and lights out;
9. Must stay in assigned hotel room; and 10. Needs and wellbeing of the team come first.

### *Financial*

1. No room service without permission;
2. Swimmers responsible for all incidental charges;
3. Swimmers responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel;
4. Must participate in contracted group meals; and
5. Communicate travel reimbursement information and policies.

### *General*

1. Establish fair trip eligibility requirements;
2. Establish age guidelines for travel trips;
3. Parent(s) responsible for getting swimmer(s) to stated departure point; and
4. Requirements for families to attend "Team Travel Meets."

### **Code of Conduct / Honor Code**

All team members, team staff, and parents of minors are apprised in writing of this Code of Conduct and the attached USA Swimming Code of Conduct. A signature on this document constitutes unconditional agreement to comply with the stipulations of both documents.

1. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
2. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
3. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
4. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
5. No "deck changes" are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.

6. Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet related functions, they are representing both themselves and the GILLS. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of GILLS.
7. Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:
  - i. Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete's expense;
  - ii. Disqualification from one or more events, or all events of competition;
  - iii. Disqualification from future team travel meets;
  - iv. Financial penalties;
  - v. Dismissal from the team; and/or
  - vi. Proceedings for a LSC or USA Swimming National Board of Review.
8. Swimmers are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities and events.
9. Swimmers are to refrain from use of inappropriate language.

[www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect)

\*GILLS Board of Directors has the authority and reserves the right to update or modify this handbook at any point. Notification will be made if updates or modifications occur.