

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

HIGHLAND PARK AQUATICS CLUB

PURPOSE

Highland Park Aquatics Club (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:

1. Drugs or alcohol use
2. Sexually oriented conversation
3. Sexually explicit language
4. Sexual activity
5. The adult’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, personal problems
6. 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 **Transparent, Accessible and Professional (T.A.P.)**.

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 the Club. 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, INSTAGRAM, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

The Club 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.

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.

TWITTER

The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

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. Athletes or their parents can expect an answer to any emails within 24 hours, typically during the hours of 12-5 pm daily.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Being a part of Highland Park Aquatics Club (HPAC), I understand that HPAC may use photographs of swimmers for appropriate purposes, including but not limited to: still photography, videotape, electronic and print publications, the team website, and team social media to promote, advertise, and/or celebrate the club. We reserve the right to use photography from paid and volunteer photographers as well as photography businesses. HPAC will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform us immediately.

I authorize Highland Park Aquatics Club and all affiliated paid and volunteer Photographers and Photography businesses to use photographs of my child(ren) communicating information directly related to team activities.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND/OR PHOTOGRAPHY

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 **and/or photographed**.

Any electronic communications between swimmers must also fall within these same guidelines, and with the guidelines set forth within the Club’s Anti-Bullying Policy. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the team.