



The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) has five parts. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the Social Media and Electronic Communications section of the policy.

Social Media and Electronic Communications

Private electronic communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete present an opportunity for the Applicable Adult to initiate grooming behaviors that may lead to abuse. Just as one-on-one interactions between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must be observable and interruptible, any communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete should be open, transparent. Additionally, electronic communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must involve the minor's legal guardian and take place during reasonable hours.

Before MAAPP, USA Swimming rules required every team establish a social media/electronic communication policy. This section of MAAPP replaces that requirement. Members will note that this section of the MAAPP is similar to the USA Swimming's previous Model Policy on Electronic Communication and published Best Practice Guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can our team still use our Electronic Communication Policy instead of this one?

A: No, you cannot use the Electronic Communication Policy that you have had to this point. Every team is required to adopt this policy, including the Social Media and Electronic Communications section, in full.

Q: Are minor athletes still allowed to follow their favorite celebrity swimmer on a fan page?

A: Yes, under the policy, a minor athlete can follow or friend a celebrity swimmers fan page.

Q: What do I do about my pre-existing social media connections with minor athletes?

A: Applicable Adults are required to discontinue existing social media connections with minor athletes.

Q: When does a minor athlete's legal guardian need to be copied on an electronic communication to a minor athlete?

A: An Applicable Adult must not send a one-on-one communication to a minor athlete. A minor athlete's legal guardian must be copied on an electronic communication sent by an Applicable Adult to the minor athlete.

Q: How should an Applicable Adult communicate with the team or a group of minor athletes?

A: If an Applicable Adult sends a message to a group of minor athletes or an entire team, another adult must be copied on the communication. It is not required that each minor athlete's legal guardian be copied on an electronic communication sent by an Applicable Adult to a group of minor athletes or an entire team.

Q: What would be an emergency circumstance?

A: An emergency circumstance should be an isolated incident that is an objectively reasonable emergency in order to justify an electronic communication sent outside of 8:00a.m. – 8:00p.m. An example would be to notify the team that early morning practice is cancelled at the last minute.

Q: Is a telephone call considered to be an electronic communication?

A: A telephone call is similar to a one-on-one interaction. Therefore, a telephone call between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must be observable and interruptible by another adult. A duration of a telephone call made during an emergency circumstance must be consistent with the type of emergency.

Q: Can a team change the hours during which electronic communications can be sent to a time period other than 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.?

A: No.

Q: Can an LSC send communications to a committee including an athlete representative outside of 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.?

A: No. LSC staff and board members are Applicable Adults. Electronic communications sent to minor athletes must only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.



The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) has five parts. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the Travel: Local and Team section of the policy.

Travel: Local and Team

Local and team travel occur frequently in our sport and presents a series of unique risk factors. The goal of this policy is to minimize the opportunity for an Applicable Adult to abuse a minor athlete during local and team travel.

Before MAAPP, USA Swimming rules required every team establish a travel policy. This section of MAAPP replaces that requirement. Members will note that this section of the MAAPP is similar to USA Swimming's previous Model Policy on Team Travel and published Best Practice Guidelines.

A legal guardian must consent in writing, in advance, for every instance in which their minor athlete travels alone with an Applicable Adult. Please note, it is the responsibility of the team to maintain parent consent forms covered in this section.

Teams often try to save money during team travel. For example, it has become a common practice for teams to rent a house which may be more cost effective than paying for hotel rooms. That practice is no longer permissible.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can Applicable Adults ride alone in a vehicle with a minor athlete?

A: Applicable Adults must not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must always have at least two minor athletes or another adult in the vehicle, unless agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's legal guardian.

Q: How is "overnight lodging location" in Section II(b) defined?

A: Overnight lodging location refers to a non-traditional lodging situation that teams might use. This includes, but is not limited to, non-traditional arrangements such as VRBO rentals, Air BNBs, campers, trailers, etc. All the travel rules apply to these locations as well.

Q: Can an adult athlete share a hotel or sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete?

A: Yes, an adult athlete can share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with a minor athlete only if the minor athlete's legal guardian provides written permission in advance and for each instance for the minor to share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with said adult athlete. No other Applicable Adult can share a hotel or sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete.

UPDATED QUESTIONS (June 13, 2019)

Q: Can families traveling to a competition share an Air BNB or VRBO?

A: Yes. If the travel is not "organized or supervised by the team" then families can make their own arrangements for accommodations. Under no circumstance can a coach share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with an athlete.

Q: What is different between a VRBO or Air BNB and a hotel? Especially if everyone has their own rooms, and bathroom.

A: A temporary residence rental such as a VRBO or an AirBNB provides opportunity for more personal and casual encounters between Applicable Adults and minor athletes than a hotel. This sort of casual setting provides an environment where boundaries can be crossed.