

# Nu Wave Swim Club Policy on Electronic Communication

## PURPOSE

Nu Wave Swim 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 and current Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).

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; or
- 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.**

**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.

### **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.

#### **FROM MAAPP:**

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

##### **I. Content**

All electronic communication from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

##### **II. Open and Transparent**

Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), the minor athlete's legal guardian must be copied. If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult must

Adopted: June 23, 2019 Last Reviewed on November 27, 2019

copy the minor athlete's legal guardian on any electronic communication response to the minor athlete.

When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult must copy another adult.

### III. Requests to Discontinue

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by Nu Wave Swim Club, LSC or by an Applicable Adult subject to this Policy. The organization must abide by any such request that the minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, or included in any social media post, absent emergency circumstances.

### IV. Hours

Electronic communications must only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless emergency circumstances exist, or during competition travel.

### V. Prohibited Electronic Communication

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes and such Applicable Adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from minor athletes, unless the Applicable Adult has a fan page, or the contact is deemed as celebrity contact as opposed to regular contact. Existing social media connections with minor athletes must be discontinued. Minor athletes may "friend" Nu Wave Swim Club and/or LSC's official page.

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes must not send private, instant or direct messages to a minor athlete through social media platforms