

# Emmaus Aquatic Club Electronic Communication Policy



## **PURPOSE**

The **Emmaus Aquatic Club** (“EMAC,” the “Club”) recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our athletes use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, EMAC also realizes the associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

## **GENERAL CONTENT**

All communications between athletes, coaches, board members and/or parents 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 (USAS) Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

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; inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures; and/or
- an adult’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems;

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

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use is: “Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?” or “Is this something one would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of one’s 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 athletes is Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

*Transparent:* All electronic communication should be transparent. Communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and/or expectations.

*Accessible:* All electronic communication 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 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 communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely the method of communication will be appropriate.

Every interaction on a social media platform should be assumed to be archived digitally for perpetuity. Athletes, coaches, board members, and parents accept responsibility for any and all interaction to which they are party. Governed by assumptions in the EMAC Codes of Conduct, in all social media interactions everyone associated with EMAC are assumed to be representatives of EMAC and therefore will avoid any interaction which may negatively reflect on self or the organization. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action under Article VI .

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Club has official social media profiles that athletes and parents can “follow” for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches may have personal social media profiles, but they are not permitted to initiate a connection with an athlete member of the Club, nor should the coach accept one and in that instance should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to direct, instant, or private message through social media.

Coaches are encouraged to set their profiles to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing that 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 to the CEO that their child(ren) not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.