

		Staff Code of Conduct
Employee Standard Operating Procedure		
Effective Date: 07/01/2013	Revision: A	Document # SOP-HR-011

Purpose:

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to clarify the policy for staff and patron/athlete interactions.

This policy was adapted from the USA Swimming Athlete Protection Policies & Rules.

Scope:

This procedure applies to all staff and all situations where staff interact with patrons, including electronic communication.

Definitions:

Swimming Experiences: This includes, but is not limited to: swim practice, swim lessons, fitness classes and all other programming.

Athlete: This includes, but is not limited to: staff, swim team members, swim lesson students, patron, and/or fitness class participants, both minors and adults.

Policy:

1. Parents should be encouraged to appropriately support their children’s swimming experience.
2. All swimming practices, lessons and classes must be open to observation by parents.
3. Two-deep Leadership: One staff member and at least one other adult who is not in the water should be present at all practices/classes and other activities whenever at least one athlete is present.
4. Open and Observable Environment: An open and observable environment must be maintained for all interactions between staff and athletes. Private, or one-on-one situations, must be avoided unless they are open and observable. Common sense should be used to move a meeting to an open and observable location if the meeting inadvertently begins in private.
5. Staff must not invite or have an athlete to their home without the permission of the athlete’s parents (or legal guardians) and there is another staff member in attendance.

6. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments must be maintained.
7. Athletes must not ride in a staff member's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete's, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
8. 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 and over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 and 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).
9. When only one athlete and one staff travel to a competition, at the competition the staff and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
10. Communications between staff and athletes must not include any topic or language that is sexual or inappropriate in nature.
11. Staff must respect the privacy of athletes in situations such as changing of clothes, showering, etc. Staff should protect their own privacy in similar situations.
12. Relationships of a peer-to-peer nature with any athletes must be avoided. For example, coaches should avoid sharing their own personal problems with athletes.
13. Staff and other non-athlete adult members must avoid horseplay and roughhousing with athletes.
14. When staff touches an athlete as part of instruction, staff must do so in direct view of others and inform the athlete of what he/she is doing prior to the initial contact. Touching athletes must be minimized outside the boundaries of what is considered normal instruction. Appropriate interaction would include high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs and handshakes.
15. Staff must not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for athletes outside normal Aquatic Center programs and activities.
16. Staff must not engage in sexual intimacies with former athlete for at least two years after the cessation or termination of professional services. Because sexual intimacies with a former athlete are frequently harmful to the athlete, and because such intimacies undermine public confidence in the Aquatic Center and thereby deter the public's use of programming, staff should not engage in sexual intimacies with former athletes even after a two-year interval except in the most unusual circumstances. The staff who engages in such activity after the two years following cessation or termination of the staff-athlete relationship bears the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation, in light of all relevant factors, including:

- a) The amount of time that has passed since the coach-athlete relationship terminated;
- b) The circumstances of termination;
- c) The athlete's personal history;
- d) The athlete's current mental status;
- e) The likelihood of adverse impact on the athlete and others; and
- f) Any statements or actions made by the staff during the course of the athlete staff relationship suggesting or inviting the possibility of a post-termination sexual or romantic relationship with the athlete or staff.
- g) Both the athlete and the staff must be 18 years of age or older.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

17. All communications between staff and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team or class activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

18. For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:
 - a) drugs or alcohol use;
 - b) sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
 - c) the adult's personal life , social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
 - d) inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures

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

20. Whether one is an athlete, staff member, 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?"

21. With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with an athlete is Transparent, Accessible and Professional.
 - a) **Transparent:** All electronic communication between staff and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.
 - b) **Accessible:** All electronic communication between staff and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Aquatic Centers records. Whenever possible, include other staff or a parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

- c) Professional: All electronic communication between staff and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Aquatic Center. 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 criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

- 22. Staff may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete join their personal page as a “friend.” Staff must not accept any “friend” request from an athlete. In addition, staff must remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Staff and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through Facebook or other social media. Staff and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.
- 23. The Aquatic Center has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters.
- 24. Staff are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.
- 25. The Aquatic Center has an official Twitter page that staff, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Staff are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow staff on Twitter. Staff and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.
- 26. Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between Staff and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to Aquatic Center activities.
- 27. Athletes and Staff 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.
- 28. The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by staff through any form of electronic communication.
- 29. Staff not following the spirit of this procedure will be disciplined according to policy P-HR-018 Employee Discipline.
- 30. For more employee conduct information, see policy P-HR-016 Employee Conduct
- 31. For information about Bullying, see Patron SOP SOP-P-009 Bullying

Referenced Documents:

Policy P-HR-016, Employee Conduct
Policy P-HR-018, Employee Discipline
Patron SOP SOP-P-009 Bullying

Records:

None