



Electronic Communication Policy

PURPOSE

Sailfish Aquatics (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 Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy.

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
- 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 **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

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. When communicating with an athlete, the athlete’s parent must be copied as part of the communication. When communicating with a group of athletes, another



adult must be copied.

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

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/instant message” each other through social media accounts.

The Club has an official Facebook/Twitter/Instagram 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.

TEXTING/EMAIL

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 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.

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. 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 that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.