

## Electronic Communication Policy of Raleigh Swimming Association

### Purpose

Raleigh Swimming Association (RSA) 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 RSA acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, our club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors, and when minors who are members of RSA use these methods of communication amongst each other.

### 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.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- Drug 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; and
- 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.

In the interest of transparency, coaches are strongly encouraged to copy the athlete's parent/guardian on any electronic communication that occurs.

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, communication with swimmers should be 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 RSA'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 RSA. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

#### Facebook and similar sites

RSA 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" each other through any social media site or application. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or any other instant message method.

RSA has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can follow 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.

#### Twitter and Instagram

RSA has official Twitter and Instagram pages that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter or Instagram. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter or Instagram. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter or Instagram.

#### Snapchat and other social media applications

RSA does not have an official Snapchat or any other social media applications/sites. If RSA coaches are users of Snapchat or any other social media application, they may not follow or message athletes. Athletes may not follow or message coaches on Snapchat or any other social media application.

#### Texting

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7 am until 9 pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. Coaches are strongly encouraged to include the athlete's parent/guardian on all text message correspondence. Coaches may choose not to share their phone number with athletes, parents or other team members in the interest of privacy and professionalism.

Coaches are strongly encouraged to communicate with athletes and parents via email instead of text message unless it is a true emergency situation.

#### Email

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7 am and 9 pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member should 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.

#### Athlete-to-Athlete Communication

Although RSA cannot monitor all electronic communication or social media activity by and between athlete members, RSA athletes should keep in mind that anything they post or share is representative of themselves, their families and RSA. Any social media or electronic communications by RSA athletes that violates the team Code of Conduct is subject to disciplinary action by the coaching staff and/or board of directors. Athletes should also be aware of any facility rules regarding cell phone use or electronic communication, for example, cell phone use is prohibited in the locker rooms.