



[www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect) MODEL POLICY: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION USA Swimming clubs are now required to implement an electronic communication policy. The policy must be reviewed with and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults affiliated with the club. The following is a model policy for appropriate electronic communication between adults and athletes and is provided to assist USA Swimming member clubs with developing their own policies. If a club chooses not to, or is unable to, create a written electronic communication policy, the following model policy will become the default electronic communication policy for that club. Once a customized set of policies is developed and approved by your club, the default policy will no longer apply. Each member club and each LSC has the responsibility for approval and implementation of its own electronic communication policy.

### **Electronic Communication Policy of AQUASTORM**

**PURPOSE** AQUASTORM (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. 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; 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.

[www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect) 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?”

### **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 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 Club Name, 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" Club Name 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.