

USA Swimming Code of Conduct Agreement

Electronic Communication Policy of the Belmont Aquatic Team

PURPOSE

The Belmont Aquatic Team (BAT) 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 Team acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Team also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when individuals use these methods to communicate.

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:

1. drugs or alcohol use;
2. sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
3. the adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
4. inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.
5. Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Transparent: All electronic 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 Team'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 the Team. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM & SIMILAR SITES

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Team 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 Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

The Team has an official Facebook 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.

TWITTER

If the Team has an official Twitter page, coaches, athletes and parents may follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

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

Action Plan of the Belmont Aquatic Team to Address Bullying

PURPOSE

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Belmont Aquatic Team (BAT) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Team is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or athlete/mentor.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines and prohibits bullying in code 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

1. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
2. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
4. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
5. materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).

REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

1. Talk to their parents;
2. Talk to a Team Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
3. Write a letter or email to the Team Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
4. Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate Team leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

BAT'S PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, coaches are to address it immediately using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. Coaches may get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when intervening.

In possible bullying situations, coaches will first, get the facts by:

1. Keeping all the involved children separate.
2. Getting the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
3. Listening without blaming,
4. Not calling the act "bullying" (They need to understand what happened before labeling it).
5. Collecting all available information, but acknowledging that it may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying.

To determine if the event/action was bullying coaches will review the USA Swimming definition of bullying and consider the following questions:

1. What is the history between the kids involved?
2. Have there been past conflicts?
3. Is there a power imbalance? (A power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.)
4. Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
5. Coaches will remember that it may not matter "who started it." Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.

In supporting a bullied child the coaches will:

1. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and offer to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input.
2. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make them feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. They are not at fault and should not be singled out. (Coaches might consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone or switching practice groups, but the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.)

Coaches will maintain open communication between the Team and parents, outline the steps that will be taken and explain how bullying will be addressed going forward.

In supporting a bullying child, the coaches will:

1. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
2. Explain to the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
3. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons they bullied. (For example: some children bully to fit in as there may be some insecurity involved. Some kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.)
4. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation so that they see how their actions affect others. (Possible amends: write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied; do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Team, or for others in the community; clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.)
5. Coaches will avoid a zero tolerance or “three strikes, you’re out” strategy as it doesn’t reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
6. Coaches will not advise conflict resolution and peer mediation. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.

Coaches will follow-up after the bullying issue is resolved and continue to find ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people.

Coaches will support bystanders who witness bullying by providing the following suggestions:

- 1 Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- 2 Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or Team board member;
- 3 Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. “Let’s go, practice is about to start.”
- 4 Set a good example by not bullying others.
- 5 Don’t give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

Team Travel Policy for the Belmont Aquatic Team**PURPOSE**

Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete-to-athlete misconduct. During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar.

Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by the Team or LSC.

- 1 Team travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the Team. (305.5.D)
- 2 Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. (305.5.B)
- 3 Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (305.5.A)
- 4 When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (305.5C)
- 5 Team or LSC officials will carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- 6 Team or LSC officials will obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
- 7 A copy of the Team's Travel Code of Conduct will be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- 8 The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.

Depending on the situation, additional travel policies may include:

- 1 During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments will be maintained.
- 2 Athletes will not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
- 3 During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and of a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & 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). (When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" Team to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.)
- 4 To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
- 5 Curfews shall be established by the team or LSC staff each day of the trip.

- 6 Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
- 7 Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- 8 When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
- 9 The Head Coach or their designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate team or LSC leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.

Additional guidelines will be established as needed by the coaches;
Travel Code of Conduct (to be signed by parents, athletes, and coach)

- 1 Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- 2 Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- 3 The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- 4 The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- 5 No "deck changes" are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.
- 6 Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and the Belmont Aquatic Team. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the Team.
- 7 Swimmers are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities and events.
- 8 Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.

Failure to comply with the Travel Code of Conduct as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:

- 1 Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete's expense;
- 2 Disqualification from one or more events, or all events of competition;
- 3 Disqualification from future team travel meets;
- 4 Financial penalties;
- 5 Dismissal from the team; and/or
- 6 Proceedings for a LSC or USA Swimming National Board of Review.

I acknowledge that I have read and accept the policies of the Belmont Aquatic Team regarding Electronic Media, Bullying and Travel.