

All Phoenix Swimming Members (athletes, parents, coaches, and meet staff),

We are writing to make you aware of some very important enhancements to the SafeSport policy within USA Swimming. Congress has mandated that the US Center for SafeSport reduce the risk for abuse in youth sports. In response the US Center for SafeSport has created the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) and USA Swimming is required to adopt it. Below you will find 4 important links.

1. Jot Form, which serves as mandatory written acknowledgment that you have received information about MAAPP. This form MUST be filled out by all Phoenix Swimming families by June 23rd to keep your membership in good standing.
<https://form.jotform.com/91714047668161>
2. Letter to all USA Swimming members from the USA Swimming Board of Directors Chair and the USA Swimming President/CEO
<https://www.usaswimming.org/articles-landing-page/2019/05/08/maapp-memberletter>
3. Landing page for important information related to MAAPP (If you review the Education Documents on this page, you can see updated FAQ as of June 14th. I encourage you to read the documents in completion.)
<https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/minor-athlete-abuseprevention-policy#sts=MAAPP%20CommunicationLetter%20to%20Membership>
4. Link to the MAAPP policy
<https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/safesportdocuments/maapp/usaswimmingmaapp.pdf>

Some of the highlights of this policy as we currently understand it that have a direct impact on our club:

- Communication between swimmers and coaches cannot be one on one. There must be a parent on text or email communications between minor swimmers and coaches or a second coach on communications between 18+ swimmers and coaches.
- Communication between swimmers and coaches can only happen between the hours of 8 am and 8 pm (unless emergency circumstances exist or during competition travel.
- It is mandatory that all 18+ athletes take an online course by June 23rd called Athlete Protection Training (APT). The course can be found here:
<https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/safe-sport/learn>

Please take some time to read through the information in the links, complete and submit the acknowledgement form, and if you are an athlete 18 years or older, complete the APT test. Please direct all questions and concerns to phxswimming@gmail.com. We have included some answers to questions we have received below:

- The biggest concern was that athlete members who are 18 or are turning 18 will no longer be able to communicate with their younger swimming friends and teammates. Under the policy, they are allowed to keep communicating with their teammates through electronic communications and social media as long as they are not deemed

- to be in a position of power.
- With travel, we are still planning on doing team travel trips. In doing so, we will need to have parents complete various permission slips prior to each trip that will give us specific information to drive your athlete, to place your minor athlete in a room with a teammate who is 18 (so if I have a 17 year old in a room with an 18 year old, I will need permission from that parent), etc.
 - The swimmers on the team are still permitted to follow the official team social media accounts.
 - We are still permitted to have one-on-one conversations with our athletes. They will need to be held in open, observable, and uninterrupted environments. If we need to have a one-on-one meeting with a coach, you will need to have a legal guardian present for 17 and younger swimmers and another coach present for athletes 18 years and older.
 - All texts and emails between your minor swimmer and a coach must have a parent or legal guardian included. Group messages are permitted as long as there is more than one athlete included on the communication. If your swimmer is 18 and older, they just need to have an additional coach included on the message (Lori-phxswimming@gmail.com, Matt-mw288098@gmail.com). Coaches and swimmers are only permitted to communicate electronically between the hours of 8am-8pm except when necessary on team travel trips.

These were the most immediate questions from the swimmers. I am willing to address others as they come in. I honestly do not believe this will change much about our team since there is nothing I would email or text your swimmers that I would not say to the parents as well. While I am very much in support of policies that protect the athletes, my concern is that this does inhibit our ability to make your swimmers more independent as they get older. Taking ownership over their swimming is a big part of our program and is crucial to their progress and development within the sport. My hope is that when parents are included on communication between coaches and swimmers, that they will allow their swimmer to talk honestly and openly without too much judgment or prying. I do not want to lose our relationships with our swimmers or the preparation/ life lessons we are trying to instill in our athletes since I see these principles as reasons why Phoenix Swimming is special. Please take the time to review the policy and if you have questions, please direct them to phxswimming@gmail.com.

Thanks,

Lori

Head Coach

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