

## **PORTSMOUTH SWIM TEAM, INC.**

### **ATHLETE SAFETY GUIDELINES**

One of the most important things we can do as a swim team is to provide a safe environment for our athletes to compete, train, and socialize. Safety is everyone's business and should be everyone's concern.

#### **Use of Communication Devices**

Portsmouth Swim is committed to protecting its athletes, coaches and others from the hazards that can be caused by inappropriate use of a cellular telephone, PDA, Treo, Blackberry or other communication device for telephone calls, text messaging, reading/sending email and/or accessing the Internet (collectively referred to as "Communication Devices"). You are encouraged to exercise discretion and care while utilizing any Communication Device and to avoid placing yourself and others at risk.

You may not carry or use Communication Devices in any locker room. Your Communication Device must be kept in your locker or backpack while you are in the locker room. Communication Devices may be used on the pool deck, in the lobby area or outside the pool, if permitted by specific pool rules.

The use of camera, audio or video options on your Communication Device is prohibited in the locker room.

To prevent distractions during practices and meets, ring tones must be switched off or to a "vibrate" mode.

#### **The Buddy System**

You are encouraged to use the buddy system in the locker room for use of the bathroom, showering and changing. Be mindful of others in the locker room that are not familiar to you or who appear to be lingering unnecessarily. Immediately inform your coach or any other adult associated with the team if you are uncomfortable with anyone's behavior in the locker room.

#### **Photos/Videotaping**

Videotaping by the media/press, family, or for promotional usage, etc. is only permitted from the side and far end of the pool during the start of an event or during subsequent relay take-offs. (Back shots of athletes starting off the blocks are not permitted.)

#### **Interviews**

Minor athletes may not be interviewed one-on-one without, at the very least, a parent present.

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**COACHES' MEETING AGENDA**

At the coach's meeting prior to the start of each season (LC & SC):

- Review team rules and regulations with respect to athlete safety.
- Document this review
- Take attendance at this meeting by having a sign-in sheet, which you should keep in your files, with a copy of the agenda attached.
- Distribute the Athlete Safety Guidelines
- Have each coach date and sign an Acknowledgment Form, indicating that they have received their own copy of the rules and regulations and have read them and are familiar with them.
- Maintain these signed sheets with your agenda and attendance sheet.
- Remember to review the Safety Rules and Regulations with any new coaches who are added at any time during the season, and have any such new coach sign the Acknowledgment Form.

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**COACHES' SAFETY GUIDELINES**

- \* Do not meet with athlete(s) behind closed doors. When having one-on-one sessions with athletes for pep talks, guidance or goal-setting, meet in a visible and removed section of the pool or office, *i.e.*, top of the bleachers, far end of the pool, etc.
- \* Remain visible at all times when coaching athletes or speaking with athletes.
- \* Coaches should NEVER enter a supply room, storage area, equipment room or office with a single athlete. Allow older athletes to remove and store equipment, etc. together as a team project at the conclusion of practice- coach should remain on deck and supervise.
- \* At the end of practice, assign a parent to wait (could be with the coach) for all parents to come and pick-up their children- do not be alone with just one athlete for a parent who is late.
- \* Keep all phone numbers for athletes and parents in your cell phone at all times. Call a parent who is late and establish rules and regulations for dismissal and pick-up.
- \* Texting is not the best form of communication with athletes and families, and coaches should not be texting with athletes as a consistent form of communication.
- \* Head coaches should use emails as a primary and best form of communication, and ask that the head coach/program administrator ALWAYS be cc'd on any email which is sent out to any athlete for ANY reason. Failure to cc the head coach/program administrator on any email sent to an athlete may result in immediate dismissal. Prior to sending a substantive email to an athlete or to the team, such emails must be sent to the head coach for review and/or correction to make certain that language and intent are appropriate and effective.
- \* Transportation: NEVER drive an athlete to/from practice or to a competition or associated event. If cooperative transportation to an event or competition is unavoidable, make certain there is a second adult, preferably a parent, in the car with the coach at all times.
- \* NEVER be alone with an athlete in their home, in a hotel room, or at any other time when on competitive trips or events. Chaperones should also act in tandem and coaches should enlist the assistance of a chaperone to observe an interaction with an athlete should such interaction be necessary while on a trip or at an event.
- \* Coaches should go through the locker rooms with another adult.

- \* Do not lock doors to the pool, do not forbid parents to enter the pool, and do not block the windows or viewing areas to the pool. The pool, associated offices and any area where athletes will be should be visible to parents and administrators at all times. Encouraging parents to speak with the coach prior to the start of practice or waiting until the end of practice is always advisable.
- \* When working with athletes on technical corrections, in and out of the pool, make certain to let the athlete know that you need to touch them to show them proper position etc., and ASK permission to touch them. Honor their decision, and do the best that you can to continue coaching them if they say no. Do not make an athlete uncomfortable if they say no; just continue on with the session.
- \* Enforce having athletes wear a t-shirt, shorts and flip flops when walking around the pool, waiting for events, doing dry-land, lounging about at any time, etc. When athletes receive awards, insist that they wear shorts and shirts; team apparel and promotes the success of our program.

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**MEDIA GUIDELINES**

Media/press must be approved by the applicable Meet Director prior to stepping on the pool deck. The Meet Director must verify the identity and association of the media/press, and verify the intent of the article, photos or video, such as where they will be used, and the purpose of the accompanying article. You should ask to see the article and or photos PRIOR to publication or release and reserve the right to refuse release/use of such photos or articles if they are unflattering to the athlete, the program, or the facility.

Once approved, media/press can film from the allowable sides of the pool from the spectator area, where they can be properly monitored.

Minor athletes may not be interviewed one-on-one without, at the very least, a parent present. If you feel that the press is attempting to interview parents, coaches and athletes in an attempt to cast a shadow on the athlete, parent, coach, facility/management or sport, let the interviewee know your thoughts.

Insist that photos used for publicity or by the media are of athletes in action. Do not allow photos or video close-ups of body parts; be taken at unflattering angles or to emphasize anything other than the athleticism of the sport and skill of the athlete.