PACK ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

PURPOSE:

PACK recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our swimmers use these as their primary method of communication. While PACK acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, PACK also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors. PACK follows the guidelines set forth by USA Swimming.

CONTENT:

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional (including word choice, tone, grammar, and subject) in nature and only for the purpose of communicating about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct and Athlete Protection Policy. All communication should be transparent- clear and direct and free of hidden meaning, innuendo or expectations. Any references (direct or indirect) to alcohol, drugs, sex or any discussion of the athlete or adult’s personal life are strictly forbidden. This includes pictures or images.

In addition, any communication needs to be accessible. An athlete’s parent or legal guardian must be copied or included in all communications with minor athletes. If a minor athlete contacts a coach or other adult participant privately first, the parent or guardian must be included in the response. All communication between a minor athlete and an adult participant is considered a matter of record. If a coach communicates to the entire team or multiple athletes, another adult participant must be included.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES:

Coaches and other adult participants may have personal sites or pages but they may not “friend” or “follow” athletes and they cannot allow an athlete to “friend” or “follow” them. No private messaging, instant or otherwise, through any social media site is permitted. This includes Twitter. Coaches should set their pages to private.

PACK may have official social media sites that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team related matters. USA Swimming’s official page is also available.

TEXTING AND EMAILING:

USA Swimming allows electronic communications between 5 am and 9 pm. PACK further restricts hours to between 8 am and 8 pm except in an emergency or as necessary during team related travel. Email and texting are permitted subject to USA Swimming guidelines and those stated above. In general, communication is done through the athlete’s parent or legal guardian but if a circumstance exists that an athlete would be contacted directly, a parent or legal guardian must be included. Another adult participant needs to be included if a communication is sent to a group of athletes.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE:

The parent or legal guardian may request in writing that their child not be contacted by adult participants of PACK or USA Swimming through any form of electronic communication.

EXCEPTIONS:

Exceptions to these policies include emergency situations, when a dual relationship between and athlete and adult participant exists (for example, the coach is an athlete’s parent) and when a close in age exception applies (for example, an athlete who turns 18 is not expected to cease communication with their friends who are not yet 18). See the USA Swimming website for further information.

USA SWIMMING’S ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY CAN BE FOUND ON THE USA SWIMMING WEBSITE UNDER SAFE SPORT, MAAPP 2.0.