



Electronic Communication Policy of the Westerville Aquatic Club.

Purpose: USA Swimming member clubs are required to have an electronic communication policy for coaches and non-athlete members to follow.

WAC 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 we acknowledge the value of these methods of communication, WAC also realized that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors. Similarly, these guidelines serve to direct the action of athletes when using any of these forms of communication between teammates. WAC recognizes there are basic standards and best practices for electronic communication for all individuals associated with the club. The ability of coaches and non-athlete members to adhere to the required policy relies, in part, on the ability of athletes to respect the boundaries established for healthy electronic communication with the team. Athletes should remember that swimming for the club is a privilege, and they are expected to always portray themselves, their team, and their community in a positive manner.

All communication 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 communication must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

All communications including coach to coach, coach to adult member, coach to athlete, adult member to athlete (excluding parent to child relationship), or athlete to athlete, will not contain or relate to any of the following:

- 1) Drugs or alcohol use
- 2) Sexually oriented conversation, sexually explicit language, or sexual activity
- 3) The recipient's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems
- 4) Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- 5) Derogatory language; including sexist, racist, homophobic, obscene, or profane material of any kind
- 6) Words or descriptions meant to degrade, demean, or attack any person, team, or organization

Additionally,

- 1) Athletes will not use social media to contact his/her coach(es) and will instead post appropriate material to the club's profile.
- 2) All communication between athletes and coaches will be related to the activities of the team and should, whenever possible, be limited to in-person communication during team practices or events.

- 3) The parents or guardians of all WAC athletes may request in writing that their child NOT be contact by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

Best Practices:

Electronic communication with athletes must be Transparent, Accessible, and Professional.

Transparent: Clear and direct, and free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and expectations.

Accessible: Considered a matter of WAC record. Whenever possible, another coach or parent should be included in the communication.

Professional: Conducted professionally as a representative of the club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

Things to remember:

Texting:

- 1) Text messages and photos can be saved or screen-shot. Once the message is transmitted, the sender does not have control.
- 2) Texting between athletes and coaches is not okay unless it is an emergency or another adult (such as a parent/guardian or another coach) is copied on the text.
- 3) It is typically more effective to discuss an issue in person.

Social Media:

- 1) Once you post something online, it is public and permanent — even if you delete it.
- 2) Many employers, college admissions officers, and athletic recruiters review social networking sites as part of their evaluation of an applicant. Carefully consider how others may perceive the information and content that you share about yourself.
- 3) Never post your email address, home address, phone number, or other personal information, as it could lead to unwanted attention, stalking, or identity theft.