

# BELLINGHAM BAY SWIM TEAM ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

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## PURPOSE

The Bellingham Bay Swim Team (the “Club”) 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 Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

## 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 only. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

With respect to electronic communications, communications with swimmers shall be **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.

***Transparent:*** All electronic communication between coaches, board members, or other nonathlete adult members of USA Swimming and athletes should be transparent. Communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

***Accessible:*** All electronic communication between coaches, board members, or other non athlete adult members of USA Swimming and athletes shall include another coach or parent/guardian in the communication for record keeping and accessibility.

***Professional:*** All electronic communication between coaches, board members, or other non-athlete adult members of USA Swimming and an athlete should be 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.

## FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

BBST has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches may not “friend” any athlete member of BBST to their personal page. 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.

#### **TWITTER**

The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can 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 minor athletes during the hours from 8am until 8pm, and shall include a parent or guardian included in the message. 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 8am and 8pm, and shall copy a parent or guardian on each message.

#### **REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing to the Board President or Team Administrator that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

### **Athlete Electronic Communication Best Practices of the Bellingham Bay Swim Team**

#### **Purpose**

USA Swimming member clubs are required to have an electronic communication policy for coaches and non-athlete members to follow. Similarly, athletes should be made aware that there are certain standards 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 portray themselves, their team, and their community in a positive manner at all times.

### **Expectations**

The club holds the following expectations of athletes:

- Athletes will not use derogatory language, including sexist, racist, homophobic, obscene, or profane material of any kind.
- Athletes will not use social media to degrade, demean, or attack any person, team, or organization.
- Athletes will not use social media to contact his/her coach(es) and will instead post appropriate material to the club's profile.
- Athletes will not call or text their coach, except in an emergency or if a parent/guardian is included in the communication.
- 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.

### **Things to remember: Texting**

Text messages and photos can be saved or screen-shot. Once the message is transmitted, the sender does not have control.

Texting between athletes and coaches is not okay unless it is an emergency situation or another adult (such as a parent/guardian or another coach) is copied on the text.  It is typically more effective to discuss an issue in person.

### **Things to remember: Social Media**

Once you post something online, it is public and permanent--even if you delete it.

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.

Never post your email address, home address, phone number, or other personal information, as it could lead to unwanted attention, stalking, or identity theft.

[www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect)