



Electronic Communication Policy DART Swimming

PURPOSE

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

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- Drugs or alcohol use;
- Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- The adult’s personal life , social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: “Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?” or “Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient’s parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?”



With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent.

- a. If an Adult Participant communicates one-on-one with a Minor Athlete via Electronic Communications, the Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian must be copied or included. If a Minor Athlete communicates to the Adult Participant privately first, said Adult Participant must copy or include the Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian on any Electronic Communication response to the Minor Athlete. Adult Participants must only use Electronic Communication platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication.
- b. The following exceptions apply to Section II(a):
 - i. In emergency circumstances.
 - ii. When a Dual Relationship exists; and/or
 - iii. When the Close-In-Age Exception applies.
- c. When an Adult Participant communicates electronically to the entire team or any number of Minor Athletes on the team, said Adult Participant must copy another Adult Participant.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach 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.

Hours

Electronic communications must only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. local time for the location of the Minor Athlete, unless emergency circumstances exist, or during competition travel.

Prohibited Electronic Communication

- a. Adult Participants are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with Minor Athletes and such Adult Participants are not permitted to accept new personal page



- requests on social media platforms from Minor Athletes, unless the Adult Participant has a fan page, or the contact is deemed as celebrity contact as opposed to regular contact. Existing social media connections with Minor Athletes must be discontinued. Minor Athletes may “friend”, “like” or “follow” the Organization’s official page.
- b. Adult Participants must not send private, instant or direct messages to a Minor Athlete through social media platforms.
 - c. The following exceptions apply
 - i. When a Dual Relationship exists; and/or
 - ii. When the Close-In-Age Exception applies.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. 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.

The Club may have an official Facebook or (other social media outlet) page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

TWITTER

The Club may have 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 athletes during the hours from 8am until 8pm, except for in the case of an emergency. Senior level athletes participating in morning workouts may text outside of these hours but between



the hours of 5am-9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities and the above guidelines should be followed

EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 8am and 8pm, with the above guidelines should be followed

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Parents/legal guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by the Organization or by an Adult Participant subject to this Policy. The Organization must abide by any such request that the Minor Athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, or included in any social media post, absent emergency circumstances.