



# SIENNA PLANTATION AQUATICS

*Developing Champions for Life*

## Electronic Communications Policy

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Sienna Plantation Aquatics (SPA) 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 SPA acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, SPA also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

### **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

Establish policy for Coach/Adult/Athlete electronic communications

### **GENERAL CONTENT**

All communications between a coach or other adult member 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
- Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- The coach's or adult member's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems
- 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.

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. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

**Accessible:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility or send the email from the parents account.

**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.

If your communication meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely the method of communication with athlete(s) will be appropriate.

## **FACEBOOK, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES**

SPA Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of SPA 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 has an official Facebook 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, INSTAGRAM, SNAPCHAT, AND SIMILAR SOCIAL MEDIA**

SPA has an official team social media presence that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on any personal social media accounts. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on social media. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through personal social media accounts.

SPA Coaches are prohibited from "following" any athlete on any of these or similar applications.

## **TEXTING**

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. 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 7am and 9pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied, unless email is sent from parent's email account.

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

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

## **REPORTING**

An athlete who feels that a member of the SPA coaching staff has inappropriately contacted him or her via electronic communications is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents
- Talk to the Head Coach or Board Member
- Notify team Board Member in writing

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible.

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Spa Board President