



# COAST GUARD BLUE DOLPHINS SWIM TEAM

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## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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*CGBD recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. While CGBD acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, we also recognize the need to establish boundaries, as these are unregulated exchanges. Additionally, communications are critical for our success as an organization requiring guidance on the best methods of interaction with the team and its members.*

### GENERAL CONTENT

1. Coaches often use electronic methods, such as text messages or email, for communicating information about team activities.
  - All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature.
  - Coaches will always be professional, respectful, and use good judgment when communicating with athletes.
  - The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.
2. With respect to electronic communications, CGBD asks that all electronic communication between swimmers and adults be **T**ransparent, **R**esponsive, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.
  - **Transparent:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Communication should be clear and direct, as well as free of hidden meanings, innuendos, and expectations.
  - **Responsive:** All board members and staff endeavor to respond to emails and text messages within 24 hours. Please be mindful that expectations about emailing and texting responses differ and the practice schedule or office hours must be considered. If in need of an urgent answer, making a phone call is best. The 24-hour guideline holds true for the work week, not the weekends, especially for meet weekends.
  - **Accessible:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes will be considered a matter of record. Whenever possible, include more than one coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.
  - **Professional:** All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally. This includes word choices and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

### FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches with *personal* Facebook (or other social media site) pages are not permitted to have any athlete member of CGBD join their personal page as a "friend."

- Athletes should be reminded that this is not allowed.
- Coaches will not use "private messages" or "instant message" with swimmers through Facebook, chat or other IM method.

## **USE OF CELL PHONES & CAMERAS:**

1. Under no circumstances will cameras or cell phones be allowed in locker rooms or behind the starting blocks.
2. No cell phones will be allowed out of swim bags during practice without coach's permission to make or accept a call (this includes dryland activities).
3. Cell phones are NOT permitted on deck at swim meets. Cell phone use during a meet session will result in a potential penalty of phone confiscation.

## **ATTENTION ATHLETES:**

1. The electronic age in which we live causes every member of the CGBD to be aware of the far-reaching effects of data posted to web sites, sent via email, and other electronic mediums. This includes photos posted to web sites, text messages between teammates, or information that is on blog sites, and messages posted to sites like Twitter, Facebook, etc.
2. No team member's future should be jeopardized due to a careless or thoughtless action. We must recognize that the words and photos that we post on-line are there for everyone to read and view, as well as know the consequences of public communication.
3. Before posting something on Facebook, text messaging, or tweeting, we would like each CGBD member to ask themselves the following questions:
  - Does this have anything to do with CGBD? Did it occur at a CGBD event or facility? Is CGBD represented in anyway (i.e. am I wearing a CGBD T-shirt)?
  - Would I mind if my coach, parents, or club president saw this?
  - Is this how I, the club, my teammates, family, or coaches should be represented?
  - Am I being respectful to anyone involved or affected?
4. If you cannot answer "**yes**" to any of the above questions, ***Don't Do It!***

## **CONSEQUENCES:**

1. Violation of these rules regarding the use of social media and cell phones, depending on the severity, may result in a minimum of a verbal warning to a disciplinary meeting between the violator, parents and the coach.
2. Consequences can range from suspension from practice to the member being excluded from the next meet and/or travel trip, but ultimately will be decided by the coaching staff and reviewed by the board.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

1. For questions that are swimming related, ask your child's coach.

2. For questions that have to do with billing, fees, contracts, fundraising status, etc., contact the Team Administrator.
3. For questions related to volunteer hours or signing up for jobs online, contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Team Administrator
4. For questions about equipment, ask your child's coach.
5. New families are assigned a Parent Mentor. This person is a CGBD parent who has had children in the program for a few years and has volunteered to help our new families "learn the ropes". A parent mentor is a great place to start when you have a question. However, in some cases, your parent mentor might refer you to someone else for an answer.

### **METHODS OF COMMUNICATION:**

1. **Website:** The CGBD website, <http://www.cgbdswimming.org>, has a wealth of information posted. Information about meets, meet registration info, job sign ups, volunteer opportunities and more are available there. You need to have a sign-in for the website (self-created during registration when you joined CGBD).
2. **Email:** Announcements about meet/job sign ups, billing, and timely news will all arrive via email. The Blue Dolphins News is a weekly email publication that shares timely news and successes with the entire team. Additionally, your child's coach will keep you informed of specific group information via email. Please keep a current email address on file with the office.
3. **Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram:** Check social media for timely notices about weather related changes, exciting news about our swimmers, and meet updates.

### **TEAM WEBSITE:**

1. You can sign your child up for a meet.
2. You can track your child's times for various races on the website. Sign-in and go to "My Account" and then "My Meet Results". You can see all of their times, or search on a particular thing - like all backstroke, or just the top times in each race.
3. You can see your current invoice, as well as past payment information. Sign-in and go to "My Account," then "My Invoice/Payment".
4. You can see your current volunteer hours. Sign-in and go to "My Account," then "My Invoice/Payment". Click on the "Service Hours" tab at the top.
5. You can update contact information. Sign in and go to "My Account," then "My Account" again.
6. You can learn more about your child's coach and find his/her email. Go to "About Us" then "Meet the Coaches".

7. You can see what the various time standards are for your child's age group. Go to "Top Times" and then "Time Standards".
8. You can see top times of your child and other children their age - go to "Top Times" and then "Best Times".
9. You can access links for social media, apparel purchases, and sponsor information

### **CGBD SWIM PARENTS:**

1. Let the coach do the coaching.
2. Be enthusiastic, positive and supportive.
3. Demonstrate good sportsmanship and set a good example.
4. Attend parent meetings as needed and maintain open communication with the coach.
5. Support fundraising activities.
6. Complete your service hour requirements.

### **PRACTICE INFORMATION:**

1. Parents are welcome at practices. Plan to sit in the bleachers or bring your own chair. Do not sit behind the starting blocks or at the opposite end.
2. Practice changes (for example, around holidays, school vacations, during exams, etc.) will be announced in the Blue Dolphins News as well as on the team calendar.
3. Practice can rotate between the pools due to maintenance needs, pool closures, or unscheduled facility changes.
4. The coach's job during practice is to coach practice. Do not try to have a conversation about your swimmer during practice time.
  - Even after your child's practice, the coach may be getting ready for another practice group and may not have time to talk.
  - The best way to get quality time with him or her is to make contact via email to schedule a time to talk.
5. Try not to distract your child during practice. The swimmers need to have their attention on the coach.
6. Swimmers must have something to drink during practice, i.e., preferably water. Sports drink are appropriate in moderation. It is best for them to have a bottle at the end of the lane as they won't be able to get out of the pool for a drink except at times specified by the coach.

7. Ensure that your child has the fuel he or she needs by giving him/her a snack before practice.
8. Please note that CGBD and the coaches are not responsible for your child at any time other than their scheduled practice time. They are not responsible for your child outside of the pool area after practice times. If children are outside, they are not being supervised.
9. Work with your child to make sure he/she has all the equipment needed for the practice.
10. CGBD does not follow a particular inclement weather policy.
  - Any weather-related closures will be posted on the website and social media.
  - Even if practices are going on, please use your best judgment to determine whether your child can safely attend practice.
11. Each swimmer progresses at his or her own level. Practice group advancement happens only in the fall (September) and spring (April).
  - We base practice group advancement on age alone. Moving to the next practice level is not a requirement. Responsibility and maturity are factors for parents to consider for practice group advancement of their swimmer.
  - Swimmers wishing to be advanced to the next practice level will need to fill out an application and submit it to their coach.