

## APPENDIX D

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

#### PURPOSE

Mako Aquatics (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 member of Mako Aquatics 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 Safe Sport. Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional (refer to specific communication expectations as outlined in the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy and Mako Aquatics Codes of Conduct).

All electronic communication from adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

- Open and Transparent - Absent emergency circumstances, if an adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), the minor athlete's legal guardian must be copied. If a minor athlete communicates to the adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said adult must copy the minor athlete's legal guardian on any electronic communication response to the minor athlete.
- When an adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said adult must copy another adult. When possible use the TU platform (including OnDeck app) to communicate.

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by the club or by an adult subject to MAAPP. The club 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.

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

Prohibited Electronic Communication - Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes and such adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from minor athletes, unless the adult 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" the club and/or LSC's official page.

Adults with authority over minor athletes must not send private, instant or direct messages to a minor athlete through social media platforms.

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If electronic communication is initiated by athlete; responses should include another coach or parent/guardian and follow communication guidelines outlined above.

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. 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.

**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 your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

### **Social Media**

Mako Aquatics encourages members/followers to post comments/tweet on the social media platforms however, they must not comment on or disclose any information which is confidential or private. Additionally, posts should not contain inappropriate language or images; bullying will not be tolerated and such posts are subject to removal by the administrator.

The following will apply to the Mako Aquatics Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram accounts:

- These are tools of communication from Mako Aquatics to the world about our swim team. Be positive at all times!
- Posts may not happen every day but will happen at least a few times a week and will be communication tools to announce last minute practice changes or cancellations, onsite meet updates, etc.
- There will be a link to the Mako Aquatics Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram accounts on our website and in the signature of coach and board member emails.

### **Facebook**

The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “like” for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are required to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information and “friend” requests from athletes will not be accepted and coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through any social media platform. “Friend” requests from parents may be accepted at the discretion of a coach.

Members may post appropriate swimming related photographs and video in accordance with all Mako Aquatics Policies and subject to review and removal by administrator if determined to be in violation.

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### **Twitter**

The Club has an official Twitter account that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches and athletes are not to follow each other individually on Twitter and are not permitted to “direct message” each other through any social media platform. Finally, coaches cannot retweet an athlete’s message post.

### **Instagram**

The Club has an official Instagram account that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and pictures on team-related matters. Coaches and athletes are not to follow each other individually on Instagram and are not permitted to “direct message” each other through any social media platform. Finally, coaches cannot retweet an athlete’s message post

### **E-Mail**

Coaches and Board Members are accessible via e-mail. Email will often be an effective way to communicate or make appointments. Athletes, coaches or other adult members of Mako Aquatics may use email to communicate; when communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied. Refer to the “[Coaches](#)” page on our website for Coach and Board email addresses.