



ASL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

The Athlete Electronic Communication Best Practices of the Aiken-Augusta Swim League are as follows.

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.

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. 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 public 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 SITES:

Coaches may have personal social media pages/accounts, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend" or "follower". 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" or "direct" message each other via social media or other instant messaging method.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

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, email, or text their coach, except in an emergency or if a parent/guardian is included in the communication.

- ☐ Texting between athletes and coaches is, in any case, only permitted between the hours of 7 am to 9pm.
- ☐ Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7 am and 9 pm. When communicating with an athlete via email, a parent, another coach, or a Board member must also be copied.
- ☐ All communication between athletes and coaches will only 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.

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.