

BULLDOG SWIMMING - Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy

PURPOSE

Bulldog Swimming (the "Club") recognizes the prevalence of social media and electronic communication in today's World. Many of our parents, swimmers, coaches, and volunteers use these means as their primary methods 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 applicable adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

GENERAL CONTENT

All communications between an applicable adult and an athlete must be professional and to communicate information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Rule Book, specifically with

- ARTICLE 304 – Code of Conduct. 90
- ARTICLE 305 – Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies 91
- ARTICLE 306 – Sexual Misconduct Reporting Requirements. 92

And The U.S.A. Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) Social Media and Electronic Communications.

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

- drug or alcohol use; · sexually-oriented conversation, sexually explicit language, and sexual activity;
- the adult's personal life, social activities, and events, relationship or family issues or own 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 use in communication is:

- "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?"
- "Is this something I would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of my communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?"
- "Is this something I would be comfortable with if it were on the front page of my local newspaper?"

Concerning electronic communications, electronic communications with swimmers should be T ransparent, Accessible, and Professional.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should be not only clear and direct but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the conversation 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, 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.

ZOOM, FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

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

Private electronic communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete present an opportunity for the Applicable Adult to initiate grooming behaviors that may lead to abuse. Just as one-on-one interactions between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must be observable and interruptible, any communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete should be open, transparent. Additionally, electronic communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must involve the minor's legal guardian and take place during reasonable hours.

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

Coaches and athletes may NOT follow each other on Twitter/Instagram. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter/Instagram. If the Club has an official Facebook page, athletes and their parents can "friend" the Club for information and updates on team-related matters.

Bulldog Swimming has an official Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter page. Athletes and their parents can follow the Club for information and updates on team-related matters.

Direct messaging and Texting

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, direct messaging and texting are not allowed between coaches and athletes, unless their parent ins included on the group message. Communication is limited during the hours from 5:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Texting only shall be used to communicate information directly related to team activities. To add a cell number for text messages, please follow the steps below. This MUST be done for the phone number to be activated for use through OnDeck. Ideally, an account holder will perform these steps, as it requires retrieving a verification code from their cell phone and entering it on the site.

EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied. No athlete under the age of 18 should have an email or phone information listed in their member account, due to automatic emails being sent at times that may be outside of the SAFE SPORT communication window.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

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