

## **SAA Electronic Communication Policy**

### **SAINT ANDREW'S AQUATICS ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

#### **PURPOSE**

Saint Andrew's Aquatics 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 and when minors have unrestricted access to the internet and such social applications. We challenge all of our members to use this power of communication for positive minded messaging and posts that will uplift our team to an even higher level of excellence.

#### **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. Furthermore, any communication between team members, whether they are minors, adults or a mix of both shall follow the same protocols.

For example, as with any 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;
- 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, official 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 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. Electronic communication must be done between the hours of 8am to 8pm. If an applicable adult is communicating with a minor athlete they must include the parent or guardian in that communication.

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.

As for communication between athletes a good rule of thumb is simply "Am I posting something that my parents and coaches would have no issue with?"

### **FACEBOOK, SNAPCHAT, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA**

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any minor athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend." A coach should not accept any "friend" request from a minor athlete. Once an athlete has turned 18 and has graduated from high school, coaches may "friend" these athletes provided all communication follows protocols and procedures listed in this document. Coaches may not follow athletes on social media accounts.

Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through Facebook and associated Internet apps unless it is directly in line with these communication protocols. Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

The Club has an official Facebook Page, Twitter Page and Instagram Account that athletes and their parents can "friend" for information and updates on team-related matters. We discourage the use of Snapchat as a social tool for our team simply because of the perceived notion that people can post a message temporarily and not be accountable for the content.

## **TEXTING**

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 8am until 8pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. If an applicable adult is communicating with a minor athlete they must include the parent or guardian in that communication.

## **EMAIL**

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email a parent and/or another coach should also be copied. Electronic communication must be done between the hours of 8am to 8pm. If an applicable adult is communicating with a minor athlete they must include the parent or guardian in that communication.

## **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.