



Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy

Electronic Communication

Iron Horse 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.

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
- 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 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.

FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TIK TOK, AND SIMILAR SITES Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a “friend.” 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 message” each other through Facebook.

Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

TWITTER The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter.

Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter.

Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

SPORTSYOU The Club has an official SPORTSYOU page that athletes and parents are encouraged to follow to keep up with current news, events and accomplishments

TEXTING Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes with a parent or guardian included on the text message. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

EMAIL Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 8 A.M. and 8 P.M. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

Social Media Policy

As representatives of Iron Horse Aquatics you have the responsibility to portray yourself and your team in a positive manner. If you participate in electronic communications (e.g. texting), interact on social media site(s) (e.g. Snapchat, Instagram) you are expected to avoid inappropriate and offensive behaviors. If a club representative's social media profile and its contents or other electronic communications are found to be inappropriate in accordance with the behaviors listed below, he/she will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the club's disciplinary procedures (swimmers) or the Parent Code of Conduct.

Examples of inappropriate content and offensive behavior may include, but are not limited to, depictions or presentations of the following:

- Photos, videos, and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
- Photos, videos, or comments or posts showing the personal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.
- Content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning, defamatory, or threatening toward any other individual or entity (e.g. derogatory comments regarding another, swimmer, member of staff of our club or another club)
- Any communications including posts depicting or encouraging unacceptable behaviors such as violent or illegal activities (e.g. sexual harassment, vandalism, underage drinking, or illegal drug use)

REMEMBER:

- Always present yourself in the most positive image possible. Don't do anything to embarrass yourself, your team, your family or the Club.
- The Internet is permanent. Anything posted online is available to anyone in the world. Any content you post is completely out of your control the moment it is published online, even if you limit access to your page.
- Don't post anything you wouldn't want your coaches or parents/guardians to see.
- Your social media content can and will be reviewed by both potential colleges and future employers.