



Electronic Communication Policy of the Spokane Sea Serpents

Purpose:

Here at the Spokane Sea Serpents (SSS) we recognize the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many swimmers on SSS use these means as their primary method of communication. While SSS acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, SSS 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 and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Communications are only allowed from 5 am to 9 pm. 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. www.usaswimming.org/protect

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 and similar sites:

Coaches may have personal Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the SSS join their personal page as a "friend." A coach should not accept any "friend" or "follow" request from an athlete. Coaches are not permitted

to follow athletes on Twitter/Instagram. 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 these social media sites. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through any direct messaging method.

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

Texting:

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes from 5 am to 9 pm. If athlete is a minor, another adult must be added to the text in a group chat. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. www.usaswimming.org/protect

Email:

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate from 5 am to 9 pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

Phone Calls:

Athletes and coaches may have telephone calls to communicate from 5 am to 9 pm. When communicating with an athlete through on the phone, the phone call must be observable and interruptible by another adult.

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.