

Emmaus Aquatic Club Electronic Communication Policy



PURPOSE

The **Emmaus Aquatic Club** (“EMAC,” the “Club”) recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our athletes use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, EMAC also realizes the associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

GENERAL CONTENT

All communications between athletes, coaches, board members and/or parents 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 (USAS) Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

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; inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures; and/or
- an adult’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems;

Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible, and professional.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use is: “Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?” or “Is this something one would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of one’s 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 athletes is Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

Transparent: All electronic communication should be transparent. Communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and/or expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication 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 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 communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely the method of communication will be appropriate.

Every interaction on a social media platform should be assumed to be archived digitally for perpetuity. Athletes, coaches, board members, and parents accept responsibility for any and all interaction to which they are party. Governed by assumptions in the EMAC Codes of Conduct, in all social media interactions everyone associated with EMAC are assumed to be representatives of EMAC and therefore will avoid any interaction which may negatively reflect on self or the organization. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action under Article VI .

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Club has official social media profiles that athletes and parents can “follow” for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches may have personal social media profiles, but they are not permitted to initiate a connection with an athlete member of the Club, nor should the coach accept one and in that instance should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to direct, instant, or private message through social media.

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

TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. When communicating with an athlete through text, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7am and 9pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

COMMUNICATION WITH MINORS

When EMAC staff must communicate with minor employees for work-related purposes:

- EMAC staff member must include another adult EMAC staff member (21 years of age or older) on emails/text messages

When EMAC coaches must communicate with minor athletes:

- EMAC staff member must include either parent/guardian of minor on all electronic communications (for individual communications)
- EMAC staff member must utilize TeamUnify for emails or TeamUnify Notifications for text messages (for group communications)

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing to the CEO that their child(ren) not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

STAFF and BoD COMMUNICATION

When emailing a member of the EMAC staff or member of the Board of Directors (BoD), members can expect a response within 24 hours during the business week (M-F). Beyond a direct response, acceptable responses may include, but are not limited to:

- A group/organization-wide email from any member of the Staff/BoD which addresses the item(s) in question
- An acknowledgement of receipt and specific indication of when to expect a more thorough response
- An automated out-of-office response, which Staff/BoD are expected to put up when away for an extended period
 - General notice of staff absences from practice can be expected within weekly/regular group communication

In the event that an inquiry is already answered in standing EMAC program documents, weekly emails, USAS information, etc., the response may be a link to the appropriate published document. While a timely response from staff/BoD is an appropriate expectation, repeated communication from membership that becomes disruptive may result in referral to the Governance Committee.

SCHEDULE CHANGE COMMUNICATION

Whenever possible, coaches will provide advance notice to athletes and parents of any anticipated changes related to scheduled practice/meet/event timelines.

If a schedule change occurs prior to the start of practice/meet/event:

- Within 24 hours of the scheduled practice time: Send update via email through TeamUnify AND via text through TeamUnify Notifications
- More than 24 hours in advance of the scheduled practice time: Send update via email through TeamUnify
- Included in the communication, coaches will indicate the reason(s) for the change to athletes and parents

If a schedule change occurs while practice/meet/event is in session:

- Coaches will immediately inform athletes about the change, explaining the circumstances and the anticipated revised time
- Coaches will promptly notify parents via email through TeamUnify AND via text through TeamUnify Notifications about the change and the anticipated revised time