



## Electronic Communication Policy of Orinda Aquatics



### Purpose

Orinda 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 Orinda Aquatics acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, Orinda Aquatics 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. 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:

- sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- drugs or alcohol
- 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.

**Accessible:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of Orinda Aquatics' 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 Orinda Aquatics. 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, AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches may have personal Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) pages/accounts, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of Orinda Aquatics join/follow their personal page/site/account as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any friend/follow request from an athlete and, likewise, may not follow athletes. In addition, the coach should remind athletes that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to use any type of Instant Message (IM) method to communicate. Orinda Aquatics has official Facebook and Instagram accounts that athletes and their parents can friend/follow” 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

Orinda Aquatics 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. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post.

#### TEXTING AND EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during reasonable hours with respect to training, competition, and home life. When communicating with an athlete individually - a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

#### 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.