



Olympic Cascade Aquatics LLC

Electronic Communication and Photography Policy

Purpose

The Olympic Cascade Aquatics (OCA) recognizes the widespread use of electronic communication and social media in today's society. Many of our athletes rely on these platforms as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the benefits of these tools, we also recognize the potential risks associated with electronic interactions between adults and minors.

To ensure a safe and professional environment, this policy establishes guidelines for electronic communication between coaches, athletes, parents, and other adults affiliated with the Club. This policy aligns with USA Swimming's requirements and the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

General Communication Guidelines

All electronic communications between coaches or other adults and athletes must be professional and solely for the purpose of conveying information about team activities. Communications should adhere to the following principles:

Prohibited Content:

- Discussions involving drugs or alcohol use
- Sexually oriented conversations, explicit language, or sexual activity
- Personal matters related to the adult's life, relationships, or family issues
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit images

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

When engaging in electronic communication, always consider:

- Would this be appropriate in a face-to-face conversation?
- Would I feel comfortable saying this in front of the athlete's parents, coaching staff, or the Club's board members?

T.A.P. Communication Standard

To ensure appropriateness in electronic communication, all interactions must be:

- Transparent: Messages should be clear, direct, and free of hidden meanings, innuendo, or expectations.
- Accessible: Whenever possible, another coach or parent should be included in the communication, ensuring visibility and accountability.
- Professional: The tone, grammar, and subject matter should reflect professionalism and uphold the integrity of the Club.

If a communication meets all three T.A.P. criteria, it is likely appropriate.

Social Media & Electronic Communication Guidelines

I. Content

All electronic communication between Applicable Adults and minor athletes must remain professional in nature.

II. Open and Transparent Communication

- Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult (e.g., coach, board member) needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete, the athlete's legal guardian must be copied on the message.
- If a minor athlete initiates private communication with an Applicable Adult, the adult must include the athlete's legal guardian in any response.
- When an Applicable Adult communicates electronically with the entire team, they must copy another adult to maintain transparency.

III. Requests to Discontinue Electronic Communication

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication by the Club, LSC (Local Swimming Committee), or any Applicable Adult subject to this policy. The Club will honor such requests, except in emergency situations.

IV. Communication Hours

- Electronic communications should only be sent between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. unless emergency circumstances exist, or the team is traveling for competition.

V. Prohibited Electronic Communication

- Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections (e.g., "friending" or "following") with unrelated minor athletes.
- Applicable Adults must not accept new personal social media requests from minor athletes. Exceptions may apply if the adult maintains a professional fan page or the contact is deemed a celebrity interaction rather than a personal connection.
- Existing social media connections with minor athletes must be discontinued.
- Minor athletes may "follow" or "friend" the official Club or LSC social media pages.
- Applicable Adults must not send private, instant, or direct messages to minor athletes through social media platforms.

PHOTOGRAPHY POLICIES

The publishing of a photograph of swimmer under 18 either on a notice board or in a published article or video recording (including video streaming) of swimming competitions ("publication") should only be done with parents' consent per the attached form

A parent or guardian has a right of refuse to have children photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal cannot be used as grounds for refusing entry into a swimming competition. Therefore, any photo that may go to press or on a notice board, be it through a member of the club or official photographer, should receive parental consent before publishing/displaying the photo, preferably in writing. A suggested form allowing parents to indicate refusal of consent is to follow.

In the case of open meets and other competitions where the host club has an official photographer present, all parents attending should be made aware of this in your meet information. If photos are to be published anywhere, the individual parent should be given the opportunity to withhold their consent. Their right to do so should be specifically drawn to their attention.

All photographs must observe generally accepted standards of decency in particular:

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualized image in a sporting context.

- Action shots should not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swimsuit.
- Photographs should not be taken from behind swimming blocks at the start of a race or exhibit a child climbing out of the swimming pool.
- Photographs should not be taken in locker-rooms or bathrooms.

Effective Date & Compliance

This policy has been in effect since April 2025, in alignment with USA Swimming's Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP). All athletes, parents, coaches, and other affiliated adults are required to review and agree to this policy as a condition of their participation in the Club.

For questions regarding this policy, please contact the Olympic Cascade Aquatics at ocaswimming@gmail.com.