

# The Nation's Capital Swim Club

## *Social Media & Communication Policy*



The Nation's Capital Swim Club recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Given that our athletes use social media as their primary source of communication, the Club has established a policy for acceptable use of social media and electronic communication by our athletes. This policy is essential for NCAP to provide a safe and positive environment for all its athletes, officials, parents, and coaches.

### **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY:**

Each NCAP athlete must exhibit ethical and responsible conduct in all online communications and activities and respect the rights and privacy of all other NCAP, PVS, and USA Swimming athletes, coaches, officials, and parents. NCAP prohibits cyberbullying or cyberstalking of any athlete, coach, or official by any means or method, including but not limited to the use of Facebook, Text Messaging, Instant Messaging, Twitter, E-Mail, and SnapChat. Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

### **CYBERBULLYING:**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology of any kind. Cyberbullying involves the use of electronic information and communication technologies to support deliberate or repeated harassment, intimidation and/or hostile behavior by an individual or group through personal attacks or other means that harms others, whether intentional or not.

Examples of cyberbullying includes mean text messages, emails, tweets, or posts including rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

### **CYBERSTALKING:**

Cyberstalking involves the use of electronic information and communication technologies to communicate words, images, or language directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person. Harassing, intimidating, and hostile mean any electronic communication that is perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic including race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability or disability or any other characteristic related to athletic performance that a reasonable person should know under the any of these circumstances:

1. Will have the effect of harming another athlete or has the effect of substantially interfering with another athlete's performance or opportunities.
2. Has the effect of having a negative impact on another athlete's emotional or psychological well-being.
3. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning another athlete to cause disruption in or substantial interference with practice, any swim meet, or any other NCAP related activity.

4. Has the effect of creating a hostile environment for any athlete at any USA Swimming activity or swim meet.
5. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any NCAP practice, workout, or other events or swim meets of any other club or high school.

#### REPORTING:

If cyberbullying or cyberstalking does occur, the incident will be dealt with promptly. Any athlete who is being bullied or stalked or is aware of any such bullying or stalking occurring is asked to talk to his or her parents or talk to a NCAP coach. When an athlete talks to his or her parents or a coach, the athlete should also show to the parents or the coach the electronic communication that constitutes the incident. Safeguarding the electronic communication as evidence of the bullying or stalking will help NCAP conduct its investigation of any incident. While there is no time limit for reporting bullying incidents, reporting quickly gives the Club an opportunity to address the situation immediately and stop the bullying.

Upon receiving a report of cyberbullying or cyberstalking, the Head Coach of each site will commence an investigation of the incident. The results of the investigation may include but are not limited to immediate temporary suspension from the Club or immediate permanent expulsion from the Club.

NCAP takes cyberbullying and cyberstalking seriously and all athletes and parents can be assured that NCAP will support them when an incident is reported. Any type of bullying and stalking is counterproductive to the team atmosphere and team spirit NCAP wants to maintain and foster on a daily basis. Again, NCAP is committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for all of our athletes.

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#### **ACCEPTABLE COMMUNICATION POLICY:**

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; 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, 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, or other athletes?"

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, MYSPACE, BLOGS, 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.

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 and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter.

#### TEXTING AND EMAIL

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting and emailing is allowed between coaches and athletes. This communication shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

#### 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.