

Ensworth Aquatics - Electronic Communication Policy

Purpose

Ensworth 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 the club acknowledges the value of these communication methods, the club 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/adult affiliated with the team 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. The Code of Conduct regarding athlete protection can be found via this [LINK](#)

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
- 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.

It is important that coaches, volunteers, parents, and athletes realize that electronic communication exists forever. Words can easily be read out of context and may appear to take on a different meaning than what was intended within the context of an electronic conversation. It is recommended that, before sending an electronic message, the sender consider whether the message:

- Is appropriate both in subject matter and actual content
- Can potentially be read out of context by another person(s) at a later date
- Is something the sender would be comfortable with *anyone* reading, not just the intended recipient
- Is something the sender would be comfortable saying in a face-to-face meeting and/or in front of the sender's parents, other coaches, etc.

A simple test that can be used is to determine with the electronic communication is **Transparent**, **Accessible**, and **Professional (T.A.P.)**.

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

Accessible: All electronic communications between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and a part of the club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility. Always assume that any electronic communication from coach to athlete **will be shared** with the athlete's parents/guardians.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the club. This includes word choice, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

When in doubt, **DO NOT SEND!** If communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria above then it is likely that said communication with an athlete is appropriate.

Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, and Similar Sites

All Ensworth Aquatics members should be aware that their personal social media accounts indirectly affect the club. They must always consider whether a potential post, comment, etc. is appropriate in general and whether such action could be interpreted to reflect poorly on Ensworth Aquatics. Team Members should refrain from posts, comments, pictures, etc. referencing alcohol/drug use, sexually suggestive or explicit material, illegal activity, or socially unacceptable or divisive attitudes with the understanding that, while such action can not be directly prohibited by the club, it can affect a member's standing with the club.

Ensworth Aquatics has official Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages that athlete and parents can follow for information about the club and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their personal social media pages to "private" and are prohibited from accepting any current athlete's request via social media to follow a coach's personal account.

Texting

Subject to the general guidelines above, texting between coach and athlete is permitted only between the hours of 7am and 9 pm. Texting shall only be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

Email

Subject to the general guidelines above, email between coach and athlete is permitted only between the hours of 7am and 9pm. Coaches communicating to an athlete via email must also copy either that athlete's parent or another coach.

Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communication

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request that coaches not individually contact their child through electronic communication. Any such request must be made in writing and submitted directly to the head coach.