

## **Electronic Communication Policy of CLE Splash! Swimming**

### **PURPOSE**

The CLE Splash! Swim Club (the "Club") 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 methods of communication, 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 or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information related to team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Safe Sport.

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; or
  - inappropriate or sexually explicit picture.
- 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, council 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 parent council, 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 the Club's records. Whenever possible, messages should be sent from the Team Website and email accounts and 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, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM, AND SIMILAR SITES

### FACEBOOK

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" until that athlete reaches the age of 18. A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete prior to then. In addition, the coach should remind any requesting 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.

### TWITTER

Coaches may have personal Twitter pages, but a coach should not "follow" an athlete on Twitter until that athlete reaches the age of 18. A coach should not accept any "follow" request from an athlete prior to then. In addition, the coach should remind any requesting athlete that this is not permitted.

The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. This feed will be operated by a designated Coach and the team is not permitted to follow athletes through this Twitter account.

### TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 6am until 11pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. Texts should ideally be sent from the Team Website when possible.

### EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent or another coach should also be copied. Emails should ideally be sent from the Team Website when possible.

## 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.