

## **Electronic Communication Policy of the YMCA of South Florida Swim Team**

### **Purpose**

The YMCA of South Florida Swim Team 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 YSF Swim Team acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, YSF Swim Team 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, Y-USA, and YMCA of South Florida's 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, relationships, 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, 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 YMCA of South Florida records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility. *All YMCA Staff must use their YMCA Email when communicating with program participants/members for work-related material.*

**Professional:** All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of YMCA of South Florida. 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, SNAPCHAT, 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 YSF Swim Team join their personal page/site/account as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” 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. YSF Swim Team has official social media 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 or “X”**

Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter or “X”. 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’s 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 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.