



SUSA Swim Team

Electronic Communication Policy – Version 2024-25

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT

Defines and instructs members of SUSA as to the appropriate use of electronic communications (text, email, dm, etc.). Outlines times and methods in which coaches can be contacted or contact swimmers. Emphasizes the need for all electronic communications done by SUSA representatives to be transparent, accessible and professional. Conforms to USA Swimming's MAAPP policies.

PURPOSE

SUSA 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 we acknowledge the value of these methods of communication, we also realize that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

DEFINITION & RELEVANCE

Electronic communication relates to the communication of content through use of social media, email, texting and messaging, whether it be from person to person or within a group. SUSA has a dedicated Social Media Policy to govern social networking. The Electronic Communication policy structures the use of email, texting and messaging as a method of communication specifically between athletes and adult members of SUSA.

This policy applies to all members or persons involved with SUSA, including coaches, officials, volunteers, swimmers, parents and any other adult who has regular contact with athletes in an official capacity.

We value positive interaction as a way to empower each SUSA member to be his or her best self. We strive to make our culture one in which swimmers feel safe and loved. Electronic communications should meet the standard of being:

- Positive
- Informative
- Appropriate

TEXTING

Coaches should use the online platform available through the website or OnDeck app to text swimmers and parents. Subject to the general guidelines mentioned below, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. or other times when official practices are held. Texting shall only be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

EMAIL

Best practice dictates that email communications from coach to athlete or coach to parent should be done by utilizing the online platform available through the team database (ie the website or OnDec app). Otherwise, when communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or team directors must also be copied. Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate with each other between the

hours of 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. under the above guidelines.

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.

GENERAL CONTENT

All communications between a coach or other adult members 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, board 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 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 adult members 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 adult members and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the SUSA'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 an adult member and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of SUSA. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

For further definitions and information, refer to the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy 2.0](#) (available on our website as well as at usaswimming.org).