

## TWIN CITY SWIM TEAM (TCST) ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

### PURPOSE

The YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston and Twin City 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 TCST acknowledges 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.

### GENERAL CONTENT

**Coach to Athlete Communication:** 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 Safe Sport policies. It's important to note that when a coach or athlete sends the other an electronic communication, a parent/guardian must also be on the communication.

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 **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

*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 team'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 Y's TCST. 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 the method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

**Athlete to Athlete Communication:** While we cannot monitor athlete to athlete communication, we nevertheless ask our athletes to be positive and respectful in their interactions. A person's reputation is one of their most valuable assets and our athletes need to protect themselves, their teammates, and

TCST from compromising or inappropriate postings. Swimmers should also be aware that many adults have access to athlete electronic communication. Most electronic communication is not private, so our athletes need to be highly aware of the image they are presenting to a larger audience. Please remember that”

- Photos/videos in locker rooms are prohibited
- Photos/videos in hotel rooms during team travel are prohibited
- Language in all electronic communication between teammates should be clean
- Posting offensive comments, photos or videos of teammates could be a form of bullying

#### **FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, YOUTUBE, BLOGS, SNAPCHAT, 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. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through Facebook Messenger or other IM method. Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

The TCST has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters.

#### **TEXTING**

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

#### **EMAIL**

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7am and 9pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member 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.