

HIGHLANDER AQUATICS

Electronic Communication Policy

PURPOSE

Highlander 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 Highlander Aquatics acknowledges the value of these methods, we also realize 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 and intended to communicate 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
- 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 an individual 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 (TAP):

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 Highlander Aquatics' records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that accessibility is not a question.

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

If an electronic communication meets all three of the TAP criteria, then it is likely the method of communication with athletes is appropriate.

FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, X, AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Coaches may have personal social media profiles, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of Highlander Aquatics join their personal page as a friend or follower. A coach should not accept any friend or follow request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted.

Coaches and athletes are not permitted to send private, direct, or instant messages to each other through social media sites. However, athletes and parents can follow Highlander Aquatics' official social media pages for program-related information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their personal social media profiles to private to prevent athletes from accessing a coach's personal information.

TEXTING

Subject to the guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Texting is only allowed to communicate information directly related to team activities.

EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, coach, or board member must also be copied.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

Highlander Aquatics will adhere to and enforce these policies.