

# ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA – COACHES



## IDEAL PRACTICES

### Competition Stream (High Performance Sport)

<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>ATHLETES 13-18</b>	<b>ATHLETES 19+</b>
Email	Email athletes when necessary. Stick to non-personal communication. Alert or copy parents/guardians.	Email athletes when necessary.
Text	Text athletes when necessary. Stick to non-personal communication. Alert or copy parents/guardians.	Text athletes when necessary.
Facebook	Avoid initiating contact. Accept requests if necessary. All communication must be public. Inform parents/guardians.	Avoid initiating contact. Accept requests if necessary. All communication must be public.
Instagram	Avoid initiating contact. Accept requests if necessary. All communication must be public. Inform parents/guardians.	Avoid initiating contact. Accept requests if necessary. All communication must be public.
Twitter	Avoid initiating contact. Accept requests if necessary. All communication must be public. Inform parents/guardians.	Avoid initiating contact. Accept requests if necessary. All communication must be public.
Snapchat	Do not follow athletes on Snapchat. Block follow requests.	Avoid following athletes on Snapchat.
TikTok	Do not follow athletes on TikTok. Block follow requests.	Avoid initiating contact. Accept requests if necessary. All communication must be public.
Team Communication Platforms (TeamSnap)	Add athletes when necessary. Stick to non-personal communication. Alert or copy parents/guardians.	Add athletes when necessary.

## Athletes 13-18 – Communication

Persons in Authority can communicate with athletes on Electronic Communication and Social Media, but must take several precautions when doing so. Communication should be open and observable whenever possible. If it is not possible to have open and observable communication on a particular medium, Persons in Authority should maintain a log or record of the communication and make it available to the athlete's parent/guardian whenever requested.



## ***Athletes 19+ – Communication***

At this level, communication on Electronic Communication and Social Media is permitted, but Persons in Authority should take some precautions. All communication should be Public Communication, whenever possible, and should be open and observable. However, recognizing that Persons in Authority and athletes at this level are adults, communication that is of a personal nature may occur on an Electronic Communication Medium and it is not necessary to copy a second adult. This communication should be logged and available if requested.

## ***GUIDELINES FOR PERSONS IN AUTHORITY (COACHES)***

### ***General***

- a. You must model appropriate behaviour befitting your role and status.
- b. Ensure you host an information session for parents/guardians and athletes at the beginning of your season that clearly outlines communication standards and how you will be communicating with the athletes throughout the season.
- c. Ensure all electronic and social communication is professional, unambiguous, and on-topic. Avoid emojis and unspecific language that can be interpreted in multiple ways.
- d. Be aware that you may acquire information about an athlete that imposes an obligation of disclosure on your part (such as seeing pictures of underage athletes drinking during a trip).
- e. Athletes will search for your Social Media accounts. Be prepared for how you will respond when an athlete attempts to interact with you on Social Media.
- f. Annually review and update the privacy settings on all your Social Media accounts.
- g. Consider creating separate Social Media accounts for the express purpose of communicating with Vulnerable Participants. Access should be provided to other Persons in Authority so that the accounts are open and observable.
- h. Consider monitoring or being generally aware of athletes' public Social Media behaviour to ensure compliance with all Codes of Conduct.
- i. Persons in Authority may not demand access to an athlete's private posts on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook.
- j. Avoid adding athletes to Snapchat and do not send snapchats to athletes.
- k. Do not post pictures or videos of athletes on your private Social Media accounts.
- l. Keep selection decisions and other official business off Social Media.
- m. Never misrepresent yourself by using a fake name or fake profile.



- n. Avoid association with Facebook groups, Instagram accounts, or X (formerly Twitter) feeds with explicit sexual conduct or viewpoints that might offend or compromise your relationship with an athlete.
- o. Do not delete your communication history with Vulnerable Participants in any medium.
- p. Be prepared to accept that your organization (or parents/guardians) may request logs or records of your communication history.

## ***General – Video Sessions***

- a. Video sessions should be recorded, when possible. Recording video sessions documents the interaction and serves to ‘open’ the environment.
- b. Video sessions with groups of athletes (such as a team) should be attended by at least two adults (preferably coaches). One-on-one video sessions should be either recorded with permission and/or attended by another adult and/or the athlete’s parent/guardian (when applicable). No one-on-one video session with a minor athlete should take place without a parent/guardian’s knowledge.
- c. Sessions should avoid overly personal communication and focus on training/coaching.
- d. Video sessions should be held in a professional setting. Your video stream must show a neutral background (avoid bedrooms and bathrooms).
- e. Dress professionally (to the point of over-dressing) and reduce socialization.
- f. Inform your sport organization that you intend to communicate with athletes via video session. If you intend to provide instruction or skills training, your organization may need to sanction the session and/or parents/guardians of minor athletes may need to sign an agreement or a waiver.