



Electronic Communication Policy

For membership term June 1, 2019-May 31, 2020

The U.S. All Star Federation requires that all Member Organizations adopt a clear and concise policy regarding electronic communication. It is evident that electronic communication has significant positive benefits, but we must address the availability it yields for an adult with inappropriate intentions to breach an athlete's rights of privacy and their physical and emotional safety. In order to fully protect the Athlete Members we serve, a clear policy and written expectations about using electronic communications should be available and implemented by every U.S. All Star Federation Member Organization.

This document contains the recommended policy created by the U.S. All Star Federation as the default Electronic Communication Policy for Member Organizations. Programs may choose to accept the recommended policy or create their own policy. If a program creates their own policy, it must be more restrictive than the USASF default Electronic Communication Policy outlined herein. Athletes, parents, coaches and adults associated with the Member Organization must read and accept the Policy, whether it be the organization's policy or the default policy.

Every member organization has the responsibility for the implementation of an Electronic Communication Policy.

The Electronic Communication Policy is available for our members to utilize in order to establish clear boundaries.

Electronic Communication Policy

As part of the U.S. All Star Federation's emphasis on safety and athlete protection, communications involving any participant, and especially our minor participants, should be appropriate, productive, transparent and observable.. Effective communication concerning travel, practice or competition schedules, and administrative issues among coaches, administrators, participants and their families is critical. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media, and other forms of electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings and also provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to participants. The improper use of social media, mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct. Adherence to the Electronic Communications Policy helps reduce these risks.

This policy is designed specifically for U.S. All Star Federation Members for the protection of athletes. The objective is for all members who provide a platform for adults and minors to interact must minimize any opportunity for one on one private communication and all communications must be observable.

The following are considered adults:

- 1. Any person, 18 years of age or older affiliated with the program, that has a role within the program (other than being an athlete on a Senior team) that does or could have interaction with participants.*
- 2. Any adult athletes, 18 or older and on an Open team, that is a member of the program that may train within the program or be a member of a team.*

This includes, but is not limited to, program owners, coaches, choreographers, photographers, team parents, adult age participants and employees of the member organization.

Dual Roles:

- 1. Adults that are affiliated with the program that are also the parent or relative of the minor participant serve dual roles and the parent/family role supersedes the role as owner or coach.*
- 2. Adult Athletes that are 18 as of August 31st, and on a Senior team with minor athletes may communicate digitally with minors as long as it is observable by others.*
- 3. Age parameters are still in effect for adult and minor athletes that compete on an open team.*



All electronic communication between coach and participant must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Coaches, participants and all team personnel must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication. All content between coaches and participants should be readily available to share with the public or families of the participant or coach. If the participant is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media, or similar communication must also copy or include the participant's parents.

Social Media

Social media makes it easy to share ideas and experiences. The U.S. All Star Federation recognizes, however, that social media, mobile and other electronic communications can be especially concerning where minor participants are involved. It is strongly recommended that owners, coaches and other adult members of the All Star community are not joined to or connected through their personal Facebook page or any other similar social media application. To facilitate communication, an official organization or team page may be set up and participants and parents may join (i.e., "friend", "follow" or "like") the official organization or team page and coaches can communicate to participants through that site. All electronic communication of any kind between coach and participant, including use of social media, must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team oriented motivational purposes.

Personal Social Media Sites

An adult affiliated with a program may have a personal social media page or site, with the following restrictions regarding athletes:

1. May not invite or allow an athlete to "friend" or join a personal social media site or similar online community that is not observable or open to the minor's parent as well.
2. May not "private", "instant" or "direct" message athletes.
3. Must inform parents and athletes that the above is not permitted.
4. It is recommended that adults make their pages "private" to restrict athlete access.
5. Social media accounts that allow an athlete to "friend" or "follow" or have no privacy restrictions may only have posts that are appropriate for minors to view.

Email, Text Messaging and Similar Electronic Communications

Owners, coaches, team parents and participants may use email and text messaging to communicate. All email and text message content between coaches/team parents and participants must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Emails and text messages from a coach to any minor participant that are not related team activities must include a copy to the participant's parents. Where possible, a coach should be provided and use the organization website email center (the coach's return email address will contain "@organization.com") for all communications with the team, participants, and participants' parents, where applicable.

Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communications or Imagery with Athlete

Following receipt of a written request by the parents of a minor participant that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by coaches or other adults in the program, the program, team, coaches and administrators shall immediately comply with such request without any repercussions for such request.

Any adult member may not directly message a minor athlete participant unless the minor athlete is a member of their program. All contact must be initiated to the parent, adult owner or adult coach.

Abuse and Misconduct

Social media and other means of electronic communication can be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by any employee, volunteer, independent



contractor or other participant of a U.S. All Star Federation Member Program will not be tolerated and are considered violations of U.S. All Star Federation's SafeSport Program.

Reporting infractions of U.S. All Star Federation's Electronic Communications Policy should be reported to the appropriate person as described in the Professional Responsibility Code V8.0.

A U.S. All Star Federation participant or parent of a participant who violates this Electronic Communications Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

All content must adhere to the U. S. All Star Federation Code of Conduct and the Professional Responsibility Code V8.0 regarding the protection of athletes. Non-Compliance with the Professional Responsibility Code is subject to disciplinary hearing and potential penalties.

The following four points are defined as definitively inappropriate conduct. Any communication with an athlete, either verbal or electronic may not involve or relate to any of the following:

1. Inappropriate or sexually explicit photos,
2. Sexual innuendos, sexual conversation, explicit language or sexual activity,
3. Drug or alcohol use, and/or
4. The adult should not relay information about their personal life or social life outside of the professional environment or discuss relationships or personal problems.

Regardless of the adult's role in relationship to the athlete, it is the responsibility for the adult to maintain these guiding principles when communicating electronically.

1. Does the conversation pertain to the team and team activities?
2. Is the content of the electronic conversation something that any parent, boss or other adult would agree is professional in nature?
3. Is the electronic communication accessible to anyone at anytime?
4. Can the information conveyed to the athlete be used as a permanent part of the athlete's record?

Summary: An adult must ask him/herself whether the electronic communication with the athlete is *available for all to read, understand and determine as professional in nature.*

Latitude Clause

It is understood that there may be times when a minor athlete is in distress or seeking counsel from an adult. In the case where:

1. A minor athlete reaches out to an adult
2. The adult responds to a minor athlete
3. The adult takes proactive measures to reach the minor

The adult must be vigilant in evaluating their communication and interaction. The safety of the athlete and addressing the situation that initiated the contact must be the focus of the communication. Adults who are not trained or equipped to mitigate the situation at hand are advised to seek professional assistance *and* involve the minor's guardian in resolution.