



## USAI Social Media / Electronic Communication Policy

### PURPOSE

USAI recognizes the prevalence of social media and electronic communication in today's world. While USAI acknowledges the value of these communication methods, we also realize they present risks that must be considered. While attempting to maintain opportunities to communicate team/club-related information, weather/participation-related updates and encouragement or congratulations, USAI strives to protect all of its Associates and athletes from the dangers that social media and electronic communication can bring. When direct communication is necessary between a USAI coach, employee, board member, parent, or other adult affiliated with USAI ("Associate") and an athlete, at least one other adult should also be included in the communication.

### GENERAL CONTENT

All communication between an Associate and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team or club activities. The content and intent of all electronic communication must adhere to the USAI Code of Conduct.

The guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask whether the communication is something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting or in the presence of others.

All electronic communication should be **Transparent**, **Accessible** and **Professional**.

- **Transparent**: All electronic communication between Associates and athletes should be transparent. Communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.
- **Accessible**: All electronic communication between Associates and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of USAI's records. Whenever possible, include another adult affiliated with USAI in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.
- **Professional**: All electronic communication between Associates and athletes should be conducted professionally as a representative of USAI. This



includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of USAI.

#### FACEBOOK, TWITTER, SNAPCHAT, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES

USAI strongly recommends that Associates do not permit athletes to “friend” their personal social media pages. Associates and athletes are not permitted to send private communications to each other through any form of social media. When direct communication is necessary between an Associate and an athlete, at least one other adult should also be included in the communication.

#### TEXTING, EMAIL, VIDEO CHAT, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR COMMUNICATION METHODS

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, electronic communication that fits within this category is permitted between an Associate and an athlete between the hours of 7 am and 9 pm. Such communication shall only be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team or USAI activities. When communicating with an athlete, at least one other adult affiliated with USAI must also be copied.

#### INTERACTION WITH PARENTS

Associates should also be cognizant of electronic communication with parents of athletes on their team. While not prohibited, it is recommended that Associates do not communicate with athletes’ parents except when the communication is directly related to team/club information – and even then, it is best to include at least one other adult or Associate on the communication.

#### VIOLATION OF POLICY

The use of social media or electronic communication considered to be “unbecoming of a person associated with USAI” may result in the Associate and/or athlete being suspended or removed from an activity, group, leadership position or team.