



Electronic Communication Policy of Morris Athletic Association

PURPOSE The Morris Athletic Association (the “Club”) recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our players use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes 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 in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the Morris Athletic Association 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; and • inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures • Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional. 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 players is **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches, Parents 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, parents and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club’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, parents and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. 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 your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, 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. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method. The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are encouraged to set their personal pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information. Parents should not directly comment back to coaches regarding coaching, playing time, or team demeanor. Parents should communicate with coaches personally about conflicts that potentially may arise during the season, not through methods of social media.

TWITTER Best Practice: Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.
3 Alternative Option: Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

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.

Violation of the Morris Athletic Association social media policy may result in one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

- Meeting with the MAA Board of Director, and/or the Head Coach, and/or the appropriate law enforcement (if sexual in nature)
- Requiring removing the unacceptable content
- Deactivating the social media profile.
- If a Player - Temporary suspensions from the team until the prescribed conditions are met.
- Coaches – Immediate removal from the team and association with The Club
- If a Player - Potential Suspension from the team for a prescribed period of time if the MAA board agrees this is a best option
- Coaches - Potential Indefinite suspension from the team and the Club

I agree to the aforementioned guidelines and expectations surrounding social media use and communication as it pertains to the ‘The Coach’ and the ‘The Player and/or Parent’ associated with Morris Athletic Association. I agree to abide by any, and all decisions, determined by MAA Board of Directors should a violation occur.

Signature _____ Date _____