



---

## Electronic Communication Policy

*For membership term August 1, 2018-July 31, 2019*

**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.

Member Organizations may either use their existing policy or create their own policy. If they do neither, the model policy created by the U.S. All Star Federation will become the default Electronic Communication Policy for the Member Organization. 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, and transparent. 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 following are considered adults:*

- 1. Any person, 18 years of age or older affiliated with the program, that has a role within the program that does or could have interaction with participants.*
- 2. Any adult athletes (as defined in the PRC) 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 participant and employees of the member organization.*

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. Owners, coaches and other adult members of the All Star community are prohibited from having participants 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.
2. May not “private” or “instant” 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.

## **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 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.**