



# Electronic Communications - Staff/Contractors

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## 1 Purpose

Carlile Swimming recognises how mainstream the use of electronic communication and social media has become in today's world. Many of our swimmers and staff use social media as a primary method of communication. While Carlile Swimming acknowledges the value and effectiveness of these methods of communication, Carlile Swimming also realises there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with members under 16 years of age.

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## 2 Policy

### 2.1 Content of communication

- a. All communications between a coach, staff member, consultant and swimmers/parents must be in a professional nature and used to communicate information about team/program activities. All communication between any Carlile Swimming staff member, coach and consultant and any adult or member under 16 years of age must not relate to:
  - Drugs, alcohol, weapons, crime or inappropriate behaviour.
  - The adult or members personal life, including sexual orientation, sexual experience, any words, videos or pictures of a sexual nature. Communicating sexualised images, texts or email with a member under 16 years of age via a carriage service (SMS, Email and social media) is unlawful and Carlile Swimming will report activity immediately to police.
  - Any issues or personal problems the adult is experiencing including relationships issues, social activities or mental health or welfare of the adult.
  - Any content, images, videos or media that discriminates or is bullying in nature

### 2.2 Concerns expressed by a young member

- a. Any communication where a young member expresses concerns about their personal life, relationships or family issues must always be handled professionally and in a transparent manner. Adult members are encouraged to refer members under the age of 16 years to either the Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) or Headspace (1800 650 890) if they are experiencing personal difficulties and advise the members parent/guardian immediately.

### 2.3 Appropriate use of technology

- a. Whether the member is a swimmer, coach, office bearer, technical official or a parent, the rule of thumb is always to consider:
  - Is this communication reasonable? In other words, would someone else think it is appropriate; would it be acceptable in a face-to-face meeting? Or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to someone in front of their parents, coaching staff, office bearers, or other swimmers?"
  - Do not use offensive or inappropriate language towards members and swimmers.

- Other than where relevant to swimming, do not refer to Swimmers' physical characteristics or development. Comments or discussing characteristics of intimate areas is strictly prohibited.
- Do not communicate with swimmers via personal social media websites.
- Coaches, staff members and Consultants are only allowed to use electronic communication (e.g. email, SMS) with a swimmer where necessary to inform them of training or other swimming arrangements.
- Correspondence regarding club and program matters is to be carried out by designated Coaches, Staff, Club Officers and/or Officials.

## 2.4 Transparency

- a. All communication by electronic or other means, between coaches, staff, consultants and members must be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

## 2.5 Accessibility

- a. All communication by electronic or other means, between coaches, staff, consultants and swimmers should be considered a matter of record and part of the Carlile Swimming Competitive Programs records. At all times, another coach, the competitive programs manager or a parent/guardian must be included in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

## 2.6 Professionalism

- a. All communication by electronic or other means, between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of Carlile Swimming. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a Carlile Swimming staff member.

## 2.7 Prohibited uses

- a. Coaches, staff members and consultants may have a range of personal social media accounts; however, Carlile Swimming does not allow any coach, staff member or consultant to have any swimmers or members under 16 years of age join their personal pages/accounts.
- b. Carlile Swimming does not allow any coaches, staff members, consultants or swimmers to degrade, demean or attack another person, team, club or organisation. To do so will result in immediate disciplinary action.
- c. Interactions between coaches, staff members, consultants to swimmers via Snapchat is strictly prohibited.

## 2.8 Facebook

- a. A coach, staff member or consultant should not accept any friend request from a swimmer. A Coaches role is to instruct swimmers, not be friendly or socially accepted by younger swimmers. In addition, the coach should remind swimmers in their squads that this is not permitted. Coaches and swimmers are not permitted to 'private message' each other through Facebook. Coaches and Swimmers are not permitted to 'instant message' each other through Facebook chat or other instant messaging methods.
- b. Carlile Swimming and/or the club may have an official Facebook page that swimmers and parents can 'friend' for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches, staff members and consultants are encouraged to set their pages to 'private' to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's, staff member or consultants personal information. The coach's, staff member, or consultant's personal life is not a representation of Carlile Swimming.

## 2.9 Instagram/Twitter

- a. Coaches, Staff members and Consultants are encouraged to set their Instagram accounts to 'private' to prevent athletes from accessing personal information.
- b. Carlile Swimming and/or the club may have an official Instagram account that swimmers and parents can 'friend' for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches, staff members and consultants are encouraged to set their accounts to 'private' to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's, staff member or consultants personal information. The coach's, staff member, or consultant's personal life is not a representation of Carlile Swimming.

## 2.10 Texting and WhatsApp messaging

- a. Texting and messaging is subject to the general communication guidelines detailed above. Texting is allowed between coaches, staff members, consultants and swimmers only for the purpose of communicating information directly relating to their swimming activities.
- b. It is good practice to copy/include another coach, staff member and the parent/guardian on all text and SMS communication with a swimmer/member. It is important to remember that Text messages and photos can be saved or screen-shot. Therefore once the message is transmitted the sender does not have control.

## 2.11 Email

- a. Email communication is subject to the general communication guidelines detailed above. Coaches, staff members and consultants may use email to communicate with Swimmers, Parents/Guardians and Officers about swimming related information and activities, though they must ensure it is done so through their Carlile Swimming company email account.
- b. Where the intended recipient member is a child, the parent/guardian must be copied in along with the program head coach and/or Carlile Swimming competitive programs manager. Where the member is an adult, the program head coach and/or Carlile Swimming competitive programs manager will be copied in on communication. Therefore every email to a swimmer must be received by at least two people.

## 2.12 Opting out

- a. The swimmers and their parents/guardians may request at any time that their child not be contacted by coaches, staff members and consultants through any form of electronic communication.
- b. All such requests must be respected and the head coach and competitive programs manager are to be notified.

Policy date: December 2020