



## ***Optimum Volleyball Club (OVC) Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy - USAV Recommended***

*As a member of USAV we are required to implement an electronic communication policy. The policy must be reviewed with and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults affiliated with our club.*

### ***PURPOSE***

*OVC recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our student-athletes use these means as their primary method of communication. While OVC 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 USA Volleyball Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.*

*For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication shall 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 athletes is **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.

**Transparent:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes are to 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 and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of OVC's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so there is no question regarding accessibility.

**Professional:** All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete shall be conducted professionally as a representative of OVC. This includes word choice, 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 and manner of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

#### INFORMATION REGARDING ALL PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA, BLOGS, AND OTHER SIMILAR WEBSITES

Coaches may have personal social media profiles, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of OVC join their personal account as a "friend." A coach shall not accept any "friend" request from any athlete. In addition, the coach will remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through social media. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through private online messaging tools.

OVC has official social media pages that athletes and their parents can "like" or "friend" for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their social media to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

#### TEXTING

*Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 10pm. 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. 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 communications. Immediate compliance without repercussion must be granted.*

#### **MISCONDUCT**

*Because social media and electronic communications can be used to commit misconduct (e.g. emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing), such communications by coaches, staff, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated and are considered violations of our SafeSport Handbook.*

#### **VIOLATIONS**

*Violations of the OVC's Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy should be reported to a coach, club director, club administrator, or the Regional SafeSport Contact for evaluation of complaints and allegations.*

*A USA Volleyball participant or parent of a participant who violates this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to: suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.*

*Player: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_*

*OVC Representative : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_*