

Social Media, Mobile and Electronic Communications Guidelines

As part of U.S. Figure Skating's emphasis on participant safety, communications involving minor participants should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communication concerning activities, schedules, and administrative issues among coaches, members and their families, officials, and volunteers is critical.

U.S. Figure Skating encourages and supports members, member clubs, programs, and teams to take part in social media by posting, blogging and tweeting positive experiences in skating as a show of support of its members and for promotion of the club, its programs and events. 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 mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct.

All electronic communication of any kind between adults and minors, including use of social media, should be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about skating-related activities. The club, program or team should have a signed name and likeness consent and release agreement form (see SafeSport webpage for sample) by the minor's parent or legal guardian before any distribution or posting of photos, videos, images, etc. No contact information for any minor should be placed on any social media site.

Coaches, skaters and club volunteers must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowable electronic communication. All content between adults and minors should be readily available to share with the public or families of the minor member. If the member is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media, or similar communication should also copy or include a parent.

Social Media

U.S. Figure Skating recognizes, however, that social media, mobile and other electronic communications can be concerning where minor participants are involved. Coaches, especially, are cautioned from having their skaters joined

to their personal Facebook page or any other similar social media application.

As a best practice to facilitate communication, an official club, program or team page may be set up and members and parents may join (i.e., "friend") the official organization or team page.

Email, Text Messaging and Similar Electronic Communication

Coaches, volunteers and skaters may use email and text messaging to communicate among each other about non-personal matters. All email and text message content between adults and minors must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about club/skating-related activities. Emails and text messages from an adult to any minor participant should copy or include a parent.

Request To Discontinue All Electronic Communication or Imagery with Minors

Following receipt of a written request by the parents of a minor that their child not be contacted by any form of electronic communication by adults, the local club, program or team administrators shall immediately comply with such request without any repercussions for such request.

Abuse and Misconduct

Social media and other means of electronic communication can be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, 'sexting', bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by a coach, official, director, employee, parent, skater or volunteer of a U.S. Figure Skating club or program will not be tolerated and are considered violations of U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Program.

Reporting

Infractions of U.S. Figure Skating's mobile and electronic communications policy should be reported to the appropriate person as described in Section V of this Handbook. A participant or parent of a participant who violates this social media, mobile and electronic communications policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.