

Electronic Communication Policy of Starlings Greater Hartford

PURPOSE

Starlings Greater Hartford (the “Club”) 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 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 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, sexualactivity
 - 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 the Club'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 the Club. 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.

FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, 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 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 Facebook.

Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM methods.

The club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can "like" or "friend" for information and updates on team-related matters.

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