

Wear Valley Amateur Swimming Club Good Practice Guidelines on the use of Mobile Phones and Emails

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a recommendation of best practice to swimming teachers, coaches and those in a position of trust regarding the following:

- Use of mobile phones whilst having responsibility for the supervision and safety of young people.
- Communication between coaches and teachers and young swimmers to the swimmers' mobile phones/emails.

The use of smart phones and social networking sites is outlined in the "WVASC good practice guidelines on the use of social networking sites" document. A young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Guidance

Phoning, texting or emailing swimmers

1. Coaches and teachers should not hold the mobile phone numbers or email addresses belonging to swimmers.
2. Coaches can hold the phone numbers and email addresses of swimmers parents with their consent in order to get messages to swimmers. It is then the responsibility of the parent to inform the child of the message from the coach.
3. In limited circumstances it may be necessary for coaches or chaperones to have mobile phone contact details of the swimmers i.e. at an away camp for reasons of safeguarding. In such circumstances the person holding the phone details must be DBS checked, have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training and the consent of each swimmer's parent or guardian to temporarily hold that information for the purposes of the event. In such circumstances the swimmers phone numbers should be deleted after the event is completed.
4. The method of communication WVASC currently uses should coaches need to contact swimmers on a group basis is through the recent articles section of the WVASC website at www.wearvalleyasc.co.uk.
5. Coaches of elite swimmers over 16 may, with the consent of swimmer's parents or guardian, use text messaging or email to communicate with the swimmer for training and competition purposes only. It is recommended such communications are also copied to parent or guardian to safeguard swimmer and coach.

Use by Coaches of mobile phones

1. Coaches and teachers should not take or make calls whilst supervising young swimmers in a teaching or training session. It is permissible for a coach to make or take a call during a swimming event providing they are not the sole supervisor of the swimmers and are not actively engaged in supervising warm up or swim down at the time of the call.
2. Coaches who have mobile phones with camera facilities must fulfil the obligations set out for the use of cameras and guidelines for the use of photographs.

3. Any teacher or coach wishing to use the phone to take photographs at an event must register the phone/camera with the promoters of the event. Whenever mobile phones are taken into changing rooms the facility to take photos must not be used.
4. The publishing of a photograph of a swimmer under 18 years should only be done with the parent's consent and it should be noted that parents and guardians have the right to refuse to have a child photographed.
5. If a photograph is taken for publication it should adhere to the guidance provided in the ASA Photography Policy. Identifying details such as full name, place or residence or school attended should not be given alongside the photograph.
6. In the event of a swimmer showing a teacher or coach a text message or image, which is inappropriate for a child to have, the teacher/coach must advise the Club Welfare Officer.

Young coaches aged 18 to 21

The ASA recognise that many young coaches aged 18 to 21 will have been swimmers before becoming a coach, and will be friends with their fellow swimmers, some of whom will be between the ages of 16/17. It is therefore plausible that they will have those swimmers phone and email contact details. For this purpose the ASA accepts it would be inappropriate to require such swimming friends to be removed from their friendship group.

Therefore in such cases:

1. If a coach aged 18 to 21 had friends phone and email details who were /are swimmers aged 16/17 prior to undertaking the role of coach the ASA does not expect them to remove those swimmers from their listed friends.
2. In such circumstances the coach is advised to inform the club Welfare Officer and the Head Coach.
3. The Head Coach should make every effort to ensure the coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.

(Reviewed May 2014 and adapted from Wavepower 2012 p.77)