

Social Media, Mobile and Digital Communications Policy

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 digital communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings and provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to participants. The improper use of mobile and digital communications can result in misconduct.

All digital communication of any kind between adults and minors, including use of social media, must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about skating-related activities. Consider social media communications as public at all times.

The club, program or team is required to have a signed name and likeness consent and release agreement form (see appendix 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 shall in any case 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 digital 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 must also copy or include a parent or legal guardian.

Social Media

U.S. Figure Skating recognizes, however, that social media, mobile and other digital communications can be concerning where minor participants are involved. Coaches are specifically prohibited from having their skaters join their personal Facebook page or any other similar social media platforms.

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

Email, Text Messaging and Similar Digital Communication

Coaches, volunteers and skaters may use email and text messaging to communicate with each other about non-personal matters. All email and text message content between adults and minors must be non-personal in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about

club/skating-related activities. Emails and text messages from an adult to any minor participant must copy or include a parent/guardian.

Request To Discontinue All Digital Communication or Imagery with Minors

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

Misconduct

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

Reporting

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