



USGA SAFEGUARDING PROGRAM Prevention Policies

Electronic Communications & Social Media

Electronic communication between an Adult Participant and Minor Athlete includes, but is not limited to, phone calls, video calls, video/live-streamed training sessions, texts, social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc.), fitness, statistical and/or performance improvement applications, emails, gaming platforms and direct messaging. All electronic communication between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must comply with the One-on-One Interactions Policy and must be open and transparent.

1. Open and Transparent means that the Adult Participant copies or includes the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, another adult family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant.
2. If a Minor Athlete communicates with the Adult Participant first, the Adult Participant must follow this policy in the response.
3. All electronic communication must be professional in nature.
4. Only platforms that allow for open and transparent communication may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.
5. Communication platforms must be able to record or maintain the message.
6. Electronic communications to an entire team or any number of Minor Athletes on the team must include at least one other Adult Participant or the Minor Athletes' parents/guardians if any team member is a Minor Athlete.
7. A custodial parent or guardian may request in writing that a Minor Athlete not be contacted through electronic communications. Requests that a Minor Athlete not be contacted electronically must be honored.
8. Any private or public direct communication between adults and Minor Athletes encouraging illegal drug and alcohol use and/or involving sexual content is prohibited.

This includes all communications unless the following exceptions exist:

- a. When a Dual Relationship exists; or
- b. When the Close-in-Age Exception applies.

Hours

Send electronic communications to athletes and parents/guardians only between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., except for travel, competition or emergency circumstances.

Social Media

All social media communication is considered In-Program Contact and must comply with the One-on-One Interactions Policy, in addition to the following conditions:

1. Adult Participants, except those with a Dual Relationship or who meet the Close-in-Age Exception, are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with Minor Athletes. This includes requesting or accepting a request to “follow” or “friend” a Minor Athlete or “liking” a Minor Athlete’s social media post. All such existing connections must be discontinued by the Adult Participant if they violate this policy.
2. Minor Athletes may “friend”, like” or “follow” an official USGA social media account or page.
3. Photos or videos of Minor Athletes may be posted on the private social media page of the Adult Participant provided that:
 - photos are displayed professionally;
 - in context of practice or competition;
 - displayed positively representing the athlete(s);
 - public facing and demonstrate the photo(s) are taken as a part of the professional role;
 - parents or Minor Athletes reserve the right to request photos to be removed and all requests respected;
 - parents are allowed to see the photo(s); and
 - parents are aware of such postings.
4. Adults Participants must conduct themselves in a professional manner when posting on any social media platform, as this information is often public and can be perceived as a direct reflection of the USGA.
5. Acts of cyberbullying by any Minor Athlete or Adult Participant towards another Minor Athlete or Adult Participant is prohibited and includes acts of harassment, intimidation, humiliation, or places an individual in reasonable fear of harm and has the effect of substantially disrupting the operation of any activity or Event within the Jurisdiction of the USGA.

Note: Public fan pages are excluded from these restrictions. Private messaging to Minor Athletes is not excluded.