



Policy on the Use of Mobile Phones and E-mail by Swimming Coaches and Teachers

Introduction

This policy is a joint policy statement by the British Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (BSCTA), Institute of Swimming (IoS), British Swimming and Swim Wales. It is endorsed by the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU).

Background

There is growing concern being expressed about what is and what is not permissible in the area of communication between adults and children and young people in sport and a number of cases in sport relating to this issue. Understandably, with the rapid development of mobile phones, text messaging, e mail and other forms of electronic communication, these methods of communicating have become a feature of the sporting landscape.

The purpose of the policy is to provide a recommendation of best practice to swimming teachers and coaches 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.

Policy

1. Coaches and Teachers should not contact young swimmers by text or voice directly to their mobile phone. All communication should either be from the coach/teacher to the swimmer's parent or guardian or if it is essential communication is made directly to the young swimmer it should be by a nominated female person at the club who has undergone CRB checking and appropriate training and is authorised to hold the mobile phone details of young swimmers. Any such communication must be with the consent of each swimmer's parent or guardian.
2. It is recommended clubs retain a confidential list of mobile numbers approved by parents or guardians, to which batch text messages advising of changes to training times, coach departure times for events etc. may be sent by the nominated female person at the club who has undergone CRB checking and appropriate training.

3. Coaches of elite swimmers may, with the consent of the swimmer's parents or guardian, use text messaging or e-mail to communicate with the swimmer when they are away with international teams. The text messages or e-mails must be restricted to information on training, events, results etc.
4. Coaches and teachers should not e-mail young swimmers directly unless it is a circular e-mail to an **undisclosed distribution list** held by a nominated female club member who has undergone CRB checking and is authorised to hold the e-mail addresses of young swimmers with the consent of each swimmer's parent or guardian.
5. 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 she/he is not the sole supervisor of the swimmers and is not actively engaged in supervising warm up or swim down at the time of the call.
6. 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.

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.

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.

If a photograph is taken for publication it should be a head and neck only photograph, or in full tracksuits if full length. Identifying details such as full name, place or residence or school attended should not be given alongside the photograph.

7. In the event of a swimmer showing a teacher or coach a text message or image which is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, the teacher / coach must advise the nominated person at the club.

Recording and Retention of Mobile Phone Numbers and E-mail Addresses of Young Swimmers

1. Clubs should not insist on obtaining email addresses or mobile telephone numbers from young swimmers. Parental /guardian consent must be obtained before the information is obtained.
2. If a club does obtain e-mail addresses or mobile telephone numbers of young swimmers the data should only be used by a nominated female adult member who has undertaken CRB checks.

3. The club should set a policy for the use of the lists e.g. mass circulation of training news by email or emergency contact by mobile phone if parents/guardians agree and are unavailable.
4. All e-mail distribution lists must be set up to ensure the recipients of the e-mail cannot see the e-mail addresses of the other recipients.