

# COMMUNICATION POLICY

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## PURPOSE & APPLICATION

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### **Purpose:**

The communication Policy for Alberta Summer Swimming and its Board of Directors supports the standardization of practices, expectations, roles and conveying messages and information safely and securely to intended recipients without exposing any member to the risk of harm at the time or in the future (by allowing access to their details by unauthorized persons).

The development and implementation of clear, consistent processes are critical to ensuring effective, consistent messaging, the protection of athletes, volunteers, and board members and preserving the ASSA brand and reputation.

This policy ensures effective communication between the Alberta Summer Swimming Association (ASSA), its Directors, stakeholders and the general public.

### **Application:**

1. Provide a framework that outlines who should communicate with whom and when, and the scope of communication with attention to the potential conflict of interest and confidentiality:
  - a. Ensure clear and consistent protocols for all Directors to prevent any damage to stakeholders' and Directors' confidence;
  - b. Inform or involve stakeholders;
  - c. Respond to requests for information or reporting;
  - d. Mitigate risk.
  
2. The Board must communicate the following:
  - a. A clear and united message, usually through the Board President;
  - b. Only on issues within the scope or authority of the Board;
  - c. With consideration of the Board's responsibility to the public;
  - d. Is consistent with other ASSA policies and processes,
  - e. Respects the confidentiality of all ASSA members.

## PROCEDURE

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### 1. General

- a. All electronic communication between members should be conducted professionally as a representative of the ASSA. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of the Association.
- b. All electronic communication between members should be considered a matter of record and part of the association's records. Whenever possible, include another member in the communication with athletes of any age, so there is no question regarding accessibility.

### 2. Formal Board Communications

- a. The President or designate shall represent the ASSA, the organization and its members on behalf of the Board of Directors.
- b. The President or designate will communicate on behalf of the organization's Board of Directors.
- c. Individual members of the Board of Directors will refer all enquiries to The President or designate or their designate. This applies to event invitations, media, public, management, technical and other stakeholder requests and communications.
- d. All electronic communication between members should be conducted professionally as a representative of the ASSA. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of the Association.
- e. All electronic communication between members should be considered a matter of record and part of the association's records. Whenever possible, include another member in the communication with athletes of any age, so there is no question regarding accessibility.

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### 3. Informal Board Communications

- a. Individual Directors will inevitably and legitimately have informal communications with stakeholders.
- b. Directors should be explicitly clear that they are communicating personally.
- c. Facts or information are shared with Directors through ASSA platforms (ASSA Facebook, Twitter or Instagram) or collateral (annual report, year in review) when appropriate and must be shared by the Directors with our board.

### 4. Communication with an Athlete

Communication with an athlete, volunteers, and board members electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- i. drugs or alcohol use;
- ii. sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- iii. the adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
- iv. inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- v. Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.
- vi. All electronic communication between members should be considered a matter of record and part of the association's records. Whenever possible, include another member in the communication with athletes of any age, so there is no question regarding accessibility.

### 5. Communication with Board and Association Members:

- a. Communication between the Board and Association Members will be carried out with recognition of the distinct reporting relationship between the Board to Region Rep to Association Member and vice versa.

## 6. One-on-one Discussions

It is inevitable with Directors that are visible within communities around the province and that interactions with members will occur. Members and sometimes volunteers have used these occasions to raise specific operational issues.

Directors of the ASSA have a responsibility to:

- i. Listen carefully to the case and commit to passing it along with the agreement of the member or volunteer.
- ii. Forward the agreed-upon message to the President.
- iii. Communication with children must be in an open environment, and any one-to-one adult/child conversations should take place in public surroundings. Group meetings may take place in a separate room; such meetings should be arranged in advance with the parents/guardians, and children should feel comfortable with the environment.

## 7. Media Relations

- a. The President or designate will ensure that the Board of Directors and/or Association receive relevant media and other communication on the organization's activities and business.
- b. If the issues are high profile or contentious, The President or designate will ensure that Directors receive key messages at an appropriate time via email. Directors will refer any requests for media interviews to the President of the Board.
- c. When responding during a crisis, the ASSA will provide stakeholders with up-to-date information during the preparedness and response stages, identify audiences and determine their information needs, establish processes for information flow, and develop materials to support ASSA procedures and policies.

## 8. Web/Internet-based social media communications

- a. The ASSA uses online tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and video/photo sharing sites such as Instagram, YouTube, blogs, flkr, dropbox, snapchat etc.\*, that allow members to create and share content with online communities and regions.  
\*This list is not limited to those platforms listed and may include others.
- b. Personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages must exercise caution to have any athlete member under the age of 18 join their personal page as a “friend.”
- c. Coaches should not accept any “friend” request from an athlete under the age of 18.
- d. Adult members may not extend a friend request to any athlete under the age of 18.
- e. Members and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through social media channels.
- f. The ASSA's website and social media will be used to facilitate further engagement with stakeholders. The ASSA Social Media Policy provides direction on the proper use of social media on behalf of ASSA and/or its programs and services.
- g. If an issue arises that is not covered in this section; we will defer to the Swim Alberta Social Media Policy.

## 9. Obligations:

- a. An annual report detailing ASSA's activities and financial performance from the preceding fiscal year will be produced.
- b. As members of ASSA, directors are obligated to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of any personal information they receive as part of their roles and duties on the Board. Directors should be familiar with guidelines affecting the collection, use or disclosure of personal information as they apply to Board materials. When required, any member of the ASSA must be cognizant of keeping materials they encounter private and confidential.

## 10. Committee Meetings:

The relationship between The President or designate and the Chair of the Committee is an important communication avenue.

The Committee has the responsibility to:

- i. Keep Interactions only with the President or designates and not with other directors or Members within the association until the time of presentation.
- ii. Issues concerning the committee's functioning, the President or designate should be advised so that feedback can be provided by the President or designate.
- iii. Communication with the President or designate by the Director may be informal or within the Board process, depending on the issue's magnitude. The President or designate can reasonably expect that feedback on Chair's performance is communicated to them privately.

## 11. Presentations

- a. Directors and any member presenting to the Board or a committee should notify the President.
- b. Directors will keep questions directed to focus on the presentation.
- c. Policy-related queries should be directed to the Board President.

## 12. Enforcement

- a. Failure to adhere to this Policy may permit discipline in accordance with the Discipline and Complaints Policy, legal recourse, or termination of membership, employment/volunteer position.