



**NICA**

# Electronic Communication and Social Media Guidelines of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association

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The following guidelines have been developed to aid NICA Coaches and the NICA Community in complying with existing [NICA Athlete Abuse Prevention](#) Program policies and to maintain NICA Core Values while using e-communication and social media.

NICA National recognizes NICA leaders, coaches, staff and other adults use electronic communications and social media to convey information to student-athletes. NICA also recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world as many of our student-athletes use these means as their primary method of communication.

As a youth sport and youth development organization, NICA expects leaders to communicate with student-athletes, online and otherwise, in a manner aligned with our core values of Fun, Inclusivity, Equity, Respect and Community and that communications maintain our culture of athlete-abuse awareness and prevention and risk management.

These guidelines should be reviewed with and agreed to by all student-athletes, parents, coaches and other adults affiliated with NICA and its Leagues and Teams.

## **GUIDELINES**

### ***What types of communication are appropriate between a NICA Coach and Student-Athlete?***

All communications between a coach or other adult and a student-athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about national, league or team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications and social media must adhere to NICA's Code of Conduct and policies, **especially those limiting 1:1 interactions between coaches and student-athletes.**

Whether one is a student-athlete, coach, league staff, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other student-athletes?"

### ***How to manage communications between NICA Coaches and Student-Athletes***

All electronic communication with student-athletes should be **Transparent, Accessible** and **Professional** or "**T.A.P.**" If your communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with student-athletes will be appropriate.

***Transparent:*** All electronic communication between coaches and student-athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct but also free of hidden meanings, innuendos, and expectations.

***Accessible:*** All electronic communication between coaches and student-athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Team, League or NICA's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

***Professional:*** All electronic communications between a coach and student-athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of NICA, the League, and the Team. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a NICA staff member, League Director or licensed NICA Coach.

**Social media or electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:**

- The adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; ●  
Drugs or alcohol use;
- Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity;
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit images
- Communication concerning a student-athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional. ● Any and all hate speech, including but not limited to: racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and religious discrimination
  - o NICA has adopted [Facebook Hate Speech Community Standards](#) (er 1-3)
  - o Posting hate speech and connecting this speech to NICA may be grounds for disciplinary action through the League Director or NICA Coach Licensing.

All photos, posts and content should reflect NICA's core values of Fun, Inclusivity, Equity, Respect and Community. Only post photos and/or content that show positive behavior and sportsmanship, riding with respect, and of activities and behavior that are allowed at NICA practices and events per the NICA Handbook and NICA Code of Conduct.

## **SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR MOST-USED ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL MEDIA AND VIDEO CONFERENCING**

### **FACEBOOK**

Coaches and league and national staff may have personal Facebook pages however should not be friends with any student-athletes. Coaches should remind student-athletes this is not permitted. Coaches, league and national staff should not "private message" or "instant message" each other through Facebook, Facebook chat or other IM methods. Private chats or messaging leaves adults open to accusations of abuse.

NICA National, Leagues and Teams are encouraged to have official Facebook pages that student-athletes and their parents can "Like" or "Follow" for information and updates on team-related matters. Pages should have a minimum of three administrators to ensure any communication that may occur between League or Team page and any student-athletes adheres to the **T. A. P.** criteria outlined above.

If coaches, league or national staff have concerns about student-athletes accessing their personal information, it is recommended that personal pages are set to "private."

## **Instagram, Twier Snapchat, YouTube, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Pinterest, WhatsApp and others not specifically menoned**

NICA Naonal, Leagues and Teams are encouraged to have official Instagram and Twier accounts that coaches, student-athletes, and parents may follow for informaon and updates. Coaches, league and naonal staff should not follow student-athletes from their personal accounts. Student-athletes should not follow coaches, league and naonal staff personal accounts. Coaches, league and naonal staff should not “direct message” student-athletes from their personal Instagram accounts as private chats or messaging leaves adults open to accusaons of abuse.

Instagram and Twier and any social media accounts for NICA Naonal, Leagues and Teams should have a minimum of three individuals with administrave access to ensure any communicaon that may occur on an official NICA Naonal, League or Team account adheres to the **T.A.P.** criteria. It is acceptable for official NICA Naonal, League or Team accounts to “Follow” student-athletes as long as the official account is accessible by a minimum of three administrators.

### **STRAVA**

NICA Naonal, Leagues and Teams may have Strava accounts that coaches, student-athletes, and parents may follow for ride informaon and route tracking. It is recommended that coaches, league and naonal staff, do not follow student-athletes from their personal accounts. Coaches, league and naonal staff should not message or comment on student-athletes from their personal Strava accounts.

Official NICA Naonal, League, and Team Strava accounts should have a minimum of three individuals with administrave access to ensure any communicaon that may occur on an official NICA Naonal, League or Team account adheres to the **T.A.P.** criteria. It is acceptable for official NICA Naonal, League or Team accounts to “Follow” student-athletes as long as the official account is accessible by a minimum of three administrators.

### **VIRTUAL MEETINGS/FACETIME/ZOOM/GOOGLE HANGOUT, ETC.**

Generally, NICA doesn’t recommend or expect coaches to host virtual meengs or praces. However, NICA also recognizes a virtual meeng may help student-athletes and coaches stay connected with teammates if in-person praces or events cannot happen.

Anyme NICA Community members connect online, our primary safety concern is one-on-one contact between coaches and student-athletes. One-on-one is not allowed as it presents an opportunity for grooming and abuse of an athlete by a coach. Having a one-on-one video/faceme chat with a student-athlete is a violaon of NICA policies. Virtual meengs are no different than in person praces, meengs and events and must comply with normal NICA in season, preseason and offseason rules.

If a coach or an adult does choose to host an online meeng, all the same abuse prevenon rules apply. Meengs should always have more than 2 coaches on the call and coaches should log in 5 minutes before the meeng. Parents should also be invited to aend or at the minimum get an invite to the meeng. No meeng should occur before 8 AM or aer 8 PM and all interaon should be Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

Should a coach or team choose to have a virtual meeting, coaches should first assess the value of video conferencing while also considering equal access. Is this really necessary? Is this adding value to my team and team culture? Do all my student-athletes have an internet connection and a computer/phone so they aren't excluded? Ask yourself these important questions before you host virtual meetings.

### **TEXTING, EMAIL and TEAM SNAP TEXT/EMAIL MESSAGES**

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and student-athletes during the hours from 8am until 8pm local time. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team or league activities. When communicating with a student-athlete through email, a parent, another coach, league staff, national staff or league or national board member must also be copied.

### **REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The parents or guardians of a student-athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

### **Other Considerations**

#### **Media / Photo Release**

Unless otherwise noted by the league - all NICA student-athletes sign a media waiver that authorizes NICA, their League, sponsors and outside media agents (newspapers, television, etc.) to take photographs, videos and otherwise document student-athletes involved in the activities of NICA and league programs. Permission is granted for any photographs or video material of the student-athletes to be used in publicity about the program and organization (website, promotional materials, newspaper/magazine articles, etc.).

