



Terre Haute Torpedoes

Social Media Policy

In the electronic age in which we live, every member of the Terre Haute Torpedoes Club, including coaches, parents, and athletes, needs to be aware of the far reaching effects of data posted to web sites, email, and other electronic mediums. This includes photos posted to web sites, text messages that contain inappropriate language or information that is private or confidential, blog sites, and messages posted to sites like Twitter, Facebook, Vine, etc. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

The Terre Haute Torpedoes Social Media Policy is designed to:

1. Protect our THT family
2. Raise awareness of acceptable and effective ways to use electronic communication tools when communicating
3. Raise awareness of positive and negative outcomes that result from using these tools.

THT coaches and board members cannot monitor all of our members' social media accounts. What the THT coaching staff and board members can and will do is work to educate the parents, athletes, and membership on best social media practices. We do not want to have any team member's future or career jeopardized due to a careless or thoughtless impulsive action. We all recognize that the words and photos that we post on-line are there for everyone to read and view and we have all seen the high price that some people have paid for careless mistakes and poor choices.

Before posting anything to the internet or texting to someone, we would like each Terre Haute Torpedoes member to ask themselves the following questions:

1. Would I send this message or photo to my parents?
2. Would I send it to my coach or teachers?
3. Would I send it to my religious leader or mentor?

If the answer to any of these is, "no", then it is probably a good idea to delete the message before you send it.

Keep these few things in mind before hitting that share or send button:

1. Use Good Judgment. Refrain from comments that can be interpreted as slurs, demeaning, inflammatory, etc. The Internet is full of varied opinions, and it's okay to share yours, but beware of how others may interpret what you say.
2. Retweeting or "sharing" other's tweets make them look like yours, and imply that you support the information that is displayed.

By joining THT, you are becoming part of a community. In this case, it is a community of parents, swimmers, coaches, Board Members, officials, and more. Your new community extends far beyond THT, and also includes former swimmers, other swimming clubs, USA Swimming, and the list goes on. Communities exist so that others can support you, and you, in turn, can be supported by them. The very best communities are transparent in their operation and include a healthy balance between personal and professional information.

Before you post something, or even “like” a post or re-tweet something, think about how it will impact others. When in doubt, don’t post. If you need to think about it, your best decision (and usually the correct one) is to not share. It is better to be safe than sorry! Remember, what you post today can definitely haunt you later. As colleges and universities begin the recruiting process, many check the social media pages of the athletes they recruit. Many employers do the same. Will they find information they are pleased with and a person who they want to represent their team or company, or will they be discouraged in what they see?

When it comes to your social media presence, there are a few guidelines that we recommend:

1. Are you easy to find? Make sure you use appropriate levels of privacy and protection.
2. Keep private information private. Be smart and safe about what you share. Do you really need to tell everyone your cell phone number, what time you leave for school every day, or where you live?
3. Never use social media to vent your frustrations or anger towards something or someone. When there is doubt, talk it out. Speak with a parent, teacher, coach, anyone that you trust before expressing your feelings in a social media network. NEVER post anything on a social media network when you are mad.

Finally, when you use electronic communications, ask yourself, “Is this communication something that you and the Club would find acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?” With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication is called T.A.P., and it stands for Transparent, Accessible and Professional:

1. Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches, parents, and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should be clear and direct, free of hidden meanings and expectations.
2. Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches, parents, and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of Club records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so there is no question of the accessibility.
3. Professional: All electronic communication between coaches, parents, and athletes should be as a professional representing the Club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a THT Club member.

If your communication meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is very likely that the methods of communicating that you are choosing are appropriate. If you cannot answer “yes” to all of the above questions, perhaps you should hit the “delete” button. Your future is too important to be affected by an action that is impulsive and rash.