



# HALIFAX TROJAN AQUATIC CLUB

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

*Policy Approved by the Board of Directors on April 15, 2026*

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### 1. Purpose

Halifax Trojans Aquatic Club (HTAC) is a competitive, athlete-centered and coach-driven swim club. Coaches and athletes are supported by a volunteer Board of Directors, office staff, and engaged parents/guardians.

This Communication Policy exists to:

- Promote clear, respectful, and effective communication
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Establish appropriate channels and response expectations
- Support a safe, positive, and athlete-focused environment

### 2. Guiding Principles

All HTAC communication is expected to be:

- Respectful – free from abusive, threatening, or discriminatory language
- Professional – appropriate in tone and content
- Timely – mindful of response expectations
- Purposeful – using the correct channel for the message

The Club maintains a zero-tolerance policy for abusive, violent, threatening, or disrespectful communication in any form (email, social media, in-person, or text-based messaging).

### 3. Communication Channels

To ensure clarity and consistency, the following communication channels are used:

- Email (via Pool Queue system) – Primary method for official communication; used for time-sensitive updates (e.g., cancellations, schedule changes), calls for officials and volunteer opportunities, as well as correspondence with Office and Coaching staff

- Google Calendar (for Training Schedule) – The only source for training schedules by squad
- Chlorine Chronicles e-Newsletter – Monthly morale and community-building updates
- Social Media – Promotional and community engagement only (not for official or time-sensitive information)
- Website – Club information, registration, events, results, club policies, and member hub

Members are responsible for maintaining up-to-date contact information and access to required platforms. Please note that members who choose to block emails from Pool Queue will miss critical information as email is the club's official communication channel.

#### **4. Club-Wide Communication**

- Office staff will distribute official information (meets, schedules, logistics) to members via Pool Queue email lists.
- The monthly Chlorine Chronicles e-newsletter is intended to build club culture, share highlights and accomplishments, and recognize our members.
- Club-wide communication may also be sent by:
  - The Head Coach on training, meets, or athlete matters on an ad-hoc basis.
  - The Board President and Board Members on governance or strategic matters, invoicing, officiating, volunteering, and registration as necessary.
- Short-notice changes (e.g., cancellations, weather issues) will be also communicated to members via Pool Queue by the Office staff.

#### **5. Office Staff**

- Office staff are expected to respond to emails and phone calls made to the HTAC office promptly or within 2 business days.
- Office staff are expected to ensure email and phone accounts are operational and able to accept messages at all times. Unexpected outages should be communicated to the membership as necessary.
- Planned office closures must be communicated at least 2 business days in advance. Office staff must set an email auto-responder and out-of-office voicemail message indicating closure dates and expected response timelines.
- Office staff are not expected to respond to:
  - Text messages sent to personal cell phones
  - Messages via personal social media accounts
- Office staff should avoid conducting HTAC business through personal social media accounts.

## 6. Coaching Staff

- Coaching staff are expected to respond to emails within 2 business days.
- Coaching staff are expected to ensure HTAC email accounts are accessible and operational at all times.
- Coaching staff must set an out-of-office auto-responder when unavailable for more than 2 business days, including their return date and an alternate contact (if applicable).
- To comply with Safe Sport rules, email communication between adults and minors must be open and observable, meaning a second adult (parent, guardian, office staff, or another coach) should be copied on all correspondence.
- Coaching staff may choose to use text messaging and/or phone calls on personal cell phones at their discretion (e.g. for logistical purposes).
- Coaching staff are not expected to:
  - Respond to text messages sent to personal cell phones
  - Respond to messages via personal social media accounts
  - Be available for unscheduled meetings
- Coaching staff should avoid conducting HTAC business through personal social media accounts.

## 7. Board of Directors & Non-Board Volunteers

- The Board operates at a governance level and does not oversee day-to-day operations or coaching decisions. Accordingly, Directors are expected to monitor their HTAC email at least once per week. The President, Treasurer and Safe Sport Officer, however, are required to check their email every other day to address urgent matters.
- Communication to the Board should follow the escalation pathway outlined below.
- Non-Board volunteer roles, such as parent representatives, meet coordinator, volunteer points coordinator, etc. are expected to monitor their HTAC email a minimum of once per week.

## 8. Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a critical role in supporting athletes and maintaining a positive club environment. It is generally expected that parents/guardians will:

- Communicate respectfully and constructively with Office staff, Coaching staff, the Board, and volunteers
- Use appropriate channels based on the nature of the inquiry or concern (for further details refer to the Communication and Escalation Pathway section)

- Maintain up-to-date contact information in Pool Queue and regularly check email for time-sensitive updates

## **Communication and Escalation Pathway**

To ensure timely, respectful, and effective communication, parents/guardians are asked to direct inquiries to the appropriate representative and follow the escalation process outlined below:

### Primary Points of Contact

- Squad Coach – Training plans, performance, and athlete- or squad-specific matters
- Office Staff – Administrative matters, including schedules, meets, invoicing, and logistics
- Volunteer Representative – Volunteer opportunities and tracking of volunteer points
- Parent Representative – General squad-related questions, including meets, travel, and team-building activities
- Officials Coordinator – Officiating roles, certification, and related opportunities
- Registrar – Club registration and enrollment inquiries

### Escalation Process

If an inquiry or concern is not resolved at the initial point of contact, the following escalation pathway should be followed:

1. Squad Coach / Relevant Representative – Begin by addressing the matter directly with the appropriate individual listed above. Most concerns can be resolved at this level.
2. Head Coach – If the issue remains unresolved, or if it involves broader club and/or program considerations, it should be escalated to the Head Coach.
3. Board of Directors – Matters related to governance, policy, or concerns that remain unresolved after following the above steps may be submitted in writing to the Board President by email at [president@htac.ca](mailto:president@htac.ca).
4. President and Safe Sport Officer – Issues involving athlete safety, conduct, or wellbeing may be escalated directly and confidentially to the Board President and Safe Sport Officer.

All HTAC members are expected to follow this pathway in good faith, allowing each level the opportunity to address concerns before escalation. This approach supports clear communication, accountability, and a positive environment for all athletes and families. Formal complaints should be submitted and managed in accordance with the HTAC's [Complaint Policy](#).

### Coach Meetings

- Meetings with coaches must be scheduled in advance, with defined start and end times. Parents/guardians can send meeting requests directly to the coach via email, including the nature of the discussion.
- When a meeting is requested by a coach, parents/guardians are expected to be available within 7 days.

### Safe Sport Complaints

- All Safe Sport–related inquiries or concerns, including those involving athlete safety, conduct, or well-being, should be directed promptly and confidentially to the Safe Sport Officer and Board President (or designate) by email at [safesport@htac.ca](mailto:safesport@htac.ca) and [president@htac.ca](mailto:president@htac.ca).
- The Board President may designate the Head Coach to act on their behalf in time-sensitive matters, as appropriate.
- The Safe Sport Officer is expected to acknowledge and respond to inquiries promptly.
- Parents/guardians must respond to inquiries from the Safe Sport Officer within 24 hours.
- Parents/guardians must be available for virtual or in-person meetings with the Safe Sport Officer, Coaching Staff, and/or Board President within 72 hours of the incident if requested.
- Safe Sport complaints should be submitted and managed in accordance with the HTAC's Complaint Policy.

### Attendance Communication

- Parents/guardians of swimmers across all squads must notify their Squad Coach directly of absences in advance via email. See Swimmers section below for consideration given to Elite and Senior Atlantic squads.

## **9. Swimmers**

Swimmers are expected to take increasing responsibility for communication as they age and progress through the squads.

- In lieu of communication from parents/guardians, swimmers in Elite and Senior Atlantic:
  - Are encouraged to notify their Squad Coach directly of absences in advance via email
  - Are also encouraged to communicate expected lateness when possible
- To comply with Safe Sport rules, email communication between minors and adults must be open and observable, meaning a second adult (parent, guardian, office staff, or another coach) should be copied on all correspondence between swimmers and staff.

## 10. Appropriate Use of Communication

The following are not appropriate uses of HTAC communication channels:

- Repeated messaging outside of reasonable response timelines outlined in this policy
- Contacting multiple parties simultaneously to escalate an issue (“triangulation”)
- Use of social media to raise complaints about the club, coaches, and/or members
- Harassment, gossip, and/or personal attacks

## 11. Response Time Guidelines

Role	Expected Response Time
Office Staff	2 business days
Coaches	2 business days
Parents/Guardians	As required (see above)
Board Members	Weekly monitoring
Board President	Monitor every two days
Safe Sport Officer	Promptly; monitor every two days at minimum
Treasurer	Monitor every two days

Note: Holidays and swim meets may impact response times.

## 12. Related Policies

- [Code of Conduct & Ethics Policy](#)
- [Complaint Policy](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#)