



## POLICY #8: SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

VERSION: 1

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 2024

### 1. Introduction

Vancouver Minor Hockey Association (VMHA) recognizes the importance of social media and other electronic platforms in shaping the public's perception of our organization. The association also recognizes the importance of our members, directors, coaches, employees, and volunteers in leading and setting the tone of social media interactions in a manner that advances our mission and goals.

Online, social media and other electronic communication tools such as text messaging have become a prevalent and effective means of personal and professional communication and have fundamentally changed the way many people and organizations interact. This policy sets forth our expectations with respect to the use of online and social media, as well as other forms of electronic communications.

The term "social media" as used in this policy encompasses a wide array of online media and communications and their scope is constantly evolving. For purposes of this policy, the terms "online media" and "social media" are to refer to internal and external websites, blogs, online social networks (e.g., Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, etc), wikis, video and photo sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, SKYPE and Flickr), and other forms of personal online publishing and discourse. Policies regarding text messaging, messaging platforms (e.g. Whatsapp, TeamSnap, etc), email and individual telephonic communications are also covered by these policies.

### 2. General Guidelines

#### **ALL MEMBERS SHALL ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA.**

- Any team that wishes to create their own social media handle on any platform must inform the association and accept the association's main account as a follower. The association holds the right to decline approval on a platform they are not comfortable with a team being promoted on for any reason, but especially one they cannot monitor.
- Do not make negative or derogatory comments about any players, parents, board members, programs, stakeholders, coaches, managers, or program participants from our association or any other.
- Do not fight your battles using social media. Always use proper channels provided by the association for issue resolution.

- Be positive and respectful, and always take the high road. When disagreeing with others' opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that is becoming antagonistic, disengage from the dialogue in a polite and respectful manner.
- Do not criticize referees. This applies to all aspects of association activities. Criticizing a referee on social media, or in any other way outside the approved process, is never acceptable behavior.
- Do not post content that would harm or damage the association's reputation. Remember that even while you are on your own personal time, you are a representative of VMHA, and people may interpret your online postings or social interactions as though they were official statements by the association.
- Use good judgment when posting comments. If you are unsure whether a comment is appropriate to post, either do not post it or obtain prior approval from the association.
- Be smart about what you publish. Once something is posted, it exists online forever.
- Personally identifiable information such as a name and date of birth and/or a street address which, when taken together, can identify a particular individual should not be disclosed in any manner on social networking sites.
- Do not post photographs, video or comments promoting negative influences and dangerous or criminal behavior including but not limited to: violence, racism, sexism, drug use, alcohol abuse, underage alcohol use, public intoxication, and sexual exploitation.
- Do not publish pictures or personal information about players, parents, team staff or other association members without their prior consent. Respect their right to a private life.
- No picture or video showing the locker room can be taken or published.

### **3. Social Media Interaction (Team Staff/Player)**

- Abide by the "rule of two" policy for all communications and activities. This means at least two adults. There should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through direct messages or chats.
- Coaches may respond to a direct inquiry via text message, email or chat from a player regarding logistics of practice times, cancellations, schedules, etc. but coaches should strive to include another adult in messages whenever possible.
- Team representatives should only use text messages and email on issues that are hockey related and all communications should include a parent or guardian copied on the message if it is going to the players.
- Coaches and team representatives should avoid cell phone conversations with players to the greatest extent possible, and cell phone communications should only be used when necessary and should only be hockey related.
- Staff members, reserve coaches, and volunteer coaches, may not be "friends" on any social media platforms or online presence with a player.

#### **4. Team Social Media Sites**

- The person who sets up a platform like Facebook, YouTube, etc., to post video footage, photos, or comments about team events and games, must ensure the site is set to private.
- The link must only be shared with specified people to maintain privacy and control over who can view the content.
- This link must also be shared with the Association.
- All parents/guardians of the team must sign the [VMHA Social Media waiver](#) and agree to the above terms.

#### **5. Social Media Safety for Players**

- Do not give anyone online, not even your coach or other parent volunteers, your phone numbers at home or school, your parents' workplaces, or the name or location of your school or home address unless you have your parents' permission first. Never give your password to anyone but a parent or other adult in your family.
- Do not "friend" your coach on any social media platforms or online presence.
- Do not participate in "one on one" conversations via email, text message, or chat with your coach.

#### **6. Internet Safety for Parents**

- Discuss internet safety with your children.
- Let your children know that their coach, and other adults, should not communicate with them without your explicit knowledge and approval.
- Review your child's online and electronic communications as appropriate to minimize risk.
- Report any suspicious online or electronic communications to the Team Manager as soon as possible.

#### **7. Violations of the Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy**

The above rules are some examples of behavior over social media that may result in disciplinary action by the association at the discretion of the Disciplinary Committee. In addition to the Social Media Rules set out above, teams may make team specific rules for social media that are more strict, but cannot contradict any of the association rules set out above.

The Board of Directors shall have the authority to monitor and enforce this Social Media Policy. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to remove any inappropriate or offensive

comments from official association sites and to block any individual or organization from posting on any official association social media platform if they determine, in their sole discretion, that such removal or block is in the best interests of the association. The Board of Directors shall also have the authority to require any team to remove a post or an account if found to be in contravention of the policy.

The failure of any Member to adhere to this Social Media Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of such individual's involvement in the association.

## **8. Version History**

Version 1 – December 2024