



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR JUNIOR CLUBS

Introduction

The aim of this policy, which applies to club and officials within the context official business, is to provide junior hockey clubs with guidance regarding their use of social platforms, and their communication with junior players aged under 18. The purpose of this is twofold. Firstly to ensure that volunteers and staff do not leave themselves or the club open to any allegation of misconduct, and do not bring the club or the EIHA into disrepute. Secondly, to minimise any circumstances in which junior players could be left exposed to any risk of grooming, exploitation, or abuse.

Clubs are expected to uphold the EIHA's values and standards of conduct in their social media usage.

Social media in this context includes:

- Social media platform e.g. Bebo, Facebook, Piczo, Hi5, WhatsApp and MySpace.
- Micro-blogging services e.g. Twitter.
- Video-sharing services e.g. You Tube.
- Photo-sharing services e.g. Flickr, Snapchat.
- Online games and virtual reality e.g. second life.
- Blogs and fora such as THF.

The EIHA recognises the benefits of being able to communicate quickly and effectively with players and parents through electronic media, but also for this to be done utilising methods and platforms which offer the greatest protections for all involved.

Social media policy

- All social media accounts and messaging platforms must be password-protected if possible and at least 2 members of designated administrators will have access to each account and password.

- The account will be monitored by at least two designated administrators, in order to provide transparency, who will have been appointed by the club's committee.
- The administrators must not 'friend' or 'follow' junior players or parents using the club's account.
- Social media should not be used as a medium to criticise players, other volunteers, clubs, facility providers or organisations involved in ice hockey.
- Uploading of photos or video should be in line with the EIHA's guidance on photography and video and with the full consent of those featured and their parent/carer.
- The account should not be used to post items that could reflect negatively on the Club/EIHA or otherwise embarrass the Club/EIHA, including comments or other posts about drug or alcohol abuse, discriminatory, abusive, obscene or other inappropriate language, content or insults.
- Club social media should not be used to engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable at the Club's events or while in the presence of the Club's members.
- Any use of social media should respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use.
- Administrators should avoid any form of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Administrators should monitor any comments made on the account by visitors on a regular basis, and remove any which are incompatible with EIHA policy and values. In the event that a club member had breached any codes of conduct or policies, evidence should be retained and the relevant disciplinary actions or intervention measures should be taken.
- Confidential information about the Club, players other volunteers or anyone else (such as facility providers) should not be shared.

Communications Policy

- It is inappropriate for coaches or volunteers to communicate on a one to one basis with junior players by: text message/e-mail/instant messaging or through social networking sites.
- Instant messaging systems should not be used to communicate with junior players under any circumstances.
- Coaches and other volunteers should not personally hold the mobile phone number or email of any junior players. This includes use of applications such as WhatsApp where a user's number is displayed and visible to a group.
- Mobile numbers of junior players may be held securely by the club for use in an emergency, such as if the child goes missing from a club event and the parent/carer is not present.
- Coaches can hold the phone numbers and email addresses of parents/ carers, with their consent, in order to get messages to players. It is then the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the player.
- When sending bulk email use blind copy (Bcc) facility so addresses are kept private.
- Clubs using Facebook as a forum for members are advised to use a closed group. They should only accept members of the club as members of the group. This must be stated on the group and the group must be set up for that reason. Coaches are reminded that ALL social networking websites are restricted to people aged 13 years and over, this restriction must be adhered to.

- Clubs may wish to consider the use of dedicated apps, designed for this purpose, such as Teamstats, or TeamApp which have built in safeguarding and privacy options and can be set up for full parental involvement.
- All communications via any club channels must relate only to club-related matters.
- All club officials must not have any player under the age of 18 on their personal social media platforms.
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Any breaches of this policy may be considered misconduct and be investigated under safeguarding or misconduct procedures.

The EIHA is committed to regular review of its policies and procedures. Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with:	
Adopted on	
Last reviewed	