

Social Media is a term used to refer to digital communication that takes place between people via the internet or through message systems on computers and personal communication message systems. Social Media can and has provided the Forest Ringette Association and its respective teams with an opportunity to engage with the community and promote the sport of Ringette, interact with players, educate/inform members, celebrate initiatives, ask/answer questions, and connect resources with needs.

This policy covers, without limitation, social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.) and all personal communication message systems (i.e. email, iMessage, Blackberry Messenger, texting, blogging, chat rooms, etc). All members of the FRA, regardless of paid or volunteer role, or position (parents, players, volunteers, officials etc) are subject to this policy and must follow the guidelines if they are to participate in social media. Some teams with coaching staff approval, may choose to set up their own social media 'group' to provide an environment for parents and players to communicate and share images. Individual team sites/groups must be CLOSED, PRIVATE and carefully managed by team volunteers who will adhere to this policy, respect privacy rights, and adhere to the FRA Code of conduct (player, parent, and bench staff).

The tone for posting any and all information regarding the Forest Ringette Association and its members/players must always be respectful, positive or informative in nature, geared towards building the team/association. Comments that could be harmful or considered as bullying, critical or detrimental to the team/association or the Ringette community as a whole are not to be posted. The internet is a world wide communication system and sensitivity, respect, and decency must be at the forefront of all posts. They can never be retracted. Should a negative comment be seen, it is recommended that this posting be copied and sent to the attention of your team's Coaching Staff. Conversations directly with the coaching staff are the best way to address concerns with the team or individual and can be escalated from there. Negative behaviour by a player/coach will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and could lead to the removal from the team for a player/coach.

Sharing of Information

The following information would be acceptable to share on social media platforms:

FRA programs, events, and initiatives

Team scores and accolades (i.e. positive live-tweets and/or posts at games)

Thanking a sponsor or volunteer

Ringette information (i.e. stories, registration deadlines, tournament results, links of interest)

Information relevant from partners (i.e. ORA, Ringette Canada, Lambton Shores), etc.

Information that the FRA feels would be valuable to followers

Promotion of awards won by teams in the FRA

General Guidelines:

- Have a clear sense of personal responsibility: If you cannot say the words directly to the individual, don't post them.
- Do not write anything that does not align with the FRA's core values and remember to comply with our Code of Conduct.
- Be aware of your association with the Forest Ringette Association, and your own online social networks; including your personal Facebook, email, Twitter, Instagram, blog or other social media accounts.
- Promoting/soliciting personal business using the FRA or it's logo/image is not acceptable.
- Protect confidential and proprietary information related to the FRA, our families, our players, and our relationships with other community stakeholders. Do not report on conversations, decisions, or events that might be considered private or internal to the FRA. Do not discuss information that has not/should not be made public.
- Players under age 18 require written consent from parents to post photographs and or names to social media sites, see Media Consent - FRA Registration Form.
- Obvious postings that are NOT acceptable: ethnic slurs, offensive or defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenities are NOT acceptable and will result in a warning or disciplinary action.

NOTE:

Cell phones and other electronic capturing devices in the change rooms are prohibited, and all FRA players, coaches, volunteers, and parents must abide by this policy.

Associations and Leagues

Associations and leagues are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social networks, message boards or blogs abide by the Rules and Regulations of ORA. As a representative of ORA, associations/leagues that maintain a social media presence to promote or communicate themselves, will assume responsibility for reviewing responses to online posts and resolving any concerns.

Teams and Players

Although many U18 players will have their own email address, all communications should also be sent to the parent's email as well. No adult representing the FRA should communicate one on one with a U18 player without the prior written consent of the parent or guardian. U18 players should be encouraged by their coaches and parents to inform an adult they trust if they receive any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable or if anyone has told them not to tell anyone about a communication.

Coaches and Referees

A large percentage of ORA/FRA coaches and referees deal with children who are under 18 years of age. Many of our referees and coaches in training are also under 18. Extra care must be taken with this age group to avoid even an appearance of improper conduct. All public communications in social media to those under 18 about the association/leagues shall be conducted using "official" FRA social media sites only (ie website, Facebook and Twitter).

Unless a U18 player/referee/coach is a direct relation, the coaches, managers, referees, trainers and association officials should generally not:

1. Accept anyone as a friend on social networking sites, or share their personal social webpage's with anyone under 18.
2. Make contact with anyone outside of the ringette context via any social networking media.
3. Send personal messages of a non-ringette nature to anyone under 18.
4. Engage in any personal conversations or social comments with a player under the age of 18.

If you have further questions regarding this policy, please contact the FRA President or a member of the FRA Executive.