



# ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## PURPOSE:

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Saskatoon Youth Soccer Inc, it's Community and Zone Association members is committed to providing a player experience which aligns with evidence and best practices. We are committed to Canada Soccer's Long-Term Player Development Model; we are driven by process, rather than outcomes. SYSI and the Member look for coaches who will champion our values. SYSI recognizes that Community and Zone Associations may have their own recruitment, development, assessment and retention processes, if not, they are encouraged to adopt the SYSI process outlined below.

## DEFINITIONS:

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- Social media – A blanket term that is applied broadly to new computer mediated communication media such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, etc.
- SYSI/Alliance-branded social media – Official social media engagement by the SYSI including the SYSI website, SYSI email, SYSI's Facebook page(s), X, photo sharing accounts, YouTube channels, blogs, message boards, or other social media engagement (both those that exist currently and those that will be created by the SYSI in the future).
- Representative – All individuals employed by or engaged in activities on behalf of SYSI and/or a Zone/Community Association member. Representatives include, but are not limited to, staff, administrators, athletes, coaches, team managers, conveners, tournament hosts, directors and officers, committee members, and volunteers.

## GENERAL:

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- The use of technology, and in particular social media and electronic communications through apps and email has become a primary form of communication in our society today. SYSI recognizes that these tools can help to communicate with families, for marketing purposes, and expand reach to new members.
- SYSI recognizes the importance of the internet in shaping the public's perception of our organization. SYSI also recognizes the importance of our staff, coaches, participants, and volunteers in leading and setting the tone of social media interactions in a manner that advances SYSI's mission and goals.
- SYSI encourages the use of social media by its representatives to enhance effective internal and external communication, build the SYSI brand, and interact with members. Since there is much ambiguity in the use of social media, SYSI has created this policy to set boundaries and standards for representatives' social media use.
- SYSI member Zones and Community Associations are responsible to ensure that their social media use and regulations are consistent with this policy.
- Be smart about what you publish. Once something is posted, it exists online forever. Ask yourself, "would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or ten years from now?" If the answer is "no," do not post.

## APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY:

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This Policy applies to all Representatives.

### 1. Representative Responsibilities

- SYSI members and representatives in these capacities will not:
  - Use social media for the purpose of fraud or any other activity that contravenes the laws of Canada, SYSI and Saskatchewan Soccer Association's (SSA) Code of Conduct and Ethics, or any other applicable jurisdiction.
  - Use social media for cyber-bullying.
  - Impersonate any other person or misrepresent their identity, role, or position with SYSI.
  - Upload, post, email, or otherwise transmit:



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- i. Any content that is offensive, obscene, unlawful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, hateful, invasive of another person's privacy, or otherwise objectionable.
  - ii. Any material which is designed to cause annoyance, inconvenience, or needless anxiety to others.
  - iii. Any material that infringes on the patent, trademark, trade secrets, copyright, or other proprietary right of any other party.
  - iv. Any material that is considered SYSI's confidential information or intellectual property.
  - v. Unofficial accounts linked to SYSI or SYSI programming such as unapproved team accounts must state this in the page description, and must state these are not the opinions, views, or beliefs of SYSI or its affiliated programs.
- SYSI representatives shall refrain from discussing matters related to SYSI business or its operations on representatives' personal social media. Instead, matters related to SYSI, or its operations should be handled through more official communication channels (like email) or through SYSI-branded social media.
  - Any complaint referenced on social media will not be considered a formal complaint; a formal complaint must meet the requirements of the Formal Complaints Policy.
  - SYSI representatives shall use their best judgment to respond to controversial or negative content posted by other people on SYSI-branded social media. In some cases, deletion of the material may be the most prudent action. In other cases, responding publicly may be preferred. If a representative questions the correct action to take, the representative shall consult with their supervisor.
  - SYSI will be responsible to:
    - Ensure that representatives only use SYSI social media in a positive manner when connecting with others.
    - Properly vet and understand each social medium before directing representatives to engage with or create SYSI-branded social media.
    - Monitor representatives' use of SYSI social media channels.
    - At their own discretion remove any posting, comment, document, etc.
  - These guidelines are best practices in addition to SYSI and SSA Code of Conduct and Ethics and SYSI Risk Management Policy.

## 2. Communications Between Adults and Minors:

- Some guiding principles for communication between adults and minors:
  - Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?
  - Is this something I would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of my communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, other coaching staff, or other athletes?
  - Is this something I would be comfortable with if it were on the front page of my local newspaper?
- Electronic communications between adults and minors should always be:
  - Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and expectations.
  - Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered part of the Organization's records. Another coach or parent must be included in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.
  - Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a coach.

## 3. Guidelines for Conduct on Social Media and Team Related Apps:

- SYSI currently uses RAMP and TeamLinkt (sports management platforms), as well as SYSI approved emails as means of communication. All communications must be directed through these channels. However, technology changes, as such SYSI reserves the right to use more effective or new technologies at their discretion. Please note that zones and community associations may use other forms of communication, however these communications must be through official channels. Please contact the organization(s) to ensure that you know what communication processes and technologies they use.



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- Coaches and team personnel may have personal Facebook, Instagram, X, or other social media site pages but should avoid having any athlete member of the organization join their personal page as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” request from an athlete, and the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted.
- Coaches and athletes are not permitted to send a “private message” to each other through social media channels.
- Coaches and athletes are not permitted to send an “instant message” (IM) to each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.
- Coaches and athletes are encouraged to set their personal pages to “private” to prevent unwanted access to personal information.
- If the organization has an official Facebook, Instagram, X or other official social media page, athletes and their parents can “friend/follow/like” the Club for information and updates on team–related matters.
- Coaches should refrain from using their personal accounts to follow athletes on Facebook, Instagram, X, or any other social media sites.

## 4. Texting

- Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes only for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. As outlined above, texts between adults and minors should always be Transparent, Accessible and Professional (refer to point 2. *Communications Between Adults and Minors*).

## 5. Email

- Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or team personnel must also be copied.

## 6. Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communications

- The athlete, parent or guardian of an athlete may request in writing that they or their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.
- The athlete, parent or guardian of an athlete’s request should be shared with SYSI or the Zone/Community Association member and documented by SYSI or the Zone/Community Association member.

## ENFORCEMENT

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Failure to adhere to this Policy may permit discipline in accordance with the SYSI’s Discipline Code, legal recourse, or termination of employment/volunteer position, or may be removed from participation in SYSI programming.