



St. Albert Ringette Association Social Media Policy

Introduction

This policy has been developed to provide guidance for teams, volunteers, members, parents, and players to make informed decisions about how they utilize the Internet and other electronic methods of communication. Social Media plays an invaluable role in promoting the sport of Ringette in our communities. However, when used improperly, Social Media can become a platform for the inadvertent disclosure of personal information without consent and, in extreme cases, disrespectful, improper, and unlawful communication such as "cyberbullying".

As some online postings could conflict with the interests of the St. Albert Ringette Association (SARA) and its members, SARA has adopted the following Social Media Policy.

Any breaches of this policy may result in a warning or possible disciplinary action, subject to the St. Albert Ringette Association Code of Conduct, which can be found on the association website.

Jurisdiction

This policy applies to the business, activities, and events (including games, practices, and social events) organized by SARA, including all its teams, members, and participants. Additionally, SARA and its members are bound by the Social Media Policy set out by Ringette Alberta. Adherence to this policy is mandatory and is considered an essential component of the Code of Conduct.

"Social media" will be used throughout this document as a catch-all term encompassing various computer-mediated communication media, such as email, instant messaging, text messages, phone messages, TeamSnap, digital images, website postings, and social media platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Kahoot, blogs, and any other similar media.

Guidelines

It is the responsibility of everyone, including coaches, volunteers, and those in positions of trust in Ringette, to follow proper procedures both in the arena and online. This includes responsible communication through electronic means. Coaches and individuals in positions of responsibility must ensure they communicate responsibly.

When using any social media platform, individuals should:

- Think twice before posting, as once something is posted, it cannot be retracted even if it appears to be deleted.
- Maintain a positive social media presence. Negative behavior and comments reflect poorly on individuals and can impact the reputation of SARA.
- Write in the first person to clearly express personal opinions rather than those of SARA.



St. Albert Ringette Association Social Media Policy

- Adjust privacy settings to limit who can search for them and control the private information visible to others.
- Not feel obliged to join fan pages, follow feeds or people, or become "friends" with anyone. Coaches, teammates, officials, or opponents may add them, but reciprocation is not required.
- Understand and adhere to the rule that cell phones and/or other recording devices may not be allowed in dressing rooms per your team's policy¹.
- Be cautious when responding to inaccurate or negative comments about your association, team, players, or anyone involved with your association. To prevent escalation, it is advised not to engage in an open debate about these comments. Instead, please reach out to the SARA Board for guidance and advice.
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior on social media that aligns with your role as an athlete, a ringette player, and a member of your team and association.

Everyone using any social media platform should refrain from:

- Publishing negative comments about SARA, other associations, teams, players, referees, or any controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects or incidents that may have occurred.
- Using harassing, hostile, or derogatory language in any online communications.
- Using copyrighted information without proper citations and links. When posting exact or paraphrased text, photos, or videos, credit should be given to the author or publisher. Permission should be obtained from the copyright owner before using trademarks, slogans, logos, etc.

Teams, players, and volunteers often create websites or social media pages on various social media platforms. These online platforms can be beneficial for communicating schedule changes, new practices, changes in arenas, weather-related cancellations, team scores, tournament wins, and more. However, when using social media, teams and athletes should consider the following:

- At least one adult should have access to the site and be designated by the team to monitor the content.
- Official team communication from coaches and managers should be sent to the email addresses of parents/guardians, even if players have their own personal email addresses.
- Adults should not engage in one-on-one communication with players who are seventeen (17) years of age or younger.
- Coaches and parents should encourage players to inform a trusted adult if they receive any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable or if someone instructs them not to disclose the communication to anyone.

¹ Due to the potential risks for the well being of athletes, SARA strongly advises all teams to adhere to a no cell phone policy in dressing rooms.



St. Albert Ringette Association Social Media Policy

Coaches

A significant portion of ringette coaches work with children who are under 18 years old. It is crucial to exercise caution and avoid any appearance of improper conduct, especially when dealing with this age group. Unless a player/coach who is seventeen (17) years old or younger is a direct relative, coaches, managers, and trainers should generally refrain from:

- Accepting anyone under 18 as a friend on social networking sites or sharing their personal social web pages with them.
- Sending personal messages of a non-ringette nature to anyone under 18.
- Engaging in personal conversations or making social comments.

Remember that the “Rule of Two”, requiring two or more coaches to be involved when communicating with players and families, applies in digital and virtual settings as well.

Any member found to be in violation of the guidelines outlined in this policy may face disciplinary action in accordance with the SARA Code of Conduct, which may range from a warning to expulsion from the association. The SARA Code of Conduct can be found at any time on its website. If you have any questions regarding the SARA social media policy or any incidents related to it, please direct them to the SARA Board of Directors.



St. Albert Ringette Association Social Media Policy

