

SOCIAL MEDIA AND NETWORKING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this Social Media and Networking Policy, this policy will encompass public communication through such internet mediums and websites as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and any other social media network that allows users to communicate online as well as other forms of electronic communication, but not limited to, methods such as 'iMessage', 'BBM' or 'texting'.

The policy will be applicable to all members of the VDMHA, including Directors, Teams, Team Members, Coaches, players, players' family members and supporters.

VDMHA recognizes and appreciates the value of social media and the importance of social networking to all of its members. VDMHA also respects the right of all Teams and Association personnel to express their views publicly. At the same time, we must be aware of the dangers social media and networking can present.

The purpose of this policy is to educate the VDMHA on the risks of social media and to ensure all Teams and Association personnel are aware that the conduct deemed to be inappropriate may be subject to disciplinary action by the VDMHA.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Comments or remarks of an inappropriate nature which are detrimental to a Team, the Association or an individual will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.

It should be recognized that social media comments are on the record and instantly published and available to the public and the media. Everyone including Association and/or Team personnel, players, and media can review social media communications. You should conduct yourself in an appropriate and professional manner at all times.

Refrain from divulging confidential information of a persona; or team related nature. Only divulge information that is considered public.

Use your best judgement at all times. Pause before posting. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for your comments and they are published for the public record.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA VIOLATIONS

The following are examples of conduct through social media and networking mediums that are considered violations of the VDMHA Social Media and Networking Policy and may be subject to disciplinary action by the Team, VDMHA and/or Hockey Alberta

- Any statement deemed to be publicly critical of Association officials or detrimental to the welfare of a member Team, the Association or an individual.
- Divulging confidential information that may include, but is not limited to:
 - Personal player and/or team information
 - Referee complaints or remarks
 - Incidents that are under investigation by VDMHA or the League
- Any other matter of a sensitive nature to a member Team, the Association or an individual
- Negative or Derogatory comments about any of the Team, Association, and/or VDMHA Directors, programs, players, referees or any member of VDMHA
- Any form of bullying, harassment or threats against players, coaches, referees, or Team members.
- Photographs, videos or comments including but not limited to:
 - Drug use
 - Alcohol abuse
 - Hazing
 - Sexual exploitation, etc.
- Photographs shall not be taken in any dressing room, washroom or other private area and posted at any time
- Inappropriate, derogatory, racist or sexist comments of any kind
- Online activity that is meant to alarm other individuals or misrepresent the fact or truth

4. DISCIPLINE

Because social media violations may vary in terms of their seriousness and effect, care must be taken to consider sanctions that are appropriate in each situation that presents itself. That is not to say that these types of violations are minor, but rather, some may be more serious than others. This document is intended to assist the VDMHA as they assess social media violations.

Factors that can be considered when dealing with social media violations include:

- The intent of the violator
- Whether harm, physical or otherwise, resulted from the violation
- The circumstances of the violation
- The effect the violation had upon its recipient, the recipient's family, the team, the Association, or the community
- Any previous social media violation history

The VDMHA will investigate reported violations of this policy in a timely manner. If a violation is determined to have occurred, the VDMHA will impose appropriate disciplinary action including suspension, possible expulsion, and/or removal of said post.

5. A FINAL NOTE

When used appropriately, Social media is a powerful tool that can benefit any Team or Association. All members of VDMHA should remember to use discretion with all Social Media and Networking platforms. Think before you post. You cannot undo a post made in anger or haste.

