



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR COACHES AND ATHLETES

About These Guidelines

Winnipeg Phoenix FC is a club built on respect, teamwork, and community. These Guidelines exist to help coaches and athletes make good decisions regarding the use of social media — to protect themselves, protect each other, and represent Phoenix with pride.

These Guidelines are practical guidance, not a restatement of Club rules. The binding Policy — including the full list of prohibited conduct, enforcement procedures, and Club responsibilities — is set out in the Social Media Policy and Procedure . Coaches and athletes are expected to have read that document. Where these Guidelines and the Policy conflict, the Policy takes precedence.

These Guidelines cover four areas:

- Section 2: Guidance for coaches on online relationships, posting, and personal conduct.
- Section 3: Guidance for athletes (with parent notes), split by age group.
- Section 4: What to do if something goes wrong.

Before you read on

The Social Media Policy sets the rules. These Guidelines help you live them out day to day.

If you are unsure whether something is okay to post — that uncertainty is usually your answer.



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION 2 — GUIDELINES FOR COACHES

Coaching puts you in a position of trust. That trust extends to how you behave online. The guidance below is organized into four themes to make it easy to think through the areas where coaches most often need a clear framework.

2.1 Your Relationship with Athletes Online

The coach–athlete relationship is a professional one, even if it feels informal at times. That boundary matters online just as much as it does on the training pitch.

Connecting on social media

- Do not send friend or follow requests to athletes. If an athlete initiates the connection, you may accept — but apply the same standard to all athletes on your team. Do not follow some and not others.
- Consider keeping your personal accounts private or managed so athletes cannot follow you without your approval. This is not about hiding — it’s about maintaining appropriate boundaries.
- Never pressure an athlete to connect with you on any platform.

Direct messaging

- Avoid private one-on-one messages with athletes on any platform. Where communication is needed, keep it visible — use a team group chat, copy a parent or another coach, or use official Club channels.
- For athletes under 13, all digital communication must go through a parent or guardian, not directly to the athlete.
- Never use Snapchat or any disappearing-message platform to communicate with athletes. This is a requirement under the Policy, not just a suggestion.

What you see online

- If you see public social media activity that suggests a Code of Conduct concern — such as underage drinking, bullying, or unsafe behaviour — report it to the Club. Do not use it to confront the athlete or as leverage.
- Demanding access to an athlete’s private accounts or private posts is prohibited under the Policy.
- Do not use social media to catch athletes out. If an athlete tells you one thing in person and posts something different online, address it through proper conversation.



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.2 Posting About Your Team

Sharing your team's journey on social media can be wonderful — but it comes with real responsibilities, especially when your athletes are minors.

Before you post

- A signed Consent to Photograph/Video form must be on file with the Club before you post any image or video of an identifiable minor. Check with the Communications Coordinator if you are unsure.
- When in doubt, leave it out. Group celebration photos carry lower risk than individual close-ups, but consent still applies in both cases.

What to keep off social media

- Selection decisions, playing time, and roster changes are private team matters and must not be posted.
- Do not post criticism of referees, opposing players, or other clubs — even in a joking tone.
- Do not share anything that could identify where a minor athlete will be at a specific time.
- Internal team conflicts and disciplinary matters must stay off social media entirely.

Making information accessible

- Never make a social media account the only place where important team information appears. Schedules, cancellations, and key announcements must also go through official channels — email, the Club website, or the team app.
- Do not require athletes or parents to follow a social media account in order to receive team information.

2.3 Your Personal Social Media

Your personal accounts are your own. But what you post publicly can reflect on the Club and on your athletes.

- Exercise discretion. Content that seems harmless among friends can land differently when seen by a 12-year-old or their parent.
- Avoid publicly associating with content that is explicitly sexual, discriminatory, or that promotes drug or alcohol use.
- Remember that athletes model what they see their coaches do. How you engage online — with opponents, with critics, with controversy — sets an example whether you intend it to or not.



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Never misrepresent yourself online with a fake name or false profile. This is prohibited under the Policy.

2.4 If You Are the Team Social Media Manager

Some coaches may also serve as the designated Team Social Media Manager for their team's Club-authorized account. If that is you, the full operational requirements are set out in Part 2 of the Social Media Policy and Procedure — including account naming, Canva Pro template use, Meta Business Suite access, and succession. Read that document carefully. These Guidelines do not repeat those requirements.

Your key obligation as manager: every piece of content published on that account during your time in the role is your responsibility. If you step down, notify the Communications Coordinator immediately.

A note for parents and guardians

Your child's coach may be active on social media in a personal or professional capacity. If you have concerns about how a coach is interacting with your child online — including unwanted friend requests, direct messages, or posts featuring your child — please contact the Communications Coordinator or submit a report under the Club's Discipline and Complaints Policy.

You are also encouraged to talk with your child about who they are connecting with online and to check that privacy settings are appropriate.



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION 3 — GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES

You're part of something real here. Winnipeg Phoenix FC is your club, your team, your community. Social media can be a great way to celebrate that — and these guidelines are here to help you do that safely and confidently.

3.1 For All Athletes

You're a Phoenix member, online and off

- When you post about your team, your games, or your club, you're representing Winnipeg Phoenix FC. That doesn't mean you can't be yourself. It just means treating others the way you'd want to be treated, even online.
- Criticism of referees, opponents, or other clubs — even meant as a joke — can create real problems for you and your club. The Club's Code of Conduct applies to what you post online just as it does on the pitch.

Your privacy is yours to protect

- Set your privacy settings to control who can see your posts and who can search for you. You have the right to keep your personal life personal.
- You are never required to follow a coach, a Club page, or a team feed. No one should pressure you to do so.
- You do not have to accept friend or follow requests from coaches. It is completely okay to decline.

Once it's out there, it's out there

- Even if you delete a post, someone may already have a screenshot of it. Treat everything you post as permanent.
- Your public accounts may be seen by the Club, your coaches, and in the future, employers or university admissions. Your conduct on social media is part of how you represent yourself and this club.
- Before you post, ask yourself: would I be okay if my coach, my parents, and the Club Board all saw this? If not, don't post it.

If something doesn't feel right

- If anyone connected to the Club sends you a message online that makes you uncomfortable, you do not have to respond. Tell a parent, guardian, or trusted adult straight away.
- If you feel harassed, pressured, or unsafe because of something happening online, report it to a Club official. You will be taken seriously.



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

You are not alone

Reporting something that makes you uncomfortable is not being difficult. It is exactly the right thing to do.

Speak to a parent, a Club official, or your coach (if the concern involves someone else). You can also submit a report under the Club's Discipline and Complaints Policy.

A note for parents and guardians

This section is written directly to your child. We encourage you to read it with them and talk about it together.

Key things to reinforce at home: your child is never required to follow or friend a coach online; coach-athlete communication should be visible (not private DMs); and if anything online ever makes them uncomfortable, they should come to you first.

If you become aware of a concern involving a Club member's online behaviour toward your child, please contact the Communications Coordinator immediately.

3.2 Additional Guidance for Youth Athletes (Under 13)

If you're under 13, here are a few simple things to keep in mind.

- It's okay not to have social media yet. Many platforms require users to be at least 13. Your parents will help you figure out what's right for you.
- A coach should never be sending you private messages on their own. If that happens, show a parent straight away.
- Never share your location, home address, school, or schedule with anyone online — even someone you think you know from soccer.
- If someone online asks you to keep something secret from your parents, that is a warning sign. Tell a trusted adult immediately.
- Sharing photos of yourself or teammates online is something to do with a parent's permission, not on your own.

A note for parents and guardians

Children under 13 should not be communicating with coaches or Club officials privately on social media. Any team communication for this age group must go through you as the parent or guardian.

We strongly recommend reviewing any Club-related social media accounts your child follows, and having regular conversations about who they are talking to online.

The Club will never post images of your child without your signed consent on file with the



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Communications Coordinator.

3.3 Additional Guidance for Teen Athletes (13–17)

You probably know your way around social media better than most adults. Here’s what’s worth keeping in mind as an athlete at this age.

Your online identity matters

- What you post now can follow you for a long time. Future coaches, university programs, and employers do look at social media. You’ve worked hard on the pitch — make sure your online presence reflects that.
- You don’t have to share everything. It’s healthy to keep parts of your life private, including keeping personal struggles off public accounts.

Team group chats

- Team group chats are great for staying connected, but they’re still part of your Club life. The same standards apply: respect, no bullying, no pressure.
- If something in a group chat makes you uncomfortable or crosses a line, screenshot it and speak to a parent or Club official. You don’t have to handle it alone.
- Screenshots of private group chats shared publicly can seriously harm people. Think carefully before you share.

Peer pressure online is real

- You might feel pressure to post things about games, teammates, or Club events — especially after a big win or a tough loss. Take a breath before posting in the heat of the moment.
- If someone is pressuring you to post something or stay silent about something online, that is worth talking to a trusted adult about.

Representing your teammates

- Before you post a photo or video of a teammate, ask them if they’re okay with it. What feels fine to you might feel very different to them.
- Never post content that mocks or embarrasses a teammate, even as a joke. That content can cause real harm and may be considered bullying under the Club’s Code of Conduct.



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A note for parents and guardians

Teen athletes are navigating real social pressures online. The most valuable thing you can do is keep the conversation open — not just about rules, but about how social media makes them feel.

Key topics worth discussing: team group chat dynamics, the permanence of content, and what to do if something uncomfortable happens online involving another Club member.

If you become aware of online bullying or inappropriate behaviour involving Club members, please report it to the Club.



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4. What To Do If Something Goes Wrong

Social media situations can escalate quickly. Use this table as your first reference.

#	Situation	What to do
1	You see a post that may violate the Club's Code of Conduct or Policy	Don't engage with it publicly. Screenshot it for reference. Report it to the Communications Coordinator or a Club official.
2	A coach contacts you (as an athlete) privately and it makes you uncomfortable	Do not respond. Tell a parent or guardian immediately. Report to the Club. You will be taken seriously and supported.
3	You are being harassed or bullied online by someone connected to the Club	Block the person if needed. Keep evidence (screenshots). Report to a Club official under the Discipline and Complaints Policy. If you feel unsafe, tell a trusted adult right away.
4	You accidentally post something that violates the Policy	Take it down immediately. Let the Communications Coordinator know what happened. Honest mistakes handled quickly are treated differently from deliberate violations.
5	An unauthorized account is using the Club's name or branding	Do not engage with the account. Report it to the Communications Coordinator immediately so the Club can act with the platform.
6	You're not sure if something is okay to post	Ask first. Contact the Communications Coordinator before posting. It's always better to check.

Who to contact

Communications Coordinator — account issues, content concerns, consent questions, general Policy queries.

Club Officials / Board — serious conduct concerns or formal complaints.

Discipline and Complaints Policy — for formal complaints involving any Club member.

If a child is in immediate danger online (e.g., exploitation or grooming), contact local authorities directly.



Winnipeg Phoenix Football Club

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

APPROVED BY:

PHOENIX SOCCER Inc Board

DATE OF APPROVAL

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