



## HOCKEY NL: Social Media Policy

**Social Media is a great way to improve communication about Hockey related activities within your membership. However, the administrators of such sites should take the utmost security and care. High security features should be utilized and maintained by a board member. For instance, if you choose as an association to use a social media venue, the administrator should review “postings” before they are posted to a site such as Facebook. An elected board member should maintain all social media sites and not general membership.**

### **Purpose:**

There is no doubt that it is time to have guidelines in place to protect our associations and their members from the misuse of social media. Many associations across the province will unfortunately face the fallout of this rising trend. Hockey Newfoundland and Labrador has gathered a variety of resources together from across the country to provide support for your members and the association as a whole. It is important to note that every case you deal with is treated with your utmost attention.

### **Definitions:**

For the purpose of this social media policy, social media can be considered any form of on-line activity that actively involves “posting” information on the Internet. The policy will encompass public communications through such Internet mediums and websites as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Foursquare and any other social media network that allows users to communicate online. The policy will be applicable to all members of HOCKEY NL, including Directors, Teams, HOCKEY NL members and staff, on-ice and off-ice officials, players, players’ family members and supporters.

HOCKEY NL recognizes and appreciates the value of social media and the importance of social networking to all of its stakeholders. We must be aware of the dangers social media and networking can present and this policy will address the procedures that should be explored when a violation takes place. Board members in consultation with HOCKEY NL directors need to address incidents when they are made aware of them. One rule of thumb will generally keep all of us within the mandate of this policy; if it isn’t positive, don’t post it!

The purpose of this policy is two-fold:

- 1.) It should be used to educate members about the proper use of social media.
- and
- 2.) It should also provide guidelines to Boards when a violation occurs.

### **Policy Guidelines**

- HOCKEY NL holds all members who participate in social media and networking to the same standards as it does for all other forms of media including radio, television and print.
- Comments or remarks of an inappropriate nature, which are detrimental to any Team, Association or 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 media. Everyone including Association and/or Team personnel, players, corporate partners and the 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 personal or team related nature. Names of children, coaches or personnel should be avoided in any post whether it’s positive or negative.
- Use your best judgment at all times – pause before posting. Once your comments are posted they cannot

be retracted. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for your comments and they are published for the public record. They can be used in court and are considered evidence.

### **Violation Guidelines:**

The following are examples of conduct through social media and networking mediums that are considered violations of the HOCKEY NL Social Media Policy and may be subject to disciplinary action by the Association or HOCKEY NL officers.

- Any statement deemed to be publicly critical or detrimental to the welfare of any member, the Association or an individual.
- Negative or derogatory comments about any member of HOCKEY NL, local boards, teams, staff, programs, stakeholders, or players.
- Any form of bullying, harassment or threats against members, players or officials.**
- Photographs, video or comments promoting negative influences or criminal behavior.
- Online activity that contradicts the current policies of the HOCKEY NL or any local Association.
- Inappropriate, derogatory, racist, or sexist comments of any kind.
- Online activity that is meant to alarm other individuals or to misrepresent fact or truth.

### **Enforcement Guidelines:**

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 Minor Hockey Associations 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.

### **Disciplinary Guidelines:**

Possible disciplinary measures therefore depend on a number of factors. Please consider the following suggested actions for various conducts:

- Implicit or implied **threats of death or serious bodily harm**: indefinite suspension, referral to HOCKEY NL for investigation and punishment (also refer to police).
- **Encouraging someone to do themselves serious harm**: indefinite suspension, referral to HOCKEY NL for investigation.
- **Posting of pictures/video of a threatening nature**: indefinite suspension, referral to HOCKEY NL for investigation and punishment (also refer to police).
- **Slurs against someone's race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation**: lengthy suspension
- **Slurs against another member or their family**: warning or short suspension
- **Posting comments and/or pictures of self of an implied sexual nature**: lengthy suspension. Referral to HOCKEY NL (also refer to police).
- **Posting comments and/or pictures of someone else of an implied sexual nature**: **indefinite suspension**, referral to HOCKEY NL for investigation and punishment (also may refer to police)
- **Gossip - Posting or sending cruel gossip to damage a person's reputation and relationships with friends, family, and acquaintances**: warning or short suspension
- **Breaking into someone's e-mail or other online account and sending messages that will cause embarrassment or damage to the person's reputation and affect his or her relationship with others**: indefinite suspension, referral to HOCKEY NL for investigation and punishment (also refer to police)
- **Posting or sending unwanted or intimidating messages**: suspension
- **Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared online**: short suspension

**-Negative or derogatory comments about members, etc.:** warning and/or short suspension

## **SUMMARY**

When using social media and networking mediums, HOCKEY NL members should assume at all times they are representing HOCKEY NL or its member Associations or Teams. All members of HOCKEY NL should remember to use the same discretion with social media and networking as they do with other traditional forms of media. HOCKEY NL members agree to adhere to all conditions set forth within the Social Media Policy. It is understood that violating the guidelines set forth within the policy will lead to appropriate disciplinary action against both parents and or child/player.