



Devils Youth Social Media, Mobile, and Electronic Communication Policy

Social media is a part of the fabric of modern life, and Devils Youth recognizes the importance of technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Wikis, You Tube, podcasts, photographs, Internet forums, and blogs. While social networking allows us to stay connected and share important information with each other, it also creates an environment where inappropriate postings have the potential to cause real harm.

Devils Youth recognizes and supports freedom of speech, expression, and association. With that said, our organization is committed to the principles of good sportsmanship, teamwork, responsibility, healthy lifestyles, diversity, and inclusion. As representatives of our organization, it is important that our athletes, coaches, and staff members portray ourselves and our teams in a positive manner consistent with these values.

We cannot - and do not wish to - police the social media accounts and electronic communications of every member of our organization. While we believe it is our responsibility to promote kindness, respect, and community among all our players at all times, we have little if any control over our players' conduct when they are not under our supervision and we rely heavily on parents to help us manage any issues that arise outside of formal team functions. Devils Youth prefers to take an education-first, problem solving approach when it comes to addressing inappropriate electronic communication, but we reserve the right to take disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the organization and filing a Safe Sport report in the case of chronic or particularly egregious misconduct. We offer these guidelines as a way to minimize the risks associated with participation in social media.

For everyone:

- All online communication must be consistent with federal and state laws.
- Specifically prohibited electronic content includes but is not limited to sexually explicit, profane, lewd, indecent, illegal, or defamatory language/images; derogatory language regarding club personnel or other players; comments designed to harass or bully players or club personnel; nude, sexually-oriented, or indecent photos, images, or altered pictures.

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**For players:**

- Remember that once information is out there, it cannot be taken back. Once you have posted something, it becomes the property of the website or social media platform where it was posted. People can always take screen shots of texts or posts, and even deleted posts can turn up in future searches. Never put anything out there that you would not want your mom/dad/sibling/grandparent/friend/coach/teacher/clergy member/future employer to see.
- Avoid sharing private information. Do not disclose your date of birth, address, telephone number, or details about your daily routine as they can facilitate identity theft or stalking.
- Consider your career. College admissions officers and employers routinely conduct Internet searches on potential candidates. Anything you have posted on social media is considered public information, and they will find it.

For parents:

- Parents are encouraged to monitor their children's online activity, including social media postings, texts, emails, online forums, and gaming chats.
- Given our limited ability to police players' behavior away from the rink, we may look to parents to help us manage conflicts or bullying that occur on social media or via electronic communication.
- USA Hockey guidelines prohibit photography and video recording in the locker room except under such unique circumstances as a victory celebration or team party where all persons in the locker room are appropriately dressed and are aware that photographs or recordings are being taken.
- Parents should be cognizant of their own online activity and ensure that any postings related to their child's team and teammates are positive and constructive.

For coaches and staff:

- Coaches and staff members must be mindful of the powerful position they hold as role models for our young athletes. As such, personnel should ask themselves if the content of their social media profiles is consistent with the image they wish to portray to their players, and if it is not, they should consider making their social media accounts private and declining friend requests from their players and/or parents.



- Coaches should never engage in private electronic communication with players. Any text or email conversations must include at least one other responsible adult, such as another coach or the team manager. Under most circumstances, electronic communications between a coach and player should also include the player's parent or guardian. Coaches and players should not communicate via private message through a social media platform such as Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook.
- The presence of cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities in the locker room increases the risk of some types of abuse or misconduct, and as such Devils Youth strongly recommends that coaches prohibit their players from bringing these devices into the locker room at all. Players can leave their phones with their parents, or coaches/managers can collect phones upon entry to the locker room.

Resources:

"Creating a Social Media Policy for Athletes: Coach & Athletic Director." *Coach and Athletic Director*, coachad.com/articles/creating-social-media-policy-athletes/.

"Social Media Policy." *Oak Hills Youth Athletics*, www.ohyouthathletics.org/page/show/929685-social-media-policy.



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