



## 6.26 Social Media and Networking Policy

### **Introduction:**

For the purpose of this Social Media and Networking Policy, 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 as well as other forms of electronic communication, but not limited to, methods such as 'BBM' or 'texting'. The policy will be applicable to all members of the Hockey Eastern Ontario (HEO) Community, including Directors, Teams, HEO members and staff, on-ice and off-ice officials, billets, players, players' family members and supporters. HEO recognizes and appreciates the value of social media and the importance of social networking to all of its stakeholders. HEO 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.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to educate the HEO Community on the risks of social media and to ensure that all Teams and Association personnel are aware that conduct deemed to be inappropriate may be subject to disciplinary action by the Team, the Minor Hockey Association, League and/or HEO.

### **Social Media Guidelines:**

- a) HEO holds the entire HEO Community who participates in social media and networking to the same standards as it does for all other forms of media including radio, television and print.
- b) Comments or remarks of an inappropriate nature which are detrimental to a Team, the Association, the Branch or an individual will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.
- c) It should be recognized that social media and comments such as 'texting' are on the record and can be 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.
- d) Refrain from divulging confidential information of a personal or team related nature. Avoid revealing business or game strategy that could provide another team or individual a competitive advantage. Furthermore, do not discuss injury information about any player i.e., only divulge information that is considered public.
- e) Use your best judgment at all times – pause before posting or sending. Once your comments are posted or sent they cannot be retracted. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for your comments.
- f) If requested to participate in an online network, as a direct result of your affiliation with or participation in Hockey Eastern Ontario, HEO recommends that you request approval from the Team or the Association.
- g) Players or hockey operations staff are not permitted to participate in social media or networking two (2) hours prior to the start of an HEO game and at least one (1) hour following the completion of an HEO game.

### **Social Media Violations:**

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

- a) Any statement deemed to be publicly critical of Association officials or detrimental to the welfare of a member Team, the Association or an individual;
- b) Divulging confidential information that may include, but is not limited to the following:





- player injuries;
  - trades or other player movement;
  - game strategies; or
  - any other matter of a sensitive nature to a member Team, the Association or an individual.
- c) Negative or derogatory comments about any of the Team, Minor Hockey Association, League and/or HEO staff, programs, stakeholders, players or any member of an HEO Team;
- d) Any form of bullying, harassment, intimidation or threats against players or officials;
- e) Photographs, video or comments promoting negative influences or criminal behavior, including but not limited to:
- drug use;
  - alcohol abuse;
  - public intoxication;
  - hazing ; and/or
  - sexual exploitation, etc.
- f) Online activity that contradicts the current policies of HEO or any of its member Associations;
- g) Inappropriate, derogatory, racist, or sexist comments of any kind, in keeping with the HEO policies and regulations on these matters; and/or
- h) Online activity that is meant to alarm other individuals or to misrepresent fact or truth.

#### **Discipline:**

The Team, Minor Hockey Association, League and/or HEO will investigate reported violation(s) of this policy in the manner set out in the HEO Operating Policies for other types of violations. If the investigation determines that a violation has occurred, the Team, Minor Hockey Association, League and/or the applicable Chairperson involved will impose an appropriate suspension considering:

- a) The intent of the violator
- b) Whether harm, physical or otherwise, resulted from the violation
- c) The circumstances of the violation.
- d) The effect the violation had on its recipient, the recipient's family, the team, the Association, the League or community.
- e) Any previous social media violation

Any appeal of the suspension will be dealt with as set out in a Minor Hockey Association, League and/or the HEO Operating Policies for other types of suspensions.

#### **Summary:**

When using social media and networking mediums, the HEO community should assume at all times they are representing HEO and/or its member Associations or Teams. All members of the HEO community should remember to use the same discretion with texting, etc., social media and networking as they do with other traditional forms of media.

Should the identity or image of any member of the HEO community be used in social media and networking without the authorization of the Individual, Team or Association, this is considered to be identity theft. Please notify your HEO Team Management or the HEO Office immediately. Any use of a player or team member's image or likeness without the written consent of HEO is strictly prohibited.

