



Guidelines for Smartphone and Social Media Use in Team Environments

As players begin to have access to smartphones, messaging applications, and social media, and team leaders see benefit in promoting their team online, it becomes important to create standards and expectations in the team context to ensure everyone is upholding the Code of Conduct and honoring themselves and the game.

Unfortunately, young players have found themselves in positions where messaging applications, social media, and team messaging groups became spaces for negative behaviour and even maltreatment.

Considerations for Players

Players should be aware that their actions in online domains will have consequences related to their Code of Conduct expectations. Consider the following:

- Players must follow the Dressing Room and Social Media policies that require phones and recording devices to be securely stored out of reach in the dressing room (ex: zipped in pocket of equipment bag).
- While some coaches may allow phones to be used solely for the purpose of playing music, players should be respectful of this provision and use with discretion.
- Parents, Guardians, Coaches, and Team Staff should stay up to date on social media platforms and trends, and speak candidly with players about expectations of honorable conduct in person and online, and promoting responsible online behaviours.
- Parents, Guardians, Coaches, and Team Staff can help organize in-person activities for socializing and team building.
- Player only chat groups should be discouraged for young age groups.
- Players should be educated on boundaries and expectations such as:
 - Not speaking about others in online forums.
 - Not sharing photos without the subject's consent.
 - Reporting breaches of conduct, or online messages or posts that make them uncomfortable to a trusted adult.
 - Long term consequences of sharing inappropriate photos, and online bullying, including removal from hockey.
- Ultimately...does your online content pass the “Grandma” test? Would you be comfortable with your Grandma seeing what you are posting? If not, it is likely not the right thing to post. Another



way to test your post is to consider “Is this the ‘me’ I want you to see.” Can you be proud of what you are posting considering it could be seen by people dear to you?

- Players who are committed to their performance should consider the implications of screen time on important factors such as rest, focus, and overall mental performance. Management of time and intentional use of screen time and social media use can positively impact performance.

Considerations for Coaches

Coaches should serve as leaders, demonstrating how online safety and care will ultimately support team performance.

- Set and uphold team rules regarding smartphone use at team events. This includes in the dressing room, on team buses, during team meetings, etc.
- Share learning resources with players on how smartphone use can impact performance. (ex. The work of Larissa Mills at the Mental Game Academy)
- Have older players pledge to a team social media agreement. Here is an example from Positive Coaching Alliance: https://positivecoach.org/wp-content/uploads/PCA_SocialMediAgreement_updated.pdf
- Ensure parents/guardians are aware of phone and social media policies you have for the team. Discuss with parents and guardians early in the season and ongoing.

Considerations for Team Management

The Team Management should administer or directly oversee any team social media accounts.

While parents/guardians often volunteer to take on this role, team accounts should not be made without the direction and ongoing approval of Team Management. More than one individual should have administrative access to team accounts, one of whom should be a member of the team or association management.

- Accounts should have more than one administrator.
- Account activity must uphold the Hockey Saskatchewan Social Media & Media Policy, and association ethical code and values.
- Posts and content should be age appropriate in relation to the team.
- Athletes should be fully dressed in all posts.
- Content should be produced with an age appropriate audience in mind. Younger players look up to older teams, and content should be reflective of this threshold.



- Accounts should be closely monitored by the team management/administrators.
- Keep comments closed if there are times accounts cannot be monitored or moderated.
- Do not tag others in posts without their consent.
- Do not post photos/videos of those outside of the team without their consent.
- Content should be positive and celebratory, and showcase the team in a respectful way.

Considerations for Parents/Guardians

- Stay up to date on social media platforms and trends, and speak candidly with players about expectations of honorable conduct in person and online, and promoting responsible online behaviours.
- Speak to your player about their role in leadership and team representation that extends beyond time in the field of play, and into online domains.
- Promote healthy screen time practices in relation to optimal rest and performance.
- Share learning resources with players on how smartphone use can impact performance. (ex. The work of Larissa Mills at the Mental Game Academy)
- Implement healthy screen time management tools to support your player's performance.
- Familiarize yourself with the Hockey Saskatchewan Social Media and Media Policy and the Code of Conduct.
- Demonstrate positive online behaviour by keeping personal posts relative to the team positive and helpful.

Resources

<https://www.daretocare.ca/post/do-you-know-what-your-children-are-googling>

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/keep-your-child-safe-online>

<https://positivecoach.org/resource-zone/>

<https://members.thecoachessite.com/article/glass-and-out-hockey-podcast-larissa-mills>