



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY			
Reviewed:	March 2018	Effective:	
Next Review:	March 2021	Approval:	Board of Directors

1. Purpose:

Athletics Ontario understands that social media is a prominent platform for the communication and posting of content on the Internet. With the significant amount of ambiguity surrounding the use of social media, AO has created this policy to provide boundaries and standards for its Members' social media use.

2. Definitions:

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

- *“Social media”*- Content created and distributed primarily using the internet and mobile based tools designed for sharing and discussing information. Using such tools as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and blogs.
- *“Athletics Ontario branded social media”*- Official social media engagement by Athletics Ontario including Athletics Ontario’s Facebook page, Twitter feed, Instagram account, Youtube channel, or other social media platforms; both those that exist currently and those that will be created by Athletics Ontario in the future.
- *“Members”*- Members include, but are not limited to, staff, committee members, directors, athletes, coaches, officials, associates and volunteers.

3. Policy:

Athletics Ontario encourages the use of social media by its members and staff to enhance effective communication, build the Athletics Ontario brand and engage the community in a positive method that reflects the values and goals of the association. Members shall abide by Athletics Ontario’s *Code of Conduct policy* and all other AO related policies.

<http://athleticsontario.ca/policies>

Athletics Ontario reserves the right to post information/pictures of AO athletes and competitions for the purpose of building the Athletics Ontario brand.

This Policy applies to all members, volunteers and staff.

4. General Social Media Responsibilities for all Members and Staff:

All members and staff of Athletics Ontario shall:

- Not use social media for the purpose of fraud or any other activity that contravenes the laws of Canada or Athletics Ontario’s *Code of Conduct policy*.
- Not impersonate any other person or misrepresent their identity, role, or position with Athletics Ontario.
- Not upload, post, email or otherwise transmit:
 - i. Any content that is offensive, obscene, unlawful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, hateful, invasive of another member’s privacy or otherwise objectionable.

- ii. Any material that infringes on the patent, trademark, trade secrets, copyright or other proprietary right of any other party.
- iii. Any material that is considered Athletics Ontario's confidential information or intellectual property as per Athletics Ontario policies.
- Refrain from discussing matters related to Athletics Ontario or its operations on Members' personal social media accounts. Instead, matters related to Athletics Ontario or its operations shall be handled through official communication channels (i.e., email) or Athletics Ontario branded social media.

In all cases, if you are in doubt of how to use or respond to social media correspondence, contact Athletics Ontario (office@athleticsontario.ca) for assistance.

5. Guidelines for Athletes, Coaches and Clubs:

This policy provides athletes, coaches and clubs with guidelines for social media use. Athletes, coaches and clubs are strongly encouraged to develop their own social media strategy, ensuring their use of social media is acceptable pursuant to Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct policy*.

5A. Guidelines for Athletes:

The following guidelines should be considered by athletes in forming their strategy for social media use:

- Set your privacy settings to restrict who can search you and what private information other people have access to.
- Coaches, teammates, officials and/or opposing competitors may add you to a social media application. You are not required to follow anyone or be friends with anyone on any social media application.
- If you feel harassed by someone on any social medium, report it to your coach, club official, or to Athletics Ontario.
- Do not feel pressured to join a fan page on any social media application.
- Content posted on your social media platforms, relative to your privacy settings, is considered public. In most cases, you do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy for any material that you post or share.
- Avoid posting pictures of, or alluding to, participation in any illegal activity.
- Model appropriate behavior in social media befitting your status as: a) an athlete, and b) a member of your club and of Athletics Ontario.
- As a member of Athletics Ontario, you have agreed to adhere to Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct policy* and must follow that agreement when posting material and/or interacting with others on various social media platforms.
- Be aware that any of your social media posts may be monitored by your club, coach or by Athletics Ontario and content or behavior demonstrated on social media may be subject to sanction under Athletics Ontario's *Disciplinary Committee*.

5B. Guidelines for Coaches:

The following guidelines should be considered by coaches in forming their strategy for social media use:

- Always use social media in a professional and positive manner.
- Ensure your social media behavior is compliant with Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct policy*.

- Most experts in risk management recommend that coaches do not interact with minor athletes on social media. If you do, make sure to keep all communications public.
- Seek permission from athletes and parent(s)/guardian(s) if the athlete is under the age of majority before communicating on social media.
- Do not initiate contact on social media from your personal account.
- Involve your athletes in creating your club communication policy for social media use.
- Coaches are encouraged to use appropriate current privacy settings to control access to their personal social media platforms.
- Be wary of creating communication gaps if you use multiple social media platforms to communicate with your members. Try to use one primary platform when disseminating important coaching information.
- Team selection decisions are not to be made over social media, rather use a more official communication form, like email or an official Athletics Ontario media platform.

5C. Guidelines for Clubs:

In addition to ensuring that every club member is provided the *Social Media Policy*, including the parents of athletes, the following guidelines should be considered by clubs in forming their strategy for social media use:

- Clubs should monitor social media usage by its athletes and coaches and have a general understanding of their online presence and personal branding. Coaches and athletes need to be aware that behavior on social media is subject to Athletics Ontario *Code of Conduct policy* and other related AO policies.
- Complaints and concerns about an athlete's or coach's conduct or behavior on social media can be addressed under Athletics Ontario Disciplinary Committee and *Harassment policy*.

6. Non – Compliance:

Failure to adhere to this policy may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with related Athletics Ontario policies.