



## **NIAGARA FALLS MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION SOCIAL MEDIA AND NETWORKING POLICY**

For the purpose of this Social Media and Networking Policy, this policy will encompass public communications through such internet mediums, websites, and online communities such as, but not limited to; Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, blogging, and any other social media network that allows users to communicate online.

The Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association recognizes and appreciates the value of social media and the importance of social networking. The Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association 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. Social Networking allows for inappropriate unsupervised conduct which may be detrimental to the welfare of all who are involved with the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association.

The purpose of this policy is to educate Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association's membership on the risks of social media and to ensure all teams and Association personnel are aware that conduct deemed to be inappropriate may be subject to disciplinary action by the team and the Association.

### **Social Media Guidelines**

a.) The Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association holds the entire membership 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 the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association, a team, or an individual will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.

c.) 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.

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. Only divulge information that is considered public.

e.) Using the identity or image of any member of the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association without the Individuals' authorization may be considered identity theft.

f.) Use your best judgement at all times – pause before posting. Once your comments are posted they cannot be retracted. Even the publisher of anonymous posts can be determined.

g.) You are solely responsible for your comments and they will be published for the public record.

## **Social Media Violations**

The following are examples of conduct through social media and networking mediums that are considered violations of the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association's social media and networking policy and may be subject to disciplinary action by the team and/or the Association.

a.) Any statement deemed to be publicly critical of association officials, or detrimental to the welfare of a member of a team or the Association.

b.) Divulging confidential information that may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Player injuries;
- Player movement;
- Game strategies; or
- Any other matter of a sensitive nature to a member of a team, association or an individual.

c.) Negative or derogatory comments about any team, the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association, volunteers, staff, programs, players, or members.

d.) Any form of bullying, harassment, or threats against players or officials.

e.) Photographs, video, or comments promoting negative influences or criminal behaviour, including but not limited to:

- Drug use;
- Alcohol abuse;
- Public intoxication;
- Hazing;
- Sexual exploitation; etc.

f.) Online activity that contradicts the current policies of the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association or any of its member associations.

g.) Inappropriate, derogatory, racist, or sexist comments of any kind, in keeping with the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association policies and regulations on these matters.

h.) Online activity that is meant to alarm other individuals or to misrepresent fact or truth.

## **Discipline**

The team and the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association will investigate all reported violation(s) of this policy. If the investigation determines that a violation has occurred, the team and/or the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Association will impose an appropriate response.

a.) The first violation will result in a verbal warning from the team or Association official and notification of the violation to the Executive.

b.) The second violation will result in an automatic five (5) game suspension and a discipline meeting with the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Executive.

c.) The third violation will result in an automatic indefinite suspension and a discipline meeting with the Niagara Falls Minor Hockey Executive.

The Executive recognizes that perpetrator intent and victim impact may differ in each case and reserves the right to escalate the process to automatic suspension immediately.