

Social Media and Communications Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety, well-being, and protection of all members of the South Leicester Youth Hockey (SLYH), including children, coaches, and parents/guardians, while using social media and other communication platforms. This policy also seeks to set guidelines on the use of photography and video to ensure respect and privacy.

By participating with SLYH, all members, coaches, volunteers, and parents agree to abide by this policy and maintain the safety and integrity of the club's community.

Scope:

This policy applies to all SLYH members, staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians, and covers the use of social media platforms, websites, apps, and digital communication tools.

1. General Principles

- **Respectful Communication:** All communication, whether online or offline, should demonstrate respect, kindness, and consideration for others. Bullying, harassment, or any form of discrimination will not be tolerated.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality:** All members' personal information, including contact details, medical information, and performance data, should be kept confidential and not shared on social media or through any communication platforms without explicit consent from the individual or their guardian (if under 18).
- **Positive Representation:** Members and parents should use social media to promote the values of SLYH, including teamwork, fair play, and respect. Negative or inappropriate comments about the club, other members, or the sport should not be posted.

2. Social Media Guidelines

- **SLYH Social Media Accounts:** Only authorised club representatives (e.g., coaches, administrators) are permitted to post on the official club social media accounts. Content should remain positive, focused on achievements, events, and other relevant club activities.
- **Personal Social Media Accounts:** Members, coaches, and parents should exercise caution when using personal social media accounts. Posting about the club or individuals associated with the club should be done responsibly, and no content should violate the privacy or integrity of others.
- **No Tagging or Posting Without Consent:** Parents or guardians must give consent before photos, videos, or personal details of their child are posted or tagged on any social media platform. Members should not post personal information about others, including without consent.

3. Communication with Members

- **Messaging Platforms:** Communication between coaches and athletes should primarily be conducted via SLYH-approved messaging platforms, ensuring transparency and accountability. Coaches should avoid private one-on-one communication with minors (under 18) on personal messaging apps.
- **Parent/Guardian Involvement:** Communication regarding the welfare or any concerns about a minor should always involve their parent/guardian. Coaches should not communicate privately with athletes under the age of 18 about sensitive issues without parental consent.
- **Respect Boundaries:** Coaches and staff should maintain professional boundaries when communicating with members. All messages should be work-related, clear, and respectful.

Growing youth participation in hockey

4. Photography and Video Policy

- **Consent for Photography and Video:** Photographs or videos of athletes may be taken during club events for promotional, educational, or documentation purposes. Before capturing any photos or videos, the club must obtain written consent from the athlete's parent/guardian (if the athlete is under 18). Consent forms will be available at registration.
- **Usage of Media:** Photos and videos taken at club events may be used on the club's website, social media platforms, and other promotional materials. Images should focus on the activity or event and not individual athletes in a compromising or harmful manner.
- **Sensitive Content:** No images or videos that could be considered inappropriate, disrespectful, or invasive of privacy (e.g., those that identify an athlete's personal struggles, injuries, etc.) should be shared online.
- **Removal of Images/Video:** If a parent/guardian requests that their child's photo or video be removed from any public platform, the club will comply with the request promptly.

5. Guidance for Coaches, Volunteers, and Staff

- **Professional Conduct:** Coaches and volunteers must always uphold the highest standards of professionalism when interacting with members online, including avoiding inappropriate comments, images, or language.
- **Monitoring:** Coaches and staff must monitor all online interactions related to the club and address any inappropriate behaviour, including cyberbullying, harassment, or any actions that could harm the reputation or safety of individuals.
- **Reporting Concerns:** Any inappropriate or concerning behaviour online (including bullying, harassment, or harmful content) should be reported immediately to the SLYH Welfare Officer for further action.

6. Cyberbullying and Harassment

- **Zero Tolerance Policy:** SLYH has a zero-tolerance policy for cyberbullying and online harassment. Any individual found to be engaging in such behaviour may face disciplinary action, including possible suspension or removal from the club.
- **Reporting:** Any athlete, coach, or parent who experiences or witnesses cyberbullying or harassment should report the incident to a club official, safeguarding officer, or via a dedicated reporting system. The club will investigate all reports promptly and take appropriate action.

7. Safeguarding

- **Safeguarding Officer:** The club has a designated Welfare Officer who is available to discuss any concerns about safety or well-being, whether online or offline.
- **Training:** All staff, volunteers, and coaches will receive training on online safety, safeguarding, and appropriate conduct in digital environments.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. Any amendments will be communicated to all members and their parents/guardians.