



Social Media Policy

While people have the right to freedom of speech, there are reasonable limits to that right as it pertains to what people communicate via social media involving the Erin Mills Soccer Club and other members and participants. Everyone who is part of the Club - parents, players, staff, coaches, match officials, spectators, volunteers and directors - need to be aware of the risks and consequences involved when engaging in social media activities. We all have the responsibility to uphold the values of fair play, community spirit, sportsmanship and fellowship that we share as members of the Erin Mills Soccer Club, both on and off the field of play, and that includes behavior on social media.

WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

- D. Parents
- E. Volunteers
- F. Match Officials
- A. Club Employees and Directors
- B. Coaches
- C. Players

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- A. To ensure that social media activity related to the Club is healthy and positive.
- B. To prevent the posting or dissemination of harmful, negative or inappropriate comments, pictures or other forms of media to the public via social media.
- C. To remind everyone associated with the Club, especially youth players, that social media postings, even if deleted, can be permanent and may have far-reaching consequences that may not be fully appreciated at the time.
- D. To provide clear guidelines regarding appropriate behavior to ensure a safe, secure, positive and respectful environment for everyone.
- E. To ensure that all members understand how social media can be used to harm or discredit others through inappropriate comments, photos, rumors or language.
- F. To ensure that it is clear what types of behavior are acceptable.
- G. To create awareness around the potential consequences of inappropriate postings, including disciplinary action.

POSITIVE USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- A. Provide information about training, practices, game times, field locations, scores
- B. Celebrate achievements of various kinds
- C. Demonstrate positive support for players, teams, and EMSC
- D. Highlight educational opportunities
- E. Promote programs, workshops and advancement opportunities
- F. Share inspirational thoughts and ideas

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media comments, photos, etc. can spread to thousands of people instantly and can be terribly damaging to individuals and their families. More than simply being inappropriate or insensitive, such actions can lead to terrible consequences. We are all more aware than ever before about the issues of anxiety and depression, for example, in young people as well as adults. We must be aware that words and actions shared via social media can be debilitating to all affected.

In addition, there are other practical outcomes. Jobs have been lost because of things posted online. Many young athletes have seen their scholarships revoked because of comments made through social media. We can harm others—and ourselves—by thoughtless or malicious behavior online.

GUIDELINES: ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

- Be responsible
- Be honest
- Treat others as they want to be treated
- Respect the privacy of others
- Only photograph or video other players if their parents agree
- Before posting something pause and think it through – ask yourself: “how would I feel if someone said things like that about me?”
- Respect all copyrighted information when posting
- Recognize that they alone are responsible for their words and actions. Therefore, make sure it is true, accurate and that they can live with the consequences – both ethically and legally

The Erin Mills Soccer Club Expects That Individuals WILL NOT:

- Pick fights
- Respond to negative posts in kind
- Threaten or bully
- Make sexual comments
- Comment on controversial subjects in an inappropriate manner
- Post videos, photographs or comments that are vulgar, offensive, abusive or that promote criminal behavior, including but not limited to:
 - Drug use
 - Alcohol abuse
 - Hazing
 - Sexual exploitation
- Make comments that bring discredit to the game, the Club or others
- Post or comment on matters such as legal issues or discipline without proper authorization to do so
- Make comments of a racist, sexist, ageist or discriminatory nature
- Re-tweet or re-post the inappropriate comments of others
- Engage in sexting or re-tweeting or re-posting a sexting image

WHAT TYPES OF CYBER BULLYING AND HARASSMENT CAN OCCUR VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

- Negative comments (including outright fabrications/lies) about coaches and players
- Insult and/or threats
- Racially oriented, religious or cultural comments
- Homophobic or sexist comments
- Personally damaging comments
- Posting of inappropriate photos or videos
- Negative and/or threatening texting, including sexting

WHAT TO TELL A CHILD OR YOUNG ADULT IF THEY ARE BULLIED OR THREATENED VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

- A. Don't respond
- B. Tell an adult you trust immediately – (if a physical threat is made, contact the police)
- C. Save the messages
- D. Block the sender

CONSEQUENCES/DISCIPLINE

As a Club affiliated with the Peel-Halton Soccer Association and Ontario Soccer Association, ongoing education and awareness is critically important when it comes to the use of social media. Ideally, an issue arising out of inappropriate use of social media can be dealt with through education and an informal resolution process.

However, if formal complaints are lodged and informal mediation is not successful, an affected party can ask the Club to deal with any misconduct contrary to this Social Media Policy pursuant to:

- The Club's Rules and Regulations;
- The Club's Code of Conduct;
- The Club's Constitution & By-Laws;
- The Club's Harassment Policy; or
- The OSA's Harassment Policy.

While it is impossible to fully prevent others from engaging in inappropriate social media behavior, we need to remind ourselves that we are all—parents, players, coaches, etc.— responsible for our own words and actions. Common sense should prevail. When in doubt about the appropriateness of a social media posting, please contact the ***Erin Mills Soccer Club***.

If you are a player and you become aware of an inappropriate social media posting, please talk to your Coach, your Parents, an adult that you trust or a Club Representative.

If you're a parent, coach, employee, volunteer, match official, please contact the Club's Discipline Chair or a Club Official and report your concerns.

Those who do not adhere to this Social Media Policy could face sanctions imposed by the ***Erin Mills Soccer Club***, from formal warnings to suspensions or being expelled or terminated from the Club.