



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY & GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The use of Social Media has become an integral aspect of communications throughout the hockey community in Calgary, Alberta and across Canada.

SMHA utilizes various social media channels to promote the organization, its programs and partnerships. Currently, SMHA utilizes official accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for delivering messages and information to the Springbank hockey community and beyond.

Utilizing social media effectively requires following certain rules and guidelines, exercising care and caution, educating on the best practices for utilizing social media channels and, when required, assessing disciplinary action or sanction to individuals who engage in unacceptable conduct when using social media.

SMHA's use of social media involves potentially every program, board member, volunteer, team, parent, player and stakeholder.

This document provides an overview of how SMHA utilizes social media in its overall Communication Plan and to provide guidelines for board members and participants on best practices when using social media. This policy is not intended to interfere with the private lives of our members or infringe on their right to freedom of speech. This policy is designed to ensure that we continue to maintain the integrity and respect in the SMHA Community and that all individuals will be held accountable for their actions should there be a breach of the guidelines.



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SOCIAL MEDIA AT SMHA

Overview

SMHA utilizes current and emerging technology and media to conduct the day-to-day business of the organization, to be as engaging and interactive as possible, and to promote and maintain a positive image in the Calgary hockey community. As a result, the use of social media is a key part of Communications, Marketing and other strategies undertaken by SMHA.

The main goal of social media use for SMHA is to share information with SMHA players, parents, teams and volunteers.

As part of that central goal, other objectives for the use of social media use for SMHA are:

- Increasing public awareness of who SMHA is, and what we do
- Sharing news and important information
- Celebrate good news/success stories
- Engaging with followers and stakeholders
- Promotion of SMHA sponsored programming

What it is NOT to be used for:

- Promotion or sales of programming or otherwise, outside SMHA sponsorship
- Reflect any dialogues or photographs in dressing rooms, regardless of context
- Comment or promote a position that may be detrimental to the team or SMHA.
- Criticize referees or event organizers

Best Practices and Guidelines

The assigned communications member is responsible for the day-to-day operations and monitoring of SMHA's social media channels, and ensuring that best practices and planning are utilized to help ensure that SMHA's social media usage is effective and wide-ranging.

Official Accounts

Facebook: @SMHAhockey

Twitter: @SMHAHockey

Instagram: @SpringbankMinorHockey

YouTube: no account at this time

LinkedIn: no account at this time



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Consent to Publish

Upon SMHA annual registration a Consent and Media Release will be provided to all registrants. It is the responsibility of the member, parent or legal guardian, to elect for consent for media release.

Springbank Minor Hockey Association maintains an official presence on certain social media platforms including: “springbankminorhockey” on Instagram and “Springbank Minor Hockey” on Facebook.

Social media pages created by individual SMHA teams which display SMHA events, players or logos are not official pages of the SMHA. Such pages are not authorized or approved by the SMHA and are contrary to this Policy. Any individual SMHA teams violating this Policy by creating and hosting any such pages are solely responsible for the content of such pages, including any and all comments posted thereon.

Similarly, social media pages created by individual members or players which display SMHA events, players or logos are not official pages of the SMHA. Any individual members displaying SMHA events, players or logos on their personal pages are also solely responsible for the content of such pages, including any and all comments posted thereon.

The SMHA assumes no obligation or responsibility whatsoever to supervise or monitor any posts, comments or conduct which takes place on any such pages. However, the SMHA Board reserves the right to discipline any team officials and/or individual members or players in accordance with the SMHA by-laws if the posts, content or conduct on any such pages is determined by the Discipline Committee to be below a reasonably acceptable standard of behavior or is improper, unbecoming or contrary to the interests or reputation of the SMHA.

Streaming of SMHA events over social media platforms is permitted provided that access and/or admission to such events is controlled by the host (i.e., access is “private” not “public”) and all comments, dialogue or other interactive features available on the platform are disabled.

Creating New Accounts

If a SMHA member believes that the creation of a new social media account (for example, a new Twitter handle) would be beneficial to promoting SMHA, its programs and partnerships, the request (including supporting rationale) should be submitted to the assigned communications member. The request will be discussed by the assigned communications member and the requester, with a decision made based on how the request fits into the overall Social Media communications plan for the organization. If a new account is created, it will be done by the assigned communications member, with login information maintained by the assigned communications member.



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Posting Guidelines

The general maximum for SMHA's main social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) is no more than 2-3 posts per day. Should more content be available, a scheduling sequence to be used to share the content over a number of days, rather than too much information in one day.

Shares/Retweets

SMHA often retweets or shares posts made by others on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook when they are of interest to our followers or help promote SMHA, its programs and partnerships. SMHA will not retweet or share any offensive posts, promotion of non SMHA sanctioned content or any post that is deemed unprofessional.

Requesting a post

SMHA board members and members are encouraged to utilize SMHA's social media channels to promote an upcoming event, share news and information. Social media account holders will do their best to ensure timely posting; in balance with content volume.

Content

Any content posted on any SMHA social media channel should be engaging, accurate, and purposeful. All content operational in nature which requires action from the membership base will utilize Team snap as primary communication channel and social media will only be utilized for promotion of content.

Hashtags

Hashtags are used primarily on Twitter and Instagram, and now more recently Facebook, as a quick-search function for a particular subject. While many hashtags exist, SMHA generally uses a select group of hashtags that have program or historical significance for the organization. Some examples include: #SMHA #SpringbankMinorHockey #gorockies



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SMHA Policy – Unacceptable Conduct on Social Media

SMHA is committed to respectful behavior and conduct both on and off the ice, and works to eliminate any disrespectful conduct and discriminatory practices including abuse, neglect and harassment.

Unacceptable Conduct is not condoned by SMHA on any SMHA, personal or other social media channel or account. This includes conduct by the board, volunteers, players, referees, parents, stakeholders or any member of the hockey community.

The following examples of unacceptable conduct are considered contrary to SMHA's social media guidelines and subject to disciplinary action:

- Bullying, harassment, intimidation or threats of any type.
- Making negative or derogatory comments about, or statements deemed detrimental to the welfare of, any individual or group.
- Use of inappropriate language.
- Divulging confidential information or any other matter of a sensitive nature.
- Posting photographs, video or comments promoting negative influences or criminal behavior, including but not limited to drug use, alcohol abuse, public intoxication, hazing, and sexual harassment.
- Undertaking activity that contradicts the current policies of SMHA
- Undertaking activity that is meant to alarm other individuals or to misrepresent fact or truth.

When unacceptable conduct is discovered on social media by board members, volunteers or members of SMHA, the user will be temporarily blocked from the channel and details of the unacceptable conduct will be provided for review to the SMHA Discipline Committee.

SMHA's preference is to educate, inform and help develop positive habits when unacceptable or inappropriate comments or posts occur on its social media channels.

When required, disciplinary action or sanction will be assessed toward the individual making the unacceptable posts. Depending on the nature of the infraction, discipline or sanction can include the individual being banned or blocked from SMHA's social media channels, suspension from or being relieved of volunteer status, to law enforcement being called.



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PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

When a situation of unacceptable conduct on social media is identified involving volunteers or members of SMHA, the following process will occur:

1. **Acknowledgement:** the allegation will be acknowledged by the Board
2. **Investigation:** a thorough investigation will be conducted, with findings to SMHA's Discipline Committee. *During the period of the investigation, if the unacceptable conduct occurred on a SMHA social media channel, the individual will be blocked from having access to post on those channels.*
3. **Hearing:** if the investigation determines sufficient evidence to proceed, the individual will be notified and given the opportunity to present evidence in his/her defense.
4. **Sanctions:** based on the evidence presented at the hearing, a determination will be made on whether sanction is required.
5. **Document retention:** all final decisions and other applicable information will be retained on file.

NOTE: Where the unacceptable conduct involves abuse, neglect or harassment of any type, and SMHA has a reasonable belief such unacceptable conduct has occurred, the matter may be turned over law enforcement or other appropriate external authorities.

For more information on Best Practices in Social Media see appendices:

Appendix 1, General Advice and Tips

Appendix 2, Social Media Guidelines



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Appendix 1

Best Practices in Social Media – General Advice and Tips

Social Media has placed increased pressure on everyone. News, comments and opinions are shared immediately. Your personal reputation, as well as your organization and SMHA is at stake, with every post. Therefore, before you post, **T-H-I-N-K!**

T - Is it **T**True?

H – Is it **H**urtful?

I – Is it **I**llegal?

N – Is it **N**ecessary?

K – Is it **K**ind?

Based on your answers to these five questions, **THINK** about whether the post should be made. Would you say it to someone in person? If not, it is probably not a suitable post for any medium.

If the post is suitable to share, here are some ways to help get maximum readership for your post, while also representing yourself and SMHA positively:

- Be creative and engaging, positive and professional
- Celebrate achievements
- Spellcheck and use proper grammar
- Choose the social media platform(s) that best suit your targeted audience
- Find the balance between originality and following trends
- Engage follows and make them feel part of the team
- Observe and take part in global social media trends

Dealing with Negative Posts

- Screenshot the post, so you have evidence if it is subsequently deleted.
- Don't feel obligated to answer **EVERY** negative tweet, message, etc.
- When responding, always be professional
- Encourage them to email, or even call if they have an issue
- Don't engage in an argument – social media arguments are a spectator sport

Dealing with the Media

- The media will often call other organizations looking for comment on what another group has done or said. You are not obligated to say anything.
- "If it's not your fire, don't talk about it!"
- If the media calls about something that has occurred or been posted within SMHA, refer them to the assigned communications member.



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Appendix 2

Social Media Guidelines

The SMHA Members, Volunteers and Executives will be held accountable for what they write or post on social media or online. As a SMHA representative, when using social media, either personally or as a SMHA volunteer, it is important to remember that, to the public and hockey community, you are a representative of SMHA, and negative comments may reflect poorly on the organization and its members. Even with a disclaimer, people will identify you as a SMHA representative, so ensure that you “take the high road” in all posts:

Be respectful

- Do not post inflammatory comments, unprofessional or disparaging remarks about SMHA or other hockey associations on any social media channel. These types of comments will not be tolerated, and may result in disciplinary action.
- If you have concerns with SMHA, discuss it through the proper channels and with the proper board members.

Be authentic

- Identify yourself in all posts and acknowledge that you are part of SMHA.
- If you share a social media account, such as Twitter, any comments posted from that account, whether or not posted by you, may be associated with you and with SMHA. You are responsible for ensuring posts made by family members do not reflect negatively on SMHA.

Be thoughtful

- Ensure that what you are posting is truthful, in good taste, and does not infringe on someone’s human and/or legal rights. Libel or slander about any individual or organization is not protected.
- Do not disclose confidential information.
- Very controversial comments or those that show a general lack of empathy should not be shared on social media, or probably anywhere.
- You are legally liable for what you post.

Be aware and safe

- Never pretend to be someone else and post about SMHA.
- At the same time, protect your identity by not putting out too much personal information.