



## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide ROWONTARIO employees, volunteers and athletes with requirements for participating in social media, including organization-hosted social media, where affiliation with ROWONTARIO is generally known, identified or presumed. It is also to outline clearly the privacy, confidentiality, legal and ethical issues that all employees and volunteers have in regard to the use of social media.

ROWONTARIO recognizes the importance of social media platforms and online communities such as, but not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter, and their importance in information sharing and education.

### **Background and Scope:**

Through rapid changes in technology and the growth of social media platforms and the internet, communication and information sharing has profoundly changed. Social media and mobile device technology brings many opportunities but also an increased threat to privacy, the risk of sharing proprietary corporate information and opportunity for code-of-conduct incidents; both innocent and intended.

We recognize our responsibility to develop policies and procedures to minimize the risk of unauthorized and inappropriate use of information technology and social media, as well as create a collaborative and supportive environment for those affiliated with ROWONTARIO to engage in social media communications.

The scope of this policy includes all employees, volunteers and team athletes with ROWONTARIO. These restrictions are intended to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory restrictions and privacy of personal information, confidentiality, and prevent breaches in participant/member privacy and communication system policy.

### **Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, "Social Media" refers to all online tools used to produce, post and interact using text, images, video and audio to communicate, share, collaborate or network. This includes, but is not limited to blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, content management systems, on-line collaborative information and publishing systems that are accessible to internal and external audiences (i.e. Blogs, social networks, wiki's, videos and photo file sharing, information sharing, tagging, podcasting and vlogging, and other similar tools (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, etc.)

## **Individual Accounts**

### **Policy**

This section includes principles, standards and responsibilities of employees, volunteers and athletes when posting on their own accounts, commenting on other sites and using social media. This policy is not intended to interfere with the private lives of our employees and volunteers or impinge on the right to freedom of speech. This policy is designed to safeguard the Association's integrity, image and branding.

1. The principles and guidelines that apply to any/all organization activities, as found in the Code of Conduct, apply to all online activities.
2. Actions inside and outside the Association can affect your relationship with the Association if such behaviours may affect the reputation of fellow staff or volunteers, athletes, members, participants, and partners.
3. Any athlete, volunteer or staff, who violates this policy may be disciplined under the Association's disciplinary process up to and including dismissal or removal from a team or from a volunteer position.

Confidentiality of member and participant information must be maintained. Consequences of breaches in confidentiality may be far reaching and, in most cases, are not anticipated at the time of occurrence. Any of these situations could jeopardize an individual's or the Association's experience, effective job performance, and place the Association and staff member/volunteer in contravention of the law.

Anyone who chooses to represent themselves as affiliated with ROWONTARIO in their personal account must consider how they are representing themselves and the Association; consistency of posted content with Association mission and values and how the Association will thus be perceived, must be maintained.

Where a staff, volunteer or athlete's connection to ROWONTARIO is apparent or presumed, the individual must make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the Association. In these circumstances, the following disclaimer: *"The views expressed on this [blog; website etc...] are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer/the Association"* should be included. Please note this disclaimer does not itself exempt anyone from being responsible for the content of their social media accounts.

Everyone should be cognizant of standards of member and participant privacy and confidentiality. Privacy and confidentiality must be maintained in all environments, including online, and staff, volunteers or others must at all times refrain from posting identifiable member or participant information of any kind online.

### **ROWONTARIO Social Media Communications**

Association representation, including specific programs or teams, via online social media platforms can only be initiated and authorized by the Executive Director. Any accounts existing without prior authorization as required above will be subject to review and may be amended or removed.

The Executive Director will identify specific employees/volunteers who will be given access to communicate via official ROWONTARIO social media accounts.

Training sessions will take place with those granted access to communicate on behalf of the Association.

In the event of an emerging crisis or potentially harmful information (whether through social media or traditional media) as determined by ROWONTARIO, all communication will originate only from ROWONTARIO-designated spokespeople.

### **Procedures**

To protect staff, volunteers, athletes, members and participants, the following procedures are in effect regarding participation by employees on social media networks. As an employee, athlete or volunteer,

- The expectation is that each person conducts themselves professionally both on and off duty. Before publishing any material online, remember that what you post online is legally considered public material, as such each individual is personally responsible for his/her publications;
- Do not publish materials that are insulting, discriminatory, demeaning, defamatory or offensive to ROWONTARIO, staff, coaches, umpires, volunteers, members, participants, athletes, community partners or the sport in general and/or that damage the Association's reputation in any way.
- ROWONTARIO recognizes that you may engage in social media networks with individuals that are volunteers, members and participants. Engaging with these individuals is accepted however **staff and volunteers in a role of authority over vulnerable individuals may NOT connect with ANYONE under 16 on any social media site, through their personal accounts. This constraint applies to staff, volunteers, athletes and Club members.**
- Do not reveal confidential information related to the Association, staff, volunteers, members or participants or any community partners.
- Do not disclose the names or personal information of your co-workers, managers or supervisors, or discuss incidents that have occurred in the Association and that are not known outside of ROWONTARIO.

***Reviewed and Approved by  
The Board of Directors  
March 24, 2018***

## SUGGESTED SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES – Coaches

The following tips should be used by coaches to inform their own strategy for social media use:

- a. Choosing not to engage with social media is an acceptable social media strategy. But you must have good reasons for your choice and be active in other communication.
- b. Your role with the athletes is a professional one and should remain so even on social media, refrain from commenting on their personal activities.
- c. Consider monitoring or being generally aware of athletes' social media behaviour to ensure compliance with Athlete *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
- d. Coaches may not demand access to an athlete's private posts on social media.
- e. Do not link with athletes on social media unless they request the connection. Never pressure athletes to connect with you (If you accept some requests, you should accept all requests and follow all the athletes. Be careful not to show favouritism on social media).
- f. Consider managing your social media so that athletes do not have the option to follow you on social media or create a completely professional account that is separate from your personal activities (however remember both can be seen).
- g. Ensure you have permission in writing from athletes (or parent if under 18) before posting pictures or videos of the athletes on social media.
- h. Do not use social media to 'trap' athletes if they say one thing to you in person but their social media activity reveals they were doing something different.
- i. Keep selection decisions and other official team business off social media
- j. Never require athletes to join Facebook, join a Facebook group, subscribe to a Twitter feed, or join a
- k. Facebook fan page about your team or organization
- l. If there is an organization-based social media account, do not make this the exclusive location for important information. Duplicate important information in more official channels (like on website or via email)
- m. Ensure that parents are aware that some coach-athlete interactions may take place on social media
- n. Exercise appropriate discretion when using social media for your own personal communications (with friends, colleagues) with the knowledge that your behaviour may be used as a model by your athletes
- o. Avoid association with social media accounts with explicit sexual contact or viewpoints that might offend or compromise your role as a coach/instructor
- p. Never misrepresent yourself by using a fake name or fake profile
- q. Be aware that you may acquire information about an athlete that imposes an obligation of disclosure on your part (such as seeing pictures of underage athletes drinking during a trip)
- r. Attempt to make communication with athletes in social media as one-sided as possible. Be available for athletes if they initiate contact via social media – athletes may wish to have this easy and quick access to you – but avoid imposing yourself into an athlete's personal social media space

## SUGGESTED SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES – Athletes

The following tips should be used by athletes to inform their own strategy for social media use:

- a) Model appropriate behaviour in social media befitting your status as a) an elite athlete, and b) a member of your club and of provincial sport body. As a Member of the Association, you have agreed to *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and must follow that Code when you post material and interact with other people through social media
- b) Set your privacy settings to restrict who can search for you and what information can be seen
- c) Coaches, teammates, officials, or opposing competitors may all request to connect with you on social media. You are not required to reciprocate this connection with anyone. This is the same for pages or accounts that are organizations as well as individuals
- d) If you feel harassed by someone in a social medium, report it to your coach, club official, or to the provincial sport organization
- e) Content posted on social media, regardless of your privacy settings, should be thought of as public as it could be shared. In most cases, you do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy for any material that you put online
- f) Avoid posting pictures of, or alluding to, participation in illegal activity such as: speeding, physical assault, harassment, drinking alcohol (if underage), and smoking marijuana
- g) Be aware that your social media accounts may be monitored by your club, coach, and content or behaviour demonstrated in social media may be subject to sanction similar to any Code Violation.