



SOCIAL MEDIA and Digital Communications POLICY

(Including Guidance and policy for communicating with young people).

– Avoca Hockey Club

January 2020

Policy overview and purpose

Social media has changed the way that we communicate with each other, making it easy to get any message out there, which in turn brings a level of professional and personal responsibility for the officers, employees, coaches, volunteers, members and players of Avoca Hockey Club.

This policy has been developed to inform our community about using social media and digital communications so that people feel enabled to participate, while being mindful of their responsibilities and obligations. In particular, this policy provides practical guidance allowing all parties to benefit from the use of social media, while minimising potential risks and protecting those involved.

This policy supports the establishment of a culture of openness, trust and integrity in all online activities related to Avoca Hockey Club.

This policy contains Avoca Hockey Clubs guidelines for our community to engage in social media and digital communications use. It also includes details of breaches of the policy and other matters, such as the protection of the Avoca Hockey Club Brand and our responsibilities to our younger members.

In circumstances where guidance about social media issues has not been given in this policy, we suggest you use common sense or seek out advice from the Club Development Chair or through the Club Committee.

Underlying principle

This policy supports our club ambition to support the healthy development, through sport and participation, of the physical and mental capability of all of our members in a safe, welcoming and inclusive community environment.

Coverage

This policy applies to all persons who are involved with the activities of Avoca Hockey Club, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity and includes:

- members, including life members of Avoca Hockey Club
- persons appointed or elected to boards, committees and sub-committees;
- support personnel, including managers, coaches, technical support, physiotherapists, psychologists, masseurs, sport trainers and others;
- coaches and assistant coaches;
- athletes;
- referees, umpires and other officials;
- member associations
- Spectators and Family Members (Where communicating online on behalf of the club)

Scope

'Social media' refers to any online tools or functions that allow people to communicate and/or share content via the internet.

This social media policy applies to platforms including, but not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Yammer, etc.)
- Video and photo sharing websites or apps (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr, Vine, Tik Tok, Snap Chat etc.)
- Blogs and micro-blogging platforms (e.g. Tumblr, WordPress, Blogger, etc.)
- Review sites (e.g. Yelp, Urban Spoon, etc.)
- Live broadcasting apps (e.g. Periscope, Meerkat, Facebook Mentions, etc.)
- Podcasting (e.g. iTunes, Stitcher, Sound cloud, etc.)
- Geo-spatial tagging (e.g. Foursquare, etc.)
- Online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia, etc.)
- Instant messaging (e.g. SMS, Skype, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc.)
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. World of Warcraft, Second life, Xbox Live, etc.)
- Online voting or polls
- Public and private online forums and discussion boards
- Any other online technologies that allow individual users to upload and share content.

This policy is applicable when using social media as:

1. An officially designated individual representing Avoca Hockey Club on social media; and/or
2. If you are posting content on social media that references Avoca Hockey Club (in any of text, sound or image formats) that might affect Avoca Hockey Club's brand, business, products, services, events, sponsors, members or reputation in any manner.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media where it is not related to or there is no reference to Avoca Hockey Club or its brand, business, competitions, teams, participants, products, services, events, sponsors, members or reputation. However, any misuse by you of social media in a manner that does not directly refer to Avoca Hockey Club may still be regulated by other policies, rules or regulations of Avoca Hockey Club.

Using social media in an official capacity

You must be authorised by the Development Chair or Club Committee before engaging in social media as a representative of Avoca Hockey Club, or when using the club brand and name in any online capacity.

As a part of Avoca Hockey Club's community you are an extension of the Avoca Hockey Club brand and any communication you make is interpreted as being the position of Avoca Hockey Club.

As such, the boundaries between when you are representing yourself and when you are representing Avoca Hockey Club can often be blurred. This becomes even more of an issue as you increase your profile or position within Avoca Hockey Club. Therefore it is important that you endeavour to represent both yourself and Avoca Hockey Club appropriately online at all times.

Guidelines

You must adhere to the following guidelines when using social media related to Avoca Hockey Club or its brand, business, products, competitions, teams, participants, services, events, sponsors, members or reputation.

Use common sense

Whenever you are unsure as to whether or not the content you wish to share is appropriate, seek advice from others before doing so or refrain from sharing the content, to be on the safe side.

When using social media, the lines between public and private, personal and professional, may be blurred. Remember, you are an ambassador for Avoca Hockey Club.

Protecting your privacy

Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy.

When posting content online there is the potential for that content to become publicly available through a variety of means, even if it was intended to be shared privately. Therefore, you should refrain from posting any content online that you would not be happy for anyone to see, even if you feel confident that a particular individual would never see it.

Where possible, privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to limit access. You should also be cautious about disclosing your personal details.

Honesty

Your honesty—or dishonesty—may be quickly noticed in the social media environment. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue or misleading about Avoca Hockey Club. If you are unsure, check the source and the facts before uploading or posting anything. Avoca Hockey Club recommends erring on the side of caution – if in doubt, do not post or upload.

When communication online on behalf of Avoca Hockey Club (and a general principle), do not post anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. Be transparent and honest. Use your real name, be clear about whom you are and identify any affiliations you have.

If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. If you make an endorsement or recommendation about something you are affiliated with, or have a close relationship with, you must disclose that affiliation. Avoca Hockey Clubs social media platforms are not to be used for any personal purposes, including supporting organisations that have no direct relationship with Avoca Hockey Club.

The web is not anonymous. You should assume that all information posted online can be traced back to you. You are accountable for your actions both on and offline, including the information you post via your personal social media accounts.

Use of disclaimers

Wherever practical, include a prominent disclaimer stating who you work for or are affiliated with (e.g. member of Avoca Hockey Club) and that anything you publish is your personal opinion and that you are not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble – it may not have legal effect.

Reasonable use

If you are an officer, core role-holder or employee of Avoca Hockey Club, you must ensure that your personal use of social media does not interfere with your work commitments or productivity.

Respect confidentiality and sensitivity

When using social media, you must maintain the privacy of Avoca Hockey Club's confidential information. This includes information that is not publically accessible, widely known, or not expected to be shared outside of Avoca Hockey Club.

Remember, if you are online, you are on the record—much of the content posted online is public and searchable.

Within the scope of your authorisation by Avoca Hockey Club, it is perfectly acceptable to talk about Avoca Hockey Club and have a dialogue with the community, but it is not okay to publish the confidential information of Avoca Hockey Club. Confidential information includes things such as details about litigation, unreleased product information and unpublished details about Avoca Hockey Club: e.g. team, coaching practices, strategic plans, private member information, financial information and other sensitive data.

When using social media you should be considerate to others and should not post information when you have been asked not to, or where consent has not been sought and given. You must also remove information about another person if that person asks you to do so.

Permission should always be sought if the use or publication of information is not incidental to the core activities of Avoca Hockey Club, but directly related to an individual. This is particularly relevant to publishing any information regarding minors. In such circumstances, parental or guardian consent is mandatory.

Guidance on publishing a person's identifiable image

It is recognised that we are a sports club and that people, teams and relationships are core to how we do our business and work together.

However, we do have to respect a person's right to protect their own image. While it is normal for sports clubs to publish celebratory type images of players, teams, activity and events, you must be very conscious that the type of image that you are posting is appropriate and seek either guidance from the Club Development Chair or Club Captain or seek the individual permission of a person. In truth, if you have to ask yourself the question as to whether a posting is appropriate or not, you may have already given yourself pause and as such, a change of mind. Think of professional sports people and other pictures that you see across media and you should have a sense of acceptable image use.

You should also refrain from posting any information or photos of a sensitive nature. This could include accidents, incidents or controversial behaviour.

You may need to have consent of the owner of copyright in the image. Seek advice if you are not sure.

A separate section dealing with our youth members is contained in this policy below.

Complying with applicable laws

Do not post or link to content that contains illegal or indecent content, including defamatory, vilifying or misleading and deceptive content.

Abiding by copyright laws

It is critical that you comply with the laws governing copyright in relation to material owned by others and Avoca Hockey Club's own copyrights and brands.

You should never quote or use more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and you should always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying

The public in general, and Avoca Hockey Club's Members and community reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view.

You must not post any material that is offensive (as interpreted by the reader), harassing, discriminatory, embarrassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, hateful, racist, sexist or otherwise inappropriate. Please be particularly mindful of the exposure of youth members to the published material of other club members.

When using social media you may also be bound by Avoca Hockey Club's Policies available at www.avocahockeyclub.com in the policies section.

Avoiding controversial issues

Within the scope of your authorisation by Avoca Hockey Club, if you see misrepresentations made about Avoca Hockey Club in the media, you may point that out to the relevant authority in Avoca Hockey Club. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is based on fact and does not discredit or belittle that party.

Dealing with mistakes

If an error is made while posting on social media, be up front about the mistake and address it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses Avoca Hockey Club of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), address it promptly and appropriately and if necessary, seek legal advice.

Conscientious behaviour and awareness of the consequences

Keep in mind that what you write is your responsibility, and failure to abide by these guidelines could put Avoca Hockey Club at risk.

You should always follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites in which you participate.

Branding and intellectual property of Avoca Hockey Club

You must not use any of Avoca Hockey Club's intellectual property or imagery on your personal social media without prior approval from Avoca Hockey Club. Avoca Hockey Club's intellectual property includes but is not limited to:

- trademarks
- The name Avoca Hockey Club
- logos
- slogans
- Imagery which has been posted on Avoca Hockey Club official social media sites or website.

You must not create either an official or unofficial Avoca Hockey Club presence using the organisation's trademarks or name without prior approval from Avoca Hockey Club. You must not imply that you are authorised to speak on behalf of Avoca Hockey Club unless you have been given official authorisation to do so.

The Avoca Hockey Club name, logo and brand are not to be used without permission, this includes the creation of 'secondary' team pages (Unofficial sites, pages or online identities that identify themselves with Avoca Hockey Club)– should 'secondary' team sites be created, please make them private and you cannot use the word 'AVOCA' in the title.

Do not support, like or lobby for any brand or commercial entity not commercially linked to Avoca Hockey Club.

Do not support, like or lobby for any personal interests or charities without explicit permission. Do not express your personal opinion when responding to any form of contact.

Policy breaches

Breaches of this policy include but are not limited to:

- Using Avoca Hockey Club's name, motto, crest and/or logo in a way that would result in a negative impact for the organisation, clubs and/or its members.
- Posting or sharing any content that is abusive, harassing, threatening, demeaning, defamatory or libellous.
- Posting or sharing any content that includes insulting, obscene, offensive, provocative or hateful language.
- Posting or sharing any content, which if said in person during the playing of the game would result in a breach of the rules of the game.
- Posting or sharing any content in breach of any of Avoca Hockey Club's policies as contained in the policies section of www.avocahockeyclub.com
- Posting or sharing any content that is a breach of any legislation or laws.
- Posting or sharing any material to our social media channels that infringes the intellectual property rights of others.
- Posting or sharing material that brings, or risks bringing Avoca Hockey Club, its affiliates, its sport, its officials, members or sponsors into disrepute. In this context, bringing a person or organisation into disrepute is to lower the reputation of that person or organisation in the eyes of the ordinary members of the public.

Reporting a breach

If you notice inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to Avoca Hockey Club or any of its members, or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, you should report the circumstances immediately to the Development Chair or any member of the Club Committee.

Investigation

Alleged breaches of this social media policy may be investigated.

Where it is considered necessary, Avoca Hockey Club may report a breach of this social media policy to the Garda Síochána.

Disciplinary process, consequences and appeals

Depending on the circumstances breaches of this policy may be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedure and policy active at the time of the incident in question.

Appeals

Any person who is sanctioned under a disciplinary process for breach of this policy may have a right of appeal. Other legal considerations that may be applicable include but are not limited to:

- Defamation
- Intellectual property laws, including copyright and trade mark laws, Privacy, confidentiality and information security laws
- Anti-discrimination laws
- Employment laws
- Advertising standards
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

- Information Privacy Act 2000
- Equal opportunity laws
- Contempt of Court
- Gaming laws

Guidance and policy for communicating with young people.

Avoca Hockey Club is committed to adhering to and abiding by all aspects of Safeguarding and protection of children in sport.

Avoca Hockey Club appreciate that the social media behaviour of members and others is not within its direct control, except for where they are acting for the club in an official capacity. In this current era of social and digital interaction it is a simple fact that many young people have a range of access to online material and this brings an onus on adult club members and others to use common sense when interacting or publishing.

Contact players only when necessary – please do not like, follow the online activity of a minor if you are over 18. If you are under 18, please use common sense. Do not accept invitations to follow the online activity of a young person. Please be aware that you may be perceived as a community figure because of your activity in Avoca Hockey Club and as such your actions will be known and can lead to reputational damage to both the club and yourself. It is recommended that your accounts are private.

- if players need to be contacted urgently, e.g. for a change in training arrangement, set up a grapevine system e.g. WhatsApp community
- Always seek the permission of parents before communicating with a young person
- copy parents into written communication (i.e. letters or emails) unless you have been given specific parental consent to communicate direct with the young player
- speak with a player and their parents if there is a need to communicate information in relation to playing, training or competition and clearly state the club's policy on communication with players and parents.
- Contacting young people by phone, text, email or social networking site should never be undertaken without parental consent.
- It is preferential that any formal communication to parents and young people should be conducted by coaches and team managers. These individuals will have been Garda vetted and will have been through Safeguarding training and certification, which is frequently provided free by Avoca Hockey Club.

Avoid:

∅ contacting a young person unnecessarily

∅ e-mailing young people directly as individuals (but this can be done as part of a disclosed list, once permission has been gained to do so)

∅ using text or a social networking site as a medium of contact with a young person

∅ making or receiving calls on a mobile phone during training or at competition (coach). It is

Inappropriate to compromise the safety of a session

∅ e-mailing one young person without copying in parents, other players or club members

End.