



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

The Waterloo Girls Hockey Association (WGHA) recognizes the emphasis on using social media channels to communicate with the Association, individual teams, players and parents. Any group affiliated with the WGHA is welcome to use social media to communicate with our members but must adhere to the following policies:

A social media policy is a crucial tool for any organization that uses social media. A social media policy guides, advises and inspires in best- and worst-case scenarios.

WGHA's social media policy provides guidelines for our social media use. It covers WGHA's official channels, as well as how employees and volunteers use social media, both personally and professionally.

This policy helps us:

- Maintain WGHA brand identity across channels.
- Treat legal and regulatory sensitivities with awareness.
- Prevent a security breach.
- Act fast if a crisis or breach does happen.
- Be upfront with staff and volunteers about their own social media responsibilities.
- Encourage everyone to own and amplify WGHA message.

DEFINITIONS:

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

"Digital Media": Includes any forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. These include, but are not limited to: Instagram, X, LinkedIn, Reddit, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, blogs, personal webpages, etc.

"Crisis Communications" Any event or situation which requires immediate release of information from the WGHA. This can include urgent news from the



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

Federal or Provincial governments, news from the OWHHA, Hockey Canada, global events, or internal releases which take priority over pre-scheduled content, as determined by the WGHA's Board in consultation with the appropriate staff or teams.

"WGHA-branded social media": Official social media engagement by the WGHA including the WGHA's Facebook page(s), X feed, photo sharing accounts, YouTube channels, blogs, or other social media engagement; both those that exist currently and those that will be created by the WGHA in the future

"Representative" : All individuals employed by, or engaged in activities on behalf of, the WGHA. Representatives include, but are not limited to, staff, administrators, directors and officers of the WGHA, committee members, and volunteers.

SCOPE

1. WGHA staff, coaching staff, players, parents and volunteers tasked with maintaining blogs and websites or establishing a social media presence on behalf of the WGHA and or specific team are guided by this policy.
2. This policy is designed to guide organization-wide communication through:
 - a. Official WGHA social media channels (example: @waterlooravens.com), blogs and website properties;
 - b. Social media profiles for teams,
 - c. Individual use of digital media for all staff and volunteers, in their capacity as representatives of the WGHA.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

1. All WGHA staff, coaching staff, players, parents and volunteers managing social media platforms will be provided with training on this policy.



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

2. The Directors of Communications and Marketing, Rep and or House League will ensure that Coaches and managers are provided with training on how to implement and abide by this policy.
3. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to team managers by the President and/or Director of Communications and Marketing.

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES

Director Marketing and Communications and the President must approve the use or creation of social media profiles.

1. All profiles will require the submission of a social media policy agreement at the beginning of each season year, or sooner if a change in management occurs, by the member manager of that account.

If you are taking over an existing social media channel, you will still need to fill out the Social Media Account Information form prior to the start of the season.
2. All accounts must be registered under an official WGHA email address, for which the WGHA Admin Assistant will have access to review. Logins and passwords, as well as any password updates, must be approved by the WGHA Admin Assistant;
3. Users must complete WGHA brand training (styles and standards) and social media training to gain and retain access to the profile;
4. For Facebook pages, the WGHA Admin Assistant must have administrator access. All other users will be assigned the appropriate level for their role. This is to ensure continuity of the page from year to year and to monitor the activity of the page;
5. Access to social media accounts will be revoked if content fails to meet the guidelines and standards outlined in training, and on a social media policy agreement and/or if the user leaves their position with the WGHA.



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

6. The President is the official spokesperson of the WGHA. No staff, volunteer, or member of the Association is permitted to express the beliefs of the WGHA, unless explicitly tasked by the President.

THE WGHA'S ACCOUNTS WILL BE GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND ANY SUB-BRANDING GUIDELINES:

1. Social media shall be used to represent the WGHA in a positive light. Use of official social media accounts must reflect the organization's brand, strategic plans, mission, vision, and values.
2. The WGHA staff, coaching staff, players, parents and volunteers shall remain non-partisan in all social media communications. Social media content shall not endorse or oppose any political candidate or party; however, content may address political issues directly related to Council approved advocacy policy/ statements or statements of our external advocacy organizations.
3. The WGHA staff, coaching staff, players, parents and volunteers shall not post material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or untruthful to another person or entity, including but not limited to staff, coaching staff, players, parents, competitors, vendors, the Association, or community members.
4. The WGHA staff, coaching staff, players, parents and volunteers may engage in friendly rivalries entered into willingly by both parties. Such content shall be good-natured and intended to foster team spirit and pride.
5. Account administrators may respectfully and factually respond to misrepresentations of the WGHA in social media, provided that the President or Vice President has been notified. The WGHA shall not engage in arguments with others via social media.



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

When responding to posts, please ensure you have retrieved the most up to date and factual information from the correct source.

6. In the event of an emergency or crisis, staff and teams will follow direction from the Director, Communications and Marketing and or President in addition to the following:
 - a. All communication shall go through official social media accounts only;
 - b. Regular social media communications shall be suspended, including services and working group communications;
 - c. Official social media accounts shall be monitored closely;
 - d. Important information related to the emergency situation shall be shared; and
 - e. The tone of communications shall be primarily informative.
7. When an error is made, the WGHA shall acknowledge the error and correct it as soon as possible. Modified posts shall be clearly labeled as such.
8. Social media content about contests administered by the WGHA shall include reference to any contest rules that are in place and follow any provincial regulations surrounding contests.

The WGHA understands that many of our staff coaches, players and parents enjoy sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for our Association online and we encourage these activities. This policy is written to give staff and volunteers guidance and to proactively protect our reputation in the eyes of our members.

1. The Board is responsible for protecting the privacy, security, and image of our Association, members, and stakeholders.



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

2. Maintain confidentiality at all times and only disclose information that is public.
3. Do not use the organization's logos or trademarks without permission, as outlined in WGHA Branding.
4. At all times, be respectful of the WGHA as well as its employees, members, vendors, and stakeholders. Employees, coaches, managers and other team staff, players and parents must remember that individuals are responsible for online behavior and should avoid content or actions that are defamatory, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or threatening. Individuals can be sued by employees, members, competitors or any other individuals affected by such content.

WGHA staff, coaching staff, players, parents and volunteers must be mindful that any allegations of online harassment and discrimination may be investigated under the Associations and or OWHA's Harassment and Discrimination Policy and could face disciplinary action up to and including suspension and or removal from the Association.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR COACHES

The following 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 media
- b) Despite what Facebook says, you are not actually "friends" with athletes. Resist commenting on athletes' personal activities, status updates, or tweets on X



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

- c) Consider monitoring or being generally aware of athletes' public social media behaviour to ensure compliance with the WGHA's *Code of Conduct*
- d) Coaches may not demand access to an athlete's private posts on X or Facebook
- e) Do not "friend" athletes on Facebook unless they request the connection. Never pressure athletes to "friend" you
- f) If you accept some "friend" requests, or follow one athlete on X, you should accept all friend requests and follow all the athletes. Be careful not to show favouritism on social media
- g) Consider managing your social media so that athletes do not have the option to follow you on X or "friend" you on Facebook
- h) Seek permission from athletes before posting pictures or videos of the athletes on publicly available social media like a blog or on YouTube
- i) 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
- j) Keep selection decisions and other official team business off social media
- k) Never require athletes to join Facebook, join a Facebook group, subscribe to a X feed, or join a Facebook fan page about your team or WGHA
- l) If you create a fan page on Facebook for your team or athlete, do not make this social media site the exclusive location for important information. Duplicate important information in more official channels (like on a website or via email)



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

- m) Ensure that parents are aware that some coach-athlete interactions may take place on Facebook
- n) Exercise appropriate discretion when using social media for your own personal communications (with friends, colleagues, and other athletes) with the knowledge that your behaviour may be used as a model by your athletes
- o) Avoid association with Facebook groups or X feeds with explicit sexual contact or viewpoints that might offend or compromise the coach-athlete relationship
- 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 unless explicitly requested to do so.
- s) Texting, if used as a means of communication, should be informational and not conversational.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR PLAYERS

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

- a) Set your privacy settings to restrict who can search for you and what private information other people can see



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

- b) Coaches, teammates, officials, or opposing competitors may all add you to Facebook or follow you on X. You are not required to follow anyone or be Facebook friends with anyone
- c) If you feel harassed by someone in a social medium, report it to your coach, Director, Concerns and Support, WGHA
- d) Do not feel pressure to join a fan page on Facebook or follow a X feed
- e) Content posted on a social medium, relative to your privacy settings, is considered public. In most cases, you do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy for any material that you post
- 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) Model appropriate behaviour in social media befitting your status as a) an elite athlete, and b) a member of your club and of the WGHA. As a representative of the WGHA, you have agreed to the WGHA's *Code of Conduct* and must follow that Code when you post material and interact with other people through social media
- h) Be aware that your public Facebook page, Instagram or X feed may be monitored by your club, coach, or by the WGHA and content or behaviour demonstrated in social media may be subject to sanction under the WGHA's *Discipline and Investigation Policy*
- i) Texting, if used as a means of communication with coaching staff, should be informational and not conversational.

WGHA RESPONSIBILITIES

There are many situations where social media contact is desirable and necessary; yet many situations where social media contact is unwanted and



Manual of Operations

Title: Digital Communications	Number: MO-06-23
Source:	
Approved By: WGHA Board	Date Approved: June 2016 Date Last Revised: March 2024

risky. Coaches and athletes should be trusted, pursuant to the WGHA's *Code of Conduct*, to navigate social media using their best judgment.

WGHA may consider regular surveys and reviews to understand how coaches and athletes are using social media. Coaches and athletes may need to be reminded that behaviour in social media is still subject to the WGHA's *Code of Conduct*.

Complaints and concerns about an athlete's or a coach's conduct or behaviour in social media can be addressed under the WGHA's *Complaints, Investigations and or Grievances and Appeals* policies.

Resources

OWHA Social Media and Use of Social Media Policies

Note: this policy replaces MO-06-24 Social Media and M0-06-25 Use of Social Media.