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ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

As part of the Northwest Chargers Hockey Association's (NWCHA) emphasis on safety, communications involving any participant, and especially our minor participants, should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communication concerning travel, practice or game schedules, and administrative issues among coaches, administrators, players, and their families is critical. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media, and other forms of electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings and also provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to participants. The improper use of social media, mobile, and electronic communications can result in misconduct. Adherence to the Electronic Communications Policy helps reduce these risks.

All electronic communication between coach and player must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Coaches, players, and all team personnel must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication. All content between coaches and players should be readily available to share with the public or families of the player or coach. If the player is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media, or similar communication must also copy or include the player's parents.

Social Media

Social media makes it easy to share ideas and experiences. NWCHA recognizes, however, that social media, mobile, and other electronic communications can be especially concerning where minor participants are involved. Coaches are prohibited from having players join or connect through their personal Facebook page or any other similar social media application. To facilitate communication, an official organization or team page may be set up, and players and parents may join (i.e., "friend") the official organization or team page, and coaches can communicate with players through that site. All electronic communication of any kind between coach and player, including the use of social media, must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

Email, Text Messaging, and Similar Electronic Communications

Coaches, team managers, and players may use email and text messaging to communicate. All email and text message content between coaches/team managers and players must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Emails and text messages from a coach to any minor participant **must** include a copy to the player's parents. Where possible, a coach should be provided and use the organization website email center (the coach's return email address will contain "@organization.com") for all communications with the team, players, and players' parents, where applicable.

Request To Discontinue All Electronic Communications or Imagery with Athlete

Following receipt of a written request by the parents of a minor player that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by coaches or other adults in the program, the local program, team, coaches, and administrators shall immediately comply with such request without any repercussions for such request.

Abuse and Misconduct

Social media and other means of electronic communication can be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor, or other participant of a USA Hockey Member Program will not be tolerated and are considered violations of USA Hockey's SafeSport Program.

Prohibited Conduct and Reporting

NWCHA prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment, and hazing, all as described in the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook and [PLAYER & PARENT CONDUCT POLICY](#). Participants, employees, or volunteers in NWCHA may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these Electronic Communications Policies or for engaging in any misconduct or abuse that violates the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies. Reports of any actual or suspected violations, you may email NWCHA Safe Sport Coordinator Don Hennessy (hennessy1965@comcast.net), NWCHA President Michele Voris (mvoris@nwchargers.org), and/or USA Hockey at SafeSport@usahockey.org or may call 1-800-888-4656.