



## GTHL POLICY

### Social Media

<b>Approved by:</b>	Board of Directors	<b>Date Approved:</b>	October 2023
<b>Responsibility of:</b>	Senior Manager, Communications & Marketing	<b>Date Effective:</b>	Immediate
		<b>Date of Last Revision:</b>	May 2018
		<b>Date Initially Issued:</b>	June 2016

#### Definitions

- **“GTHL”:** the Greater Toronto Hockey League.
- **“League”:** the GTHL and its Member Associations.
- **“Member Association” or “Member”:** any Club, Division, Division member, Affiliated Group or any other body accepted for membership in the League from time to time. For the purposes of this policy, a Member Association shall also include any organization approved by the Ontario Hockey Federation for participation in the League such as a Hockey Canada Accredited School or a hockey association that is a member of a different Branch of Hockey Canada.
- **“Participant”:** any Player, Team Official, Game Official, parent or legal guardian, director, officer, volunteer, employee, spectator, chaperone, or any other person associated with a Member.
- **“Team Official”:** the coach, assistant coach, manager, trainer, or other team official registered with the League.

#### Introduction

The GTHL recognizes the importance of participating in online interactions and wants to ensure that all Participants associated with the League receive guidance on how to participate in social media in a positive, safe, and responsible manner.

This Social Media Policy (the “Policy”) aims to provide everyone associated with the League with guidelines to follow when engaging in communications and/or sharing content via any form of social media, including but not limited to that which can be linked to or in any way associated (whether directly or indirectly) with the League. The guidelines set out in the Policy are designed to protect all Participants, others associated with them, and the League from illegal, unauthorized, irresponsible, harmful, or abusive use of social media.

#### Scope of the Policy

All Members and Participants are required to comply with the Policy when participating or engaging in communications in social media personally or as an official representative of the League. Players and Team Officials alike are reminded that they continue to act as



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representatives of the League, even outside the hockey arena, and should conduct themselves in accordance with the Policy guidelines at all times.

The conduct of any Player or Team Official that violates the Policy, which may be linked to or perceived to be linked to or associated with the League, may result in disciplinary action taken by the League. The Policy is intended to enhance and supplement, and is not intended to replace or supersede, any existing policies of the League including those in force and effect of Hockey Canada and the Ontario Hockey Federation.

#### **Definition of Social Media**

The term “social media” is a digital technology that facilitates the sharing of text and multimedia through virtual applications, networks, and communities. This includes any media used for web-based, digital, or mobile social interaction. Social media features user-generated content and personalized profiles that lend themselves to engagement via likes, shares, comments, and discussion. When used inappropriately or for questionable motivations, social media interactions can be harmful and can cause substantial harm to users personally, those associated with them (family and friends), and the League.

Examples of social media covered by the Policy include, but are not limited to:

- Social Networking Sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat);
- Micro-blogging Sites (e.g., Twitter, Threads, Tumblr, Reddit);
- Online Video and Photo Sharing Communities (e.g., TikTok, YouTube, Flickr, Vimeo);
- Digital content enabled to be shared (e.g.: screenshots of text messages, WhatsApp conversations)
- Online Discussion Forums;
- Website Encyclopaedias (e.g., Wikipedia);
- Online User Review Forums (e.g., TripAdvisor, Yelp!);
- Personal or Corporate Blogs.

#### **Social Media Policy Guidelines**

When using social media, it is important for all to exercise common sense and good judgment. The guidelines set out in the *Social Media Policy Guidelines* hereto are intended to assist and support those associated with the League when using social media. In addition to the *Social Media Policy Guidelines* all Players, Team Officials, and anyone else associated with the League and its operations are expected to adhere to all other policies applicable to the League including, but not limited to: the GTHL Harassment, Abuse, Bullying and Misconduct Policy; the GTHL Code of Conduct; the GTHL’s Rules, Regulations and Policies; and the Rules, Regulations and Policies of Hockey Canada and the Ontario Hockey Federation.

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#### **Social Media Best Practices**

Below are best practices to help protect all participants, the League, and goodwill in the social space. Adhering to them will aid in reducing situations that could be harmful to users individually, fellow participants in the League, and those associated, ultimately leading to disciplinary action:

##### **1. Use Discretion**

Use discretion both when shooting photography and video content and when choosing to share it on the Internet or through digital applications. Under no circumstance should any photo or video be taken within a dressing room and be posted on any social media platform – see GTHL Regulation 20.2(f). Seemingly harmless photos and videos of this kind can cause substantial harm to and may even ruin reputations and as such are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Photos taken and shared via social media could inadvertently reveal confidential, proprietary, private, and personal information. Any shared content that can be considered detrimental to the safety, well-being, or reputation of any participant and/or associated may be subject to disciplinary action.

##### **2. Be Courteous**

Always be courteous and respectful online. If you need help with a particularly difficult situation, contact the GTHL Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer, the Senior Manager, Communications and Marketing, or the President of your Member Association, as applicable.

##### **3. Use Common Sense**

Participants should take note of the following: DELETE DOES NOT MEAN DELETE. Anything you put online never fully goes away. Confidential, proprietary, private, and personal information concerning any Participant, or the League, must remain strictly confidential. Even if a Facebook/Instagram/Twitter (X) post, comment, tweet, retweet, photo, and/or video is deleted, it could already have been saved and/or shared by another user. All such communications are discoverable under the federal laws of Canada and the provincial laws applicable in Ontario.

##### **4. Respect the Privacy of Everyone**

Simply put, some things do not belong on the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, discussions or other communications about any and all Participants, and the League. Any violations or breaches of the Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or formal removal and termination from the League. Any such determination made by the club may be made in its sole discretion at any time.



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#### **5. When in Doubt, Ask**

Whether you have a question about how to properly respond to a request from a fan, sponsor, player, staff member, or any other person associated with the League, ask the League's Senior Manager, Communications and Marketing for resources or direction.

#### **6. Social Media Community Code**

The GTHL has a zero-tolerance policy on racism, sexism, homophobia, bullying, abuse, hate speech, or discrimination of any kind on social media. The GTHL Social Media Community Code strives to set clear guidance on what is acceptable when engaging with the League, Member Associations, Participants, and fellow hockey fans online. It also outlines what will not be tolerated. It is a collective effort, and we are calling on our community to help support us in our mission to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive online environment for all.

As outlined in the Social Media Community Code, the first step when encountering any abusive, hateful, or discriminatory comments online is to report this directly to the respective social media platform where the incident was witnessed.

If you have witnessed something that you believe violates the GTHL's Social Media Policy and/or the Community Code guidelines that is directly connected to the League and/or any Participant, you can report this to the League at [communitycode@gthlcanada.com](mailto:communitycode@gthlcanada.com).

The League also strongly recommends that if you feel you have been the victim of and/or have witnessed a crime on social media, you should immediately report this to the police.

For more information on reporting and the GTHL Social Media Community Code, click [here](#).



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#### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY GUIDELINES**

1. Do NOT post, shoot video, or take photos inside any dressing room or mode of transportation used by or in connection with the League without the prior written consent and approval from either the League President or Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer.
2. Do NOT post video filmed of any League-sanctioned game, be it a regular season, playoff, tournament, or exhibition game, on the internet or any social media platform without the prior written consent of the League President or Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer.
3. Do NOT divulge secrets, confidential, proprietary, or personal and/or health information or status concerning any aspect of the League, whether concerning you or anyone else associated with the League.
4. ALWAYS comply with all laws, including those relating to libel, copyright, trademark and data protection, and regulations, including those made or issued by Hockey Canada and the Ontario Hockey Federation.
5. ALWAYS remember that even in your private communications, your actions and/or words — in any media — can and may reflect poorly on yourself, those associated with you, and the League and its Members, and may cause irreparable harm regardless of good intentions. It is important to remain courteous, respectful, positive, and professional at all times when using any and all modes of social media and digital communication.

Your social media posts, and any other online content, are permanent and accessible to anyone. This remains true even if a post and/or comment is deleted shortly after becoming public. If you have any questions regarding compliance with the social media policy, please contact either the League's Senior Manager, Communications and Marketing or your club president before you post.

If you become aware of any breach of this Policy by any person associated with the League, please refer to the GTHL Social Media Community Code, contact the GTHL Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, or the President of your Member Association. As noted in the Social Media Community Code, please save images or videos, or use a screenshot, to capture any apparent breach of this Policy.



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#### **GTHL CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. The Greater Toronto Hockey League (“GTHL”) is committed to providing a sports environment in which all individuals are treated with respect.
2. During the course of all GTHL activities, athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, managers, officials, parents, directors, officers, volunteers, employees or chaperones and others within the GTHL and each of the GTHL Member Associations:
  - (a) shall conduct themselves, at all times, in a fair and responsible manner and refrain from comments or behaviours that are disrespectful, offensive, abusive, racist, or sexist. In particular, the GTHL will not tolerate behaviour that constitutes harassment, abuse, bullying or misconduct;
  - (b) shall avoid behaviour which brings the GTHL and/or its Member Associations, or the sport of hockey into disrepute, including but not limited to the abusive use of alcohol and/or non-medical use of drugs;
  - (c) shall not use unlawful performance-enhancing drugs or methods, nor shall they engage in any activity or behaviour that endangers the safety of others; and
  - (d) shall at all times adhere to the Hockey Canada, Ontario Hockey Federation (“OHF”), GTHL and its Member Associations’ operational policies and procedures, to rules governing Hockey Canada, OHF, GTHL or GTHL Member Association events and activities and to rules governing any competition in which they participate on behalf of Hockey Canada, the OHF, GTHL or GTHL Member Association.
3. Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, the loss or suspension of certain or all privileges connected with the respective Member Association and/or GTHL including the opportunity to participate in Hockey Canada, OHF, GTHL and its Member Association activities. Such discipline may include the removal or ban from an arena, games, practices, and other team activities.



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#### GTHL SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY CODE

The Greater Toronto Hockey League (“GTHL”) recognizes the importance of using social media to directly communicate and engage with the League's participants and those associated. Social media allows us to share stories, hear your stories, stay connected, strengthen our community, and continue conversations.

The GTHL also recognizes the responsibilities that come with using social media. It is important to us that our participants engage with the League and each other in a respectful, positive, and safe environment.

We understand that social media can sometimes be an unpleasant place, where some people choose to engage in negative dialogue, bully, and a small minority spread hate.

The GTHL has a zero-tolerance policy on racism, sexism, homophobia, bullying, abuse, hate speech, or discrimination of any kind on social media. All participants are encouraged to review the GTHL Social Media Policy for more information. The League also strongly recommends that if you feel you have been the victim of and/or have witnessed a crime on social media, you should immediately report this to the police.

The GTHL Social Media Community Code strives to set clear guidance on what is acceptable when engaging with the League, our Member Clubs, participants, and fellow hockey fans. It also outlines what will not be tolerated. This is a collective effort, and we are calling on our community to help support us in our mission to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive online environment for all.

The GTHL's official social media channels include, but are not limited to:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter \(X\)](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Threads](#)

#### GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPANTS

The GTHL is committed to creating a safe online environment across our social media channels and we ask that our participants support our mission by reflecting our values and beliefs when engaging with each other and the League online. For more information, all participants are encouraged to review the GTHL Social Media Policy.



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#### OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The GTHL is committed to continuing to work to prevent hateful, abusive, and discriminatory content appearing on our platforms. We will take the necessary action to protect our players, coaches, bench staff, officials, and those associated.

The GTHL strives to continuously and actively monitor comments posted on our social media channels and comments, including those received via direct message. We will remove posts that breach the GTHL Social Media Policy and these Guidelines. Users who violate our Policy and Community Code may also be blocked.

While the GTHL takes a proactive approach to deal with posts, comments, and messages that violate our Policy and Community Code, due to the sheer volume of activity on social media in relation to the GTHL, there may be instances where you spot them before we do.

The GTHL will not tolerate any form of bullying, abuse, or discrimination, including but not limited to:

- Racism
- Sexism
- Homophobia
- Hateful, abusive, and offensive language
- Sexual harassment
- Incitement to violence

#### YOUR COMMITMENT TO US

##### 1) Block users and report incidents to social media platforms

It is important to remember that you can block any user that is causing you harm or distress. If you encounter any abusive, hateful, or discriminatory comments online, the GTHL strongly advises that your immediate response is to report this directly to the respective social media platform where you witnessed the incident. Each platform has its own reporting procedure, and we encourage following their processes. You can find out more about reporting directly via the platforms here:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Threads](#)



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#### **2) Report incidents in relation to the GTHL and participants to the League**

If you have witnessed something that you believe violates the GTHL Social Media Policy and/or these Community Code guidelines that is directly connected to the League and/or our participants, you can report this to us at [communitycode@gthlcanada.com](mailto:communitycode@gthlcanada.com).

Participants should be aware that the social media universe is much bigger than the GTHL. For the League to investigate and act on incident reports, the incident must have had a direct connection to the League and/or its Members. It cannot, and will not, act on reports that have only a tangential connection.

To support your report, please provide the following:

- A screenshot of the content that you are reporting.
- The date and time of posting.
- The username of the perpetrator.
- A link to the original GTHL post and/or participant post where the post and/or comment was seen.

The GTHL will investigate these reports on an individual basis before deciding on an appropriate course of action, if applicable. Examples of these actions can include, but are not limited to:

- Removing posts/comments/messages from GTHL platforms.
- Blocking perpetrators from the League's social media channels.
- Reporting the account/user/comment to the relevant social media platform.

The decision on whether to take action will remain at the GTHL's discretion. Any decision not to act does not constitute an endorsement by the League of the content under complaint.

All reports will remain confidential and anonymous, and each report will be investigated on an individual basis. The GTHL will acknowledge your report and we will reach out if we require any further information. Every report is important to us, and we will investigate each one. In the world of social media, please note that it will not always be possible to provide an outcome, however, this does not mean that we have not investigated the report nor acted.

While the GTHL would discourage engaging with any offensive or abusive posts, we would suggest keeping a note of any comments or messages of this nature. You can keep a record of online abuse by taking a screenshot of the post/comment/message, be sure to include the author's username and the time and date of posting. You can do this on your smartphone, tablet, laptop, or computer. Keeping a record would be helpful should you decide to report this later.



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Where necessary, the GTHL will assist the authorities/police should they wish to act on any reports made by us and/or our online community in relation to any behaviour that has occurred on the League's social media platforms.

#### **3) Report crimes to the Police**

If you feel that you have been the victim of or have witnessed a crime on social media, you should report this directly to the police.