



Electronic Communication and Social Media Guidelines

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As part of the FC Durham Academy (FCD) emphasis on safety, communications involving our youth players should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communications concerning travel, practice or games schedules, and administrative issues among administrators, team personnel, 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. The improper use of mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct and is strictly prohibited by FCD.

FCD states that any participant involved in any of its academy programs as a team personnel, employee, volunteer, or adult participant shall adhere to this policy for electronic communications and social media. All electronic communication between team personnel (and other employees, volunteers, or adult participants) and players must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Team personnel and players must follow the common-sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication. All content of electronic communication should be readily available to share with the public or families of the player or team personnel.

Overview

- Team personnel (and other employees, volunteers, or adult participants) must copy parent(s) (or guardian(s)) on all electronic and mobile communications to minor athletes unless the parent(s) (or guardian(s)) have previously approved (in writing) direct communications between the team personnel and the player.
- To ease communications, team personnel may set-up e-mail and texting groups with parent(s) (or guardian(s)) and players and make this group communication a norm for the team. Team personnel must include parents on all email and text messaging groups.
- Should a team personnel inadvertently send a player an electronic or mobile communication without including the parent(s) (or guardian(s)), acknowledge the oversight to the parents and forward the communication to the parent(s) (or guardian(s)) as soon as possible.
- Team personnel should not hesitate to speak with a parent or guardian if a team personnel receives an electronic and mobile communications from a player that make the team personnel uncomfortable.

Facebook, MySpace, Blogs, and Similar Sites

All posts, messages, text, or media of any kind between a team personnel (or employee, volunteer, or adult participant) and players must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

Direct messaging or private messaging between a team personnel and a minor player is prohibited (another responsible adult must be copied on the message).

In the event that a team personnel opens a team Facebook page or Blog of any sort the program manager must be contacted and given access to view the page at their discretion. Team pages or blogs may not be used to bully, speak negatively of a player or family of a player, or to discuss discipline issues.

Twitter, SnapChat, Instant Messaging and Similar Media

All posts between a team personnel (or other employee, volunteer, or adult participant) and players must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Direct messaging or private messaging between a team personnel and a minor player is prohibited (another responsible adult must be copied on the message).

Email and Similar Electronic Communications

Players and team personnel may use email to communicate. All email content between team personnel and players must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Emails from a team personnel to a minor player must include a copy to such player's parent(s) or guardian(s) unless the parent(s) (or guardian(s)) has previously approved in writing direct communications between the team personnel and player.

Team Applications and Similar Electronic Communications

A team application with Sportsengine is our preferred method of communication for scheduling and availability. Players and team personnel may use this application to communicate. All communication content between team personnel and players must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Team personnel will not use this application to communicate directly to individual players. Team applications for U8-U15 will utilize the parent(s) or guardian(s) to access and communicate.

Texting and Similar Electronic Communications

Although discouraged as a primary form of communication, texting is allowed between team personnel and players. All texts between team personnel and players must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Texting should not occur after 9pm unless in emergency situations. Text messages from a team personnel to a minor player must include a copy to such player's parent(s) (or guardian(s)) unless the parent(s) (or guardian(s)) has previously approved in writing direct communication between the team personnel and the player.

Codes of Conduct and Ethics

Within our Team personnel, player, parent and spectator codes of conduct and ethics you will find further policy as it relates to the use of social media.

- SOCIAL NETWORKING is defined as communication through on-line communities of people such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, blogging, etc.
- FC Durham Academy (FCD) understands the importance of SOCIAL NETWORKING, however, it also allows for inappropriate unsupervised conduct which may be detrimental to the welfare of FC Durham Academy and the future of FCD players.
- FCD holds the entire FCD community, including Owners, Team Personnel, Support Staff, Trainers, Players and Parents who participate in SOCIAL NETWORKING to the same standards as it would with all forms of media, including television, radio and print.
- Inappropriate behavior over SOCIAL NETWORKING media will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action being taken by FCD. Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, loss of game play, full game suspension, multi- game suspension or for severe infractions season(s) suspensions from FCD.
- Inappropriate use of social networking includes, but is not limited to: Statements that are demeaning to Academy owners, team personnel, its programs, its teams, players, members, support staff, parents, sponsors or any other person associated with FCD, communication of confidential information that may include medical history, family situations, game plans or strategies and other information that is deemed confidential, sharing photos, videos or comments that promote negative influences or criminal behavior, including but not limited to physical violence, drug/alcohol use, or taken in areas prohibited by policy, posting of inappropriate, derogatory, racist or sexist comments of any kind that contradict the policies of FCD.

Team Personnel and Employees

Team personnel and employees are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Employees are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as an employee of the

academy (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to the Academy).

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary. All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that the Academy must otherwise follow.

Don't Tell Secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our financial information, upcoming projects, membership, research, and trade secrets.

Protect your own privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the academy website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. But also, be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

Respect copyright laws

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others; including the Academy's own copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Respect your audience, the Academy, and your colleagues

The public in general, and the Academy employees, and team personnel, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with our website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of FCD.

Protect our customers, business partners and suppliers

Members and partners should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a member and partner by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a customer engagement. It is acceptable to discuss general details about kinds of projects and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for a customer (e.g., Customer 123) so long as the information provided does not violate any non-disclosure agreements that may be in place with the member or make it easy for someone to identify the member. Your blog is not the place to "conduct business" with a member or partner.

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about the Academy in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad competitors or others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct.

Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Think About Consequences

For example, consider what might happen if an Academy Member is in a meeting with a member or partner, and someone on the customer's side pulls out a print-out of your blog and says, "This person at the Academy says that member sucks." Saying "Project X needs to have an easier learning curve for the first-time user" is fine; saying "Project X sucks" is risky, unsubtle and amateurish. Once again, it's all about judgment: using your blog to trash or embarrass the Academy, our customers, or your co-workers, is dangerous and ill-advised.

Disclaimers

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble – it may not have much legal effect.

Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer that states while you work or volunteer for the Academy, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of the Academy.

Don't forget your day job.

Make sure that blogging does not interfere with your job or commitments to members.

Social Media Tips

The following tips are not mandatory, but will contribute to successful use of social media.

- The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about.
- Quality matters. Use a spell-checker. If you're not design oriented, ask someone who is whether your blog looks decent, and take their advice on how to improve it.
- The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it or ask someone else to look at it first.

Violations of Policy

Social media and electronic communications can be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by team personnel, employees, volunteers, adult participants, or athletes will not be tolerated and are strictly prohibited by FCD. Anyone who violates this Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. Violations of this Policy should be reported to the FCD Player Well Being Officer.