



LAKES AREA HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy 2025-2026 Season

The following provisions apply to participation in hockey programming with Lakes Area Hockey Association (“LAHA”), which includes the Boji Mammoths.

As part of USA Hockey’s emphasis on safety, communications involving any minor Participant, and especially minor Participants, should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communication concerning travel, practice or game schedules, and administrative issues among coaches, team staff, administrators, players, and their families is crucial. 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 minor Participants. The improper use of mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct. Adherence to the Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy helps reduce these risks.

All electronic communication originating from Applicable Adults to minor Participants must be professional in nature. Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor Participants needs to communicate directly with a minor Participant via electronic communications (including social media), the Minor’s parent must be copied. If a minor Participant communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult should respond to the minor Participant with a copy to another Applicable Adult or the minor’s legal guardian. When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor Participants communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult must copy another adult.

Pursuant to these requirements, all electronic communication between coach/team staff 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/team staff and players should be readily available to share with the public or families of the player or coach/team staff. 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. USA Hockey recognizes, however, that social media, mobile, and other electronic communications can be especially concerning where minor Participants are involved. Coaches/team staff are prohibited from having minor Participants joined to or connected through their personal Facebook page, Instagram 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/team staff can communicate to players through that site. All electronic communication of any kind between coach/team staff (and any Applicable Adult) and a minor Participant, including 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.

- Be authentic- be honest about your identity. Be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a formal representative of Lakes Area Hockey Association.
- Don't use pseudonyms- never pretend to be someone else. Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced to their authors.
- Does it pass the publicity test- if the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the phone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site.
- Respect your audience- don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, or obscenity. Show proper respect for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered sensitive- such as politics and religion.
- Remember many different audiences view your posts including potential colleges, scouts, parents, coaches, teachers, etc.
- The internet is permanent. Even if you delete something, it's still out there somewhere. Be in the right state of mind when you make a post. Do not post when your judgment is impaired. Coaches and administrators monitor social media websites. Potential employers use social media sites to screen candidates.
- It is not permissible for student-athletes to post information, photos, or other representations of sexual content, inappropriate behavior (i.e.: drug or alcohol abuse), or items that could be interpreted as demeaning or inflammatory.
- Student-athletes are required to abide by all team policies, Lakes Area Hockey Association policies, and district/league rules when utilizing social media.
- It is not permissible to comment on injuries, officiating, or team matters that could reasonably be expected to be confidential to team members.

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 staff and minor Participants must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Emails and text messages from a coach/team staff to an individual minor Participant must include a copy to the player's parents.

Social Media and Group Chats Among Players

Minor hockey players often create group chats through texting or other social media applications. Such group chats are concerning because Minors may engage in bullying behavior, sexual misconduct, harassment, threats, discriminatory and other inappropriate conduct that may violate policies of USA Hockey. Group chats among Minor hockey players should be supervised by an adult to mitigate these risks.

Request To Discontinue All Electronic Communications or Imagery with an Athlete

Following receipt of a written request by the parents of a minor Participant that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by coaches or other adults in the program, the Member 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 Safe Sport Program.

Reporting

If an Adult Participant reasonably suspects that an incident(s) of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct has occurred, they must immediately report the incident(s) to the US Center for SafeSport as well as applicable law enforcement authorities. Reports to the US Center for SafeSport may be made by (1)

completing an online report to the Center at www.uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/ or by (2) calling 833-587-7233.

Reports of any allegation of misconduct or other inappropriate behavior that may violate Safe Sport Policies other than Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse, should be made immediately to the Lakes Area Hockey Association Safe Sport Coordinator.

Infractions

Infractions of Lakes Area Hockey Associations Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy should be reported to the Lakes Area Hockey Association Safe Sport Coordinator.

A USA Hockey participant who violates this Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.