



Halton Hawks FC

Electronic Communications & Social Media Policy

Statement of Intent

As part of the Halton Hawks FC's emphasis on athlete safety, communications involving our youth athletes will be appropriate, productive, and transparent. The improper use of mobile and electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings, is strictly prohibited and can result in misconduct. Any participant involved in any of the Academy's programs as a coach, employee, volunteer, or adult participant shall adhere to this policy for electronic communications and social media.

Effective Communications

All communications concerning travel, practice or games schedules, and administrative issues among administrators, coaches, athletes, and their families is critical, however coaches and athletes must follow the common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of the allowed electronic communication, the content being for the purpose of communicating information about team activities and being readily available to share with the public or families of the athlete or coach.

Overview

- Coaches (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 coach and the athlete.
- To ease communications, coaches may set-up e-mail and texting groups with parent(s) (or guardian(s)) and athletes and make this group communication a norm for the team. Coaches must include parents on all email and text messaging groups.
- Should a coach inadvertently send an athlete 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.
- Coaches should not hesitate to speak with a parent or guardian if a coach receives an electronic and mobile communications from an athlete that make the coach uncomfortable.

Facebook, MySpace, Blogs, and Similar Sites

- All posts, messages, text, or media of any kind between a coach (or employee, volunteer, or adult participant) and athletes 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 coach and a minor athlete is prohibited (another responsible adult must be copied on the message). If a coach opens a team Facebook page or Blog of any sort the Academy Director 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 coach (or other employee, volunteer, or adult participant) and athletes must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.
- Direct messaging or private messaging between a coach and a minor athlete is prohibited (another responsible adult must be copied on the message).

Email and Similar Electronic Communications

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

Texting and Similar Electronic Communications

- Although discouraged, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes.
- All texts between coach and athletes 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 coach to a minor athlete must include a copy to such athlete's parent(s) (or guardian(s)) unless the parent(s) (or guardian(s)) has previously approved in writing direct communication between the coach and the athlete.

Violations of Policy

- Social media and electronic communications must not be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing).
- Such communications by coaches, employees, volunteers, adult participants, or athletes will not be tolerated and are strictly prohibited by Halton Hawks FC.
- 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 Academy Director of Halton Hawks FC

