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**Electronic**

**Communications**

and

Social Media Use

Guidelines

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# Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Guidelines Overview

These Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Guidelines were developed by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) and the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) to provide recommended practices to protect participants and safeguard coaches.

The proliferation of electronic communications and social media platforms has created valuable opportunities to support athlete development and streamline communication. Electronic communications and social media use can also create challenges related to privacy, the blurring of divisions between the professional and personal, and increased risk for maltreatment - especially for vulnerable participants. These pros and cons have been amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many participants, coaches, and support staff have depended on social media for training, maintaining relationships, and supporting mental health.

These guidelines are part of the [**Responsible Coaching Movement**](https://coach.ca/responsible-coaching-movement), a call to action for organizations, coaches, and parents/guardians to ensure all participants can benefit fully from sport participation in a safe, healthy, and fun environment. The Responsible Coaching Movement is comprised of three pillars: [Background Screening](https://coach.ca/background-screening), [Rule of Two](https://coach.ca/rule-two), and [Ethics Training](https://coach.ca/ethics-training). New resources are developed to support organizations in their pursuit of ensuring safe sport environments for all participants.

## Key Principles

In line with the Responsible Coaching Movement’s **Rule of Two**, all communication between participants and coaches or other Persons of Authority should be open, observable, and justifiable. In electronic communications and on social media, this means:

* **Open** – The preferred methods for communication between practices and competition should be documented and communicated at the beginning of the season, with clear expectations for behaviour consistent with the organization’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and the professional standards expected of coaches and other Persons of Authority. The schedule, purpose, and format of any virtual sessions should be available to parents/guardians and the sport organization.
* **Observable** – Ideally two trained and screened coaches should be present for any virtual sessions. Exchanges on social media should be “public” - private and one-on-one communication is discouraged. All electronic communications and interactions on social media should be logged or recorded, and regularly shared with parents/guardians and/or the sport organization.
* **Justifiable** – Communication should be necessary (e.g., time sensitive), administrative, and/or focus exclusively on supporting participant engagement and development. Personal and closed/private communications between participants and coaches or other Persons of Authority is discouraged.

## Resources

These guidelines include a suite of complementary resources designed to inform policy and practice:

* Policy Implementation Plan Template
* Leading Practices for Electronic Communications and Social Media Use
* Guidelines and Consent Form for Persons of Authority
* Guidelines and Consent Form for Participants
* Guidelines and Consent Form for Parents/Guardians
* Policy Example from [Curling Canada](https://www.curling.ca/files/2020/08/SOCIAL-MEDIA-POLICY.pdf#:~:text=In%20accordance%20with%20Curling%20Canada%E2%80%99s%20Discipline%20and%20Complaints,spreading%20rumours%20or%20lies%2C%20or%20other%20harmful%20behaviour.)

# Policy Implementation Plan Template for Electronic Communications and Social Media Use

The following plan describes how a Sport Organization can support the implementation of the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*. The plan is complemented by Guidelines and Consent Forms for Persons of Authority, Participants, and parents/guardians. Sport Organizations and their coaches and teams will want to customize the implementation plan to match their sport context (e.g., age of Participants, competition level) and align it with their organizational values.

## STEP 1: Adapting the Policy Template

Read, review, and adapt the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy* template to ensure the content is as applicable and relevant as possible.

For example, a Sport Organization focused on delivering community sport programming may choose to omit any considerations for high performance sport. Other Sport Organizations will want to integrate existing practices, such as instructing Persons of Authority to limit all interpersonal communication to face-to-face or to non-personal Electronic Communications such as TeamSnap.

If your Sport Organization makes major modifications to the template, it is recommended that you connect with your sport governing organization to ensure the modifications align with the spirit and intent of the Policy.

Note: It is strongly recommended to engage your stakeholders in this process. The Policy template is intended to align with your Sport Organization’s standards for conduct and procedures for dispute resolution (your *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and *Discipline and Complaints Policy*). Ensure references to these policies match their actual titles and that content is aligned.

## STEP 2: Approve the Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy

Once your Sport Organization has reviewed and adapted the policy template (subject to approval, if necessary), the final Policy should be formally approved by the Board of Directors and/or staff (whichever group is empowered to approve new policies). Some Sport Organizations may have committees that take on a reviewing role before new policies are implemented.

## STEP 3: Communicate the Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy

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Once the new Policy is approved, your Sport Organization will want to communicate it to all individuals it affects. These groups include all Persons of Authority, coaches, Participants, and parents/guardians of Vulnerable Participants. It is not sufficient to simply post the new Policy online.

As part of the annual registration process, all coaches and Participants (and their parents/guardians) must be informed of all policies that apply to them, such as screening, conduct, privacy, and the new *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy.* These documents can be attached to a registration email and links should also be provided. If your Sport Organization approves the Policy mid-season, an email should be sent to all registered members, and those otherwise involved with your organization, with the new Policy attached and accessible via a hyperlink to the Policy posted on your website.

## STEP 4: Host a Coach Meeting

Host a meeting with all of your organization’s coaches to discuss the importance of the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*, review the expectations and leading practices, and support coordinated implementation. The new Policy may require some coaches to change the way they communicate with Participants – be prepared to provide training and support on the use of alternative platforms and new practices. Your Sport Organization may want to create a feedback process or assign an individual to respond to any questions.

## STEP 5: Pre-Season Briefing with Participants and Parents/Guardians

Information about the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy* and associated expectations should be shared during the pre-season meeting between coaches, Participants, and parents/guardians (when applicable), or when the new Policy is implemented.

The following script can be modified as appropriate for the context:

“Our organization has approved a new *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy* which was shared with you prior to this meeting. The policy is designed to support healthy relationships while protecting participants and safeguarding coaches. As a certified coach, it is important to me that we all communicate effectively and safely.

“Based on our level of participation/competition (recreational, high performance) and nature of Participants (age, vulnerability), the sport organization together with the coaching staff has decided that we will **describe the decision the sport organization and/or coaches have made about how they will communicate with team members, and other types of acceptable contact:**

**Example 1 - Recreational team with Participants under age 13:** “All communication between coaches and participants will happen in person at competitions and practices. We will use TeamSnap for any necessary communication between competitions and practices, so we encourage all parents/guardians to register on this platform. In the event of an emergency, or if an athlete will be late to a game or practice, parents/guardians should text one of the team staff. No team-related information will be shared on social media; therefore coaches will not accept friend requests and will block any athlete or parent/guardian that follow our personal accounts.

**Example 2 – Competitive team with adolescent Participants:** “Most communication between coaches and participants will happen in-person at events and practices. In between events and practices, I prefer to use email or text if I need information quickly. Any emails or text messages sent directly to participants will also be copied to their parent or guardian. I do not delete emails or text messages and I provide my communication history on all platforms to our (example: High-Performance Director) at the end of the season or when requested. We also have a YouTube channel where we post skills videos – participants and their parents/guardians are encouraged to follow that channel. We post sport-related content on Twitter and Instagram, and since the participants are 16 years old, we will accept follow requests on these platforms, but this is completely optional. However, please do not send us direct messages on these accounts because we will not respond. If any parent/guardian does not want us to interact with your athlete on YouTube, Twitter, or Instagram – please let me know.

**Example 3 – High-Performance Sport with Adults**: “Given your training and competition schedules, we do depend on electronic communications and social media use to support your high-performance goals. We will be using WhatsApp as a primary communication medium, and I encourage everyone to join our team WhatsApp group. For those who do not use WhatsApp, I will be duplicating all important team information in regular emails. Beyond that, since you’re all adults, we will accept communication via your preferred medium – you can reach me via email, text, WhatsApp, Facebook, or Instagram, and I will respond as quickly as possible. However, a reminder that we are your coaches, not your friends, so all communication should be professional and in-line with our organization’s Code of Conduct and Ethics. All communication between us will be logged and made available to the High-Performance Director.

**Example 4 – Recreational League with Adults**: “All league information and game times are posted on the organization’s website. If there are any changes between games, I will send an email to the group. We post sport-related content on our league’s Facebook group page, and we will accept requests on this platform, but this is completely optional. A reminder that interactions on social media should be respectful and stay focused on sport, as per the organization’s Code of Conduct and Ethics. We will maintain records of all electronic communications and social media exchanges.

“The organization has made guidelines and associated consent forms available for coaches, participants, and parents/guardians. Reviewing the guidelines and providing consent for documented communication sets expectations for all interactions to be open, observable, and justified; and will help ensure this is a healthy and safe environment for everyone.

“If anyone has any questions about our approach to electronic communications and social media use, or about this new Policy, please let me know and I will schedule a meeting with you and ask someone else from our organization to join us.”

## STEP 6: Ongoing Support for Implementation

All stakeholders should be reminded of the value of the new Policy and its overall purpose to protect Participants and safeguard coaches, while continuing to support healthy relationships. If certain challenges persist or some guidelines are not being followed, consider hosting a training session with someone from your governing organization such as a Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representation or Sport Organization, or a communication consultant. Alternatively, your Sport Organization could consider modifying the Policy to address the main challenges (provided any modifications continue to align with the intent of the Policy). Continue to have a representative of the Sport Organization available to address any questions.

# Policy Template for Electronic Communications and Social Media Use for Sport Organizations

***Preamble***

1. Communication can occur in person, through live virtual platforms like Teams or Zoom, and electronically via email, text, or on social media platforms like TeamSnap or a Facebook group.
2. The Sport Organization recognizes that communication between all Participants should be guided by principles that ensure the safety of the Participants and that maintain and strengthen effective relationships.
3. The Sport Organization strives to ensure that Participants are protected during electronic interactions with Persons of Authority and that they are not placed in a vulnerable situation. One-on-one electronic messaging is discouraged.

**Definitions**

1. Terms in this Policy are defined as follows:
2. ***Electronic Communications*** – Communication media that is primarily for connecting with other users without a content-sharing or social networking purpose. Electronic Communications includes email, text messaging (SMS), video sessions, virtual meeting platforms, and other similar applications.
3. ***Interpersonal Communications*** – Communication that occurs between two or more Participants within a communication medium, including between Participants and coaches or other Persons of Authority.
4. ***Maltreatment*** – Includes physical, psychological, and sexual maltreatment, as well as other types of misconduct such as neglect, grooming, and retaliation that are described in the Sport Organization’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics,* withdefinitions consistent with or exceeding those in the *Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport* (UCCMS).
5. ***Participants*** – Refers to all categories of individual members and/or registrants defined in the By-laws of the Sport Organization who are subject to the policies of the Sport Organization, as well as all people employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with the Sport Organization. This includes, but is not limited to, employees, contractors, participants/athletes, coaches, instructors, officials, volunteers, managers, parents/ guardians, administrators, committee members, and directors and officers of the Board.
6. ***Person of Authority*** – A Participant who holds a position of authority within the Sport Organization including, but not limited to, coaches, managers, support personnel, chaperones, directors, and officers.
7. ***Power Imbalance*** – A Power Imbalance may exist where a Participant (including, but not limited to, Persons of Authority) has supervisory, evaluative, a duty of care, or other authority over another Participant. Maltreatment can occur when this power is misused.
8. ***Public Communications*** – Communication that is or was posted publicly, such as through a Participant’s social media account.
9. [***Responsible Coaching Movement***](https://coach.ca/responsible-coaching-movement)– A call to action for Sport Organizations, parents/guardians, and coaches to enact responsible coaching across Canada – on and off the field of play. The Responsible Coaching Movement is comprised of three pillars: Background Screening, Rule of Two, and Ethics Training.
10. ***Social Media*** – Communication platforms that permit users to connect and create, access, and exchange user-generated content. Social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TeamSnap, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and other similar web-based or mobile-based internet applications.
11. [***True Sport***](https://truesportpur.ca/true-sport-principles) – An approach to values-based sport that is underpinned by seven principles. When “Go For It, Play Fair, Respect Others, Keep It Fun, Stay Healthy, Include Everyone, and Give Back” are activated in sport environments, it leads to a good sport culture
12. ***Vulnerable Person*** – A child, youth, or adult who, because of their age, a disability or impairment, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependency on others, or is otherwise at greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of trust or authority towards them.

**Principles**

1. The following principles reflect the Sport Organization’s values and guide this Policy:
2. The Sport Organization is committed to the Responsible Coaching Movement and to making sport safer for everyone, particularly Vulnerable Participants.
3. The Sport Organization is committed to the True Sport Principles and to ensuring that these principles are reflected by Persons of Authority who interact with Participants.
4. Conduct and behaviour that occur through Electronic Communications and Social Media – both public and personal – is subject to the Sport Organization’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and *Discipline and Complaints Policy.*
5. Regular communication is an important requirement for engaging Participants, keeping them informed, and creating effective and healthy relationships.
6. An open, observable, and justifiable sport participation environment facilitates healthy exchanges among the Sport Organization and Participants. Within the context of Electronic Communications and Social Media use, this means:
   * **Open** – The preferred methods for communication between practices and competition should be documented and communicated at the beginning of the season, with clear expectations for behaviour consistent with the organization’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and the professional standards expected of Persons of Authority. The schedule, purpose, and format of any virtual sessions should be available to parents/guardians and the sport organization.
   * **Observable** – Ideally two trained and screened coaches should be present for any virtual sessions. Exchanges on social media should be “public” - private and one-on-one communication is discouraged. All electronic communications and interactions on social media should be logged or recorded, and regularly shared with parents/guardians and/or the sport organization.
   * **Justifiable** – Communication should be necessary (time sensitive), administrative, and/or focus exclusively on supporting Participant engagement and development. Personal and closed/private communications between Participants and coaches or other Persons of Authority is discouraged.
7. Electronic Communications and Social Media must be used in ways that are appropriate for the context of the communication.

**Guidelines**

1. The following guidelines (Appendixes) have been developed to inform policy and practice:
   1. Leading Practices for Electronic Communications and Social Media Use
   2. Guidelines and Consent Form for Persons of Authority
   3. Guidelines and Consent Form for Participants
   4. Guidelines and Consent Form for Parents/Guardians

**Implementation Plan**

1. An implementation plan has been developed to assist the Sport Organization, its coaches, Participants, and parents/guardians to apply the guidelines described in this Policy.

**Reporting Concerning Behaviour**

1. An individual who believes Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate the Sport Organization’s policies and procedures should report the matter as outlined in the Sport Organization’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy.*
2. Every person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a Participant or Vulnerable Person is or may be subject to Maltreatment or abuse, including through Electronic Communications or Social Media use, must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to local child protection services or the police.
3. Removing content from Social Media after it has been posted (either publicly or privately) does not excuse the Participant from being subject to the Sport Organization’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Policy History** | |
| Approved |  |
| Next Review Date |  |

# APPENDIX A

## Leading Practices for Electronic Communications and Social Media Use

The following leading practices should inform policy and procedure relating to communication between Persons of Authority and Participants, consistent with the Sport Organization’s *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*.

Consistent with the Responsible Coaching Movement, all communication should be **open, observable, and justifiable**. Communication should respect the formal nature of the relationships between Persons of Authority and Participants, and is subject to the Sport Organization’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.

* The means and associated expectations for how the Sport Organization, coaches, and other Persons of Authority will communicate with Participants (and parents/guardians as appropriate) should be documented and communicated at the beginning of each season.
* Any Electronic Communications or Social Media interaction from the Sport Organization, coaches, and Persons of Authority to Participants should be:
  + Necessary (time sensitive and/or specific to an athlete, and cannot be delayed until the next in-person meeting),
  + Administrative in nature (sharing a new Policy), and/or
  + Sport-specific (supporting Participant training and performance).
* When working with Vulnerable Participants communication should be directed to parents/guardians.
* If communicating directly with youth or other Vulnerable Participants, parents/guardians should be copied.
* Persons of Authority are discouraged from initiating personal and private Electronic Communications or Social Media activities with Participants. Contact initiated by Vulnerable Participants should be rejected and/or blocked.
* Use only Sport Organization-approved Social Media Platforms, and only for public communication; avoid private messaging.
* Use virtual platforms (Zoom, MS Teams) only for scheduled events that are approved by the Sport Organization. A minimum of one trained coach and one screened adult (preferably coaches) is recommended to be in attendance. Sessions should be recorded.
* The use of disappearing content platforms or content (Snapchat, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories) should be avoided.
* All Electronic Communications and Social Media activity between Persons of Authority and Participants should be recorded and shared regularly with the Sport Organization and parent/guardian, and/or made available upon request.
* All Participants are expected to interact in a positive, professional manner consistent with the Sport Organization’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics*. All Participants should monitor their own Social Media content for consistency with the *Code of Conduct and Ethics.*
* Any Participant can choose not to engage with other Participants (including Persons of Authority) on Social Media. Participants should not be required to engage on Social Media platforms to access team or Sport Organization information.
* An individual who believes Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate the Sport Organization’s policies and procedures should report the matter as outlined in the Sport Organization’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy.*
* Every person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a Participant or Vulnerable Person is or may be subject to Maltreatment or abuse, including through Electronic Communications or Social Media use, must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to local child protection services or the police.

# APPENDIX B

## Guidelines and Consent Form for Persons of Authority

* All Electronic Communications and Social Media use between Persons of Authority and Participants should be open, observable, and justifiable.
* At the beginning of the season, document the means and associated expectations for how you will communicate with Participants, and inform Participants and parents/guardians.
* Choosing not to engage with Participants on Social Media is an acceptable strategy. Be prepared to inform Participants (and/or parents/guardians) why you have chosen not to engage in this space. Be consistent in how you respond to “friend” or “follow” requests.
* If communicating via Social Media is necessary or preferred, consider creating a professional Social media account for use in your role with the Sport Organization, separate from your personal account. Provide access to other Persons of Authority and to the Sport Organization so the account is open and observable.
* Annually review and update the privacy settings on all Social Media accounts and across devices.
* Always model appropriate behaviour befitting your role and status in connection with the Sport Organization. Whether for professional or personal use, all Electronic Communications and Social Media platforms should be considered “public” and permanent. Avoid emojis and language that could be misinterpreted.
* Participants or parents/guardians should not be required to engage on Social Media platforms to access information about your team or Sport Organization.
* Persons of Authority should not demand access to a Participant’s private posts on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or other Social Media platforms.
* Ensure parents/guardians are aware of any Electronic Communications or Social Media interactions with a Vulnerable Participant in their care.
* Be prepared to share logs or records of your communication history with Participants with the Sport Organization and parents/guardians. Become familiar with methods to save and download messages on platforms in use:
  + [Transferring iPhone messages](https://www.iphone-to-pc.com/how-transfer-messages-iphone-pc.html)
  + [Saving text messages iPhone and Android](https://deciphertools.com/blog/save-text-messages-forever/" \t "_blank)
  + [Saving and printing Instagram messages](https://deciphertools.com/blog/how-to-save-instagram-messeges-to-computer/" \t "_blank)
  + [Saving Chat History (WhatsApp)](https://faq.whatsapp.com/android/chats/how-to-save-your-chat-history/?lang=en)
* Selection decisions and other sensitive team business should be shared in-person meetings or through official Electronic Communications (email), rather than posting on social media.
* The use of disappearing content platforms and formats (Snapchat, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories) is discouraged.
* Posting pictures or videos of Participants on your private Social Media accounts is discouraged. Consent must always be provided by Participants and parents/guardian, via the sport organization.
* Never misrepresent yourself by using a fake name or fake profile on Social Media platforms.
* Avoid engaging Participants via Electronic Communications or Social Media while using any substances (alcohol, drugs).
* Avoid association with Facebook groups, Instagram accounts, Twitter feeds, or online communities with explicit sexual content or viewpoints that might offend or compromise your relationship with a Participant, their parents/guardians, or the Sport Organization.
* If you believe Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate the Sport Organization’s policies and procedures, report the matter as outlined in the Sport Organization’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy.*
* Persons of Authority who have reasonable grounds to suspect that a Participant or a Vulnerable Person is or may be subject to Maltreatment or abuse, including through Electronic Communications or Social Media use, must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to local child protection services or the police.

### Guidelines for Virtual Video Sessions

* Virtual video sessions should be open, observable, and justifiable.
* Inform the Sport Organization that you intend to communicate with Participants via video session. If you intend to provide instruction or skills training, your organization may need to sanction the session and/or parents/guardians of Vulnerable Participants may need to sign an agreement or waiver.
* Virtual video sessions using platforms such as Zoom, MS Teams, Google Connect, Adobe, should be recorded to document the interaction and be held in an “open” environment. The Sport Organization, the Participant, and/or parent/guardians as appropriate should be permitted to view the recording.
* Virtual video sessions with groups of Participants should be attended by at least two trained and screened adults (preferably coaches). One-on-one video sessions should be recorded with permission and/or attended by another adult and/or the Participant’s parent/guardian (when applicable). One-on-one video sessions with a Participant should not take place without a parent/guardian’s knowledge.
* Provide the agenda prior to the virtual video session, along with the behavioural expectations and professional standards for all Participants. If there are any breaches of professional standards during the session, they must be communicated to parents/guardians of Participants after the session.
* Ensure you are dressed appropriately and in a neutral location (avoid personal spaces such as bedrooms or bathrooms).

Name of Person of Authority (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Organization (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that any communication that occurs on Electronic Communications and/or Social Media be open, observable, and justified.
2. I understand that it is my responsibility to log or record any communication that occurs on Electronic Communications and/or Social Media.
3. I understand that a Participant, parent/guardian, and/or the Sport Organization may request that I cease communicating with the Participant on any Social Media platform.

1. I **UNDERSTAND AND AGREE** that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document, including the guidelines above, and that I have been provided with the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*. I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily.

Signature of Person of Authority: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX C

## Guidelines and Consent Form for Participants

* All Electronic Communications and Social Media use between Persons of Authority and Participants should be open, observable, and justifiable.
* Familiarize yourself with the means and associated expectations for how team staff/volunteers will communicate with Participants, shared at the beginning of the season.
* Engaging on Social Media is your choice:
  + You are not required to follow or accept invitations from coaches, teammates, competitors, officials, or other Sport Organization Participants. You can also choose to block individuals from following you.
  + Talk to your coaches and parents/guardians about how you would like to communicate about your sport participation.
* Protect your privacy. Set and annually review your privacy settings across platforms and on all devices to restrict who can search for you and what private information other people can see.
  + Remember – Depending on your privacy settings, content posted or shared on Social Media is not private or anonymous, and is considered public communication. Content is also almost always permanent because individuals may take screenshots of your content before it is deleted.
* If you are under the age of 18, make sure your parent/guardian is aware of any Electronic Communications and/or Social Media interactions you have with your coach or other Persons of Authority.
* Model appropriate behaviour on Social Media befitting your status as a Participant within the Sport Organization. Interactions on Social Media must respect the Sport Organization’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics.*
* If you attend or host a video session, ensure you are dressed appropriately and in a neutral location (avoid personal spaces such as bedrooms or bathrooms).
* Do not post content or pictures of, or alluding to, participation in illegal activities by yourself or others.
* Do not engage with coaches or other Persons of Authority on platforms with disappearing content (Snapchat, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories).
* If you feel harassed or believe Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate the Sport Organization’s policies and procedures, report the matter to your parent/guardian, your coach, and/or as outlined in the Sport Organization’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy.*
* Every Participant who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a Participant or Vulnerable Person is or may be subject to Maltreatment or abuse, including through Electronic Communications or Social Media use, must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to local child protection services or the police.

Name of Participant (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian (if Participant is a Vulnerable Person) (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. I understand that Electronic Communications and Social Media use with my coaches and other Person of Authority must be open, observable, and justified.
2. I understand that engagement on Social Media is not required as part of my membership in this team or Sport Organization.
3. I understand that I may request that my coaches and other Persons of Authority cease communicating with me via Electronic Communications or Social Media platform(s).
4. **I** **UNDERSTAND** **AND AGREE** that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document, including the guidelines above, and that I have been provided with the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*. I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily.

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if Participant is a Vulnerable Participant):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX D

## Guidelines and Consent Form for Parents / Guardians

* All Electronic Communications and Social Media use between Persons of Authority and Participants should be open, observable, and justifiable.
* Familiarize yourself with the means and associated expectations for how team staff/volunteers will communicate with Participants, shared at the beginning of the season.
* Consider that Participants may discuss personal and non-personal matters through Electronic Communications or Social Media rather than face-to-face. You can inform Persons of Authority that they are not permitted to contact the Participant in your care directly using Electronic Communications and/or on any (or a specific) Social Media platform.
* Participants joining video sessions (on Zoom, MS Teams) must dress appropriately and avoid personal spaces (bedrooms, bathrooms).
* Consider joining any Public Communication that occurs on a Social Media platform between a Person of Authority and the Participant in your care (tag a coach and your Participant on a sport-related Twitter thread or add a comment to an Instagram post).
* You can request copies of any Electronic Communications and/or Social Media interactions between a Person of Authority and the Participant in your care.
* You can request to be copied on all Electronic Communications between team staff/the Sport Organization and the Participant in your care.
* An individual who believes Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate the Sport Organization’s policies and procedures should report the matter as outlined in the Sport Organization’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy.*
* Every Parent/Guardian who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a Participant or Vulnerable Person is or may be subject to Maltreatment or abuse, including through Electronic Communications or Social Media use, must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to local child protection services or the police.

Name of Participant (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. I, being the parent or legal guardian of a Participant/Vulnerable Person, hereby grant [insert names of Persons of Authority] (“Persons of Authority”) the permission to contact the Participant to support their participation and athletic development (not for personal purposes) as follows:

[insert nature of contact]

*Sample 1: Through TeamSnap, email, and text for all types of communication, and through public posts on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.*

*Sample 2: Through text, only in emergencies.*

1. I understand that I may request to see a log or record of any communication that occurs via Electronic Communications and/or Social Media.
2. I understand that I may request at any time that the Person of Authority cease communicating with the Participant in my care via Electronic Communications and/or Social Media.
3. **I** **UNDERSTAND** **AND AGREE** that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document including the guidelines above, and that I have been provided with the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*. I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_