



BIPHA Social Media Policy

To be read in conjunction with the BIPHA Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Procedures and Codes of Conduct

Purpose and scope

BIPHA recognise the developing range of technologies used to interactively share, create and discuss issues and content as extremely positive and encourages individuals and communities to use social media to promote themselves, their clubs, their achievements and the sport of Inline hockey.

However, BIPHA will challenge anyone using social media either intentionally or by association to insult, slander, create a risk to personal safety or abuse any individual, organisation or the sport Inline Hockey.

This Policy provides guidance for all BIPHA members, officials, referees, coaches, managers and other associated individuals, to help them understand the acceptable standards of use of social media with the sport of Inline Hockey. It sets out best practice designed to assist everyone in understanding what the potential risks are in using social media and how these can be managed.

The pace of change in technology means that it is not possible to identify a definitive list of all forms of social media which this Policy applies to, hence it is to be read as applying to all forms commonly understood to be social media and used as such. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Codes of Conduct and remember that misuse of social media can result in Disciplinary Action being taken against a member, volunteer or other associated individual

Definitions

Social media is the collective of online communications and media channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration via a range of technologies such as desktop, laptop, tablets, smartphones and other internet enable devices. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, chat rooms, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media and examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, tiktok, Messenger, WhatsApp, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, Wikipedia, LinkedIn and Reddit.



Child and Young person is used to refer to any person below the age of 18.

Disciplinary Action means action taken under the Disciplinary Regulations of BIPHA.

Usage

Whilst clubs and athletes are encouraged to use social media to positively promote their clubs, themselves and their achievements and the sport of inline hockey, the balance between the right to free speech and the responsibility not to insult, slander, abuse or create risks to anyone's personal safety must be borne in mind. This Policy seeks to assist each person in knowing how to achieve that balance.

- The web is not anonymous. BIPHA members and staff should assume that everything they write can be traced back to them.
- Due to the unique nature of sporting groups such as BIPHA and inline hockey, the boundaries between a member's profession, volunteer time and social life can often be blurred. It is therefore essential that members make a clear distinction between what they do in a professional capacity and what they do, think or say in their capacity as a volunteer for BIPHA.
- BIPHA considers all members of the association are its representatives.
- Honesty is always the best policy, especially online. It is important that BIPHA members think of the web as a permanent record of online actions and opinions.
- When using the Internet for professional or personal pursuits, all members must respect the BIPHA brand and follow the guidelines in place to ensure BIPHA's intellectual property or its relationships with sponsors and stakeholders is not compromised, or the association is brought into disrepute.

Good Practice Guidance

As a general principle it is recommended that the club, athlete or individual has an online presence, i.e a Facebook Page or Group, which is used for their inline hockey involvement and that they keep their personal identity, pages and profile separate. This will help in distinguishing between what is part of a



person's private life, and what is part of their life in inline hockey. Whilst there will always be grey lines between the two, having separate online behaviours should assist in focusing the mind on what is and what is not appropriate content and usage, before anything is posted.

The internet presents a unique set of challenges for protecting personal safety as all information posted is available to the whole world, indefinitely.

Generational differences in understanding the implications of what is being posted means that there are very different perceptions of risk operating.

Whilst young people get great benefits from the online communities they belong to and the instant access they have to friends from across the world, they may need guidance from the people with responsibility for their safety as to what is acceptable and safe use.

The use of social media to target individuals, whether for grooming or the increasing incidences of cyber bullying, has created a set of risks to vulnerable people which is a real challenge to manage. Everyone is creating potential risk to themselves when they post personal information.

For example, if a person posts that they are going on holiday and has their address on their page, it is easy to see that there is an increased risk to their property whilst they are away. If a top athlete posts that they are tired, injured, worried about an upcoming event, they are giving their opponents information which provides them with psychological advantages that they would not have otherwise gained.

Thinking before you post will help reduce these sorts of unforeseen consequences.

Texting/e-mail/chat groups/Team Apps

Probably the most commonly used form of social media, as it is a great way to send fast cheap communications

One to one contact, without a parent/carer copied in to messages, between any adult in a position of responsibility and a young person is inappropriate including within any form of chat feature in an App. Clubs/coaches should seek parental consent at the start of the season for social media communications, with anyone under the age of 16. If this is given, clubs should use group



messaging, with the Club Safeguarding Officer and any parent who requests it, copied in. Using this method, there should be no need for any adult to have individual contact with a young person in the sport in the normal course of things. If there is an emergency which means that an individual young person needs to be contacted, the Club Safeguarding Officer or the parent/carer should be copied in.

Over the age of 16, parents should still be made aware of the club's practice and this Policy.

Clubs should keep a copy of the phone numbers and e-mail addresses of their members, by group and ensure that these are held securely and not used for any other purpose. The messages sent should always make it clear what the purpose of the communication is and contain the name of the organisation, not just a mobile number.

There should be at least two administrators with access to the group and contact details.

BIPHA members should not have any form of social media contact with children under the age of thirteen and should check current age requirements for each individual online channel (for example you must be 16 to use WhatsApp)

Social networks

Social networks are the communities which develop on media applications, such as Facebook and twitter.

Adults and young persons should not be "friending" or "following" each other, outside of the inline hockey relationship. Communications for inline hockey purposes should be through sites/social media groups which are public and managed by the club. This applies to adults in a position of trust as well as to the adults who come into contact with young people through inline hockey.

For example, if a coach receives a friend request from a young person who they have met at a training session, they should decline. If the club has a page or identify which allows communication via a public forum, this would be acceptable, provided the site is secure and there are no private messages being sent or received.



It is accepted that some parents/carers are friends with their children, to monitor the material posted and seen by them. If the adult then accepts their child's friends, this is not something which BIPHA has any jurisdiction over, however it is strongly recommended that any adult in a position of trust does not engage in any form of private messaging with any child or young person except their own kin.

BIPHA is concerned about social media usage where the primary relationship is one gained through inline hockey. Everyone needs to be mindful that:

Social media must not be used to insult, belittle, or criticise other teams, players, officials or volunteers of BIPHA.

Expressing your opinion is fine, being rude in the way you express it or expressing discriminatory views is not and could lead to the individual who posted the comment, anyone who forwards or positively affirms the comment, and the person with administration rights for the site used, being subject to Disciplinary Action. Anyone who has posted an offensive message or image is advised to remove the comment as soon as possible, to reduce its impact.

The speed and variety in the development of social media forums, means that posts can be generated rapidly and spread to a wider audience in a very short space of time. All members, connected participants, officials and members of the public can and should report any misuse of social media to the club, region or national safeguarding officer, so that appropriate action can be taken to maintain the high standards of behaviour expected within the sport of Inline Hockey.

When using any form of social media, reposting other people's comments or posts can be taken as adopting the views that have been expressed, and therefore a repost would be seen to be endorsing those views.

Comments made should clearly be attributable to the individual and not to the club, region or BIPHA.

Setting up Club Webpages

Clubs setting up webpages, including Facebook pages, are advised to ensure that they retain ownership and administration rights over that site. No one



individual should have exclusive ownership or administration rights, including the Chair. At club/regional and national level safeguarding officers should be informed about and involved in the administration of any site(s). All these people should be aware of the law and good practice for protecting children from the potential risks of social media.

The primary purpose of the site should be for promoting the club and the sport of inline hockey and for communicating between members of the club. Privacy settings should be set so that members of the public cannot contact individuals from the club by first establishing a link with the club.

Links from a young person's personal page to the club site may be made, but additional links between the pages of an adult and a young person, should not be made. Remember that privacy settings change frequently – keep them under review and update as necessary.

Photos and tagging should be used with consideration for the safety implications which these bring. A photo of the team in play, without any tagging of individuals is fine. Do not use tags as this allows people to be identified and then traced. Whenever a photo is going to be taken and used, make sure the individual knows and get parental consent. All use of photos and images should be in accordance with the BIPHA child protection policy, procedures and codes of conduct.

All clubs should provide their members with guidance on the use of the club site and issue their members with acceptable use agreements which the parent/carer of a young person also signs. A template Acceptable Use Agreement is appended to this policy.

BIPHA members must recognise that it may not be appropriate to share photographs, videos and comments online. For example, there may be an expectation that photographs taken at a club event will not appear publicly on the Internet. In certain situations BIPHA members or staff could potentially breach the privacy act or inadvertently make BIPHA liable for breach of copyright.

BIPHA members should be considerate to others in such circumstance and should not post information when they have been asked not to, or consent has not been sought and given. They must also remove information about another person if that person asks them to do so.



Players usage

Young Performance athletes are in a position of greater prominence than most players in the sport of Inline Hockey and this increases as they progress up the Performance Pathway and to possible National Team Selection. As such, these athletes are the role models for acceptable standards of behaviour and this is as true for their use of social media, as it is for their everyday conduct.

Players are encouraged to show their personality and engage with their friends when using social media. There is a need for professional conduct at all times and the onus remains on them to promote the sport, the team and the events. They are reminded that sponsorship deals depend on the public perception of the sport and they are the public face of the sport. Deals can be lost on the basis of the behaviour of any one player, so it is not just your personal reputation which is important to protect and nurture. Remember the overriding factor is that the tweets or posts must not mislead.

Showing your personality and sharing your performances helps show what it takes to be a top player and attracts people to you. Make regular use of your pages/posts so that your supporters feel you invest in them and that they have a relationship with you.

Players should make it clear they are posting their own views. They should not use the club, region or BIPHA logo.

Players are advised to think carefully about what is posted before it is posted. As a rule of thumb, operate a 5-hour embargo either side of a game, so that you don't post in haste and regret it later. Never criticise the referees and officials.

Remember that players also have a responsibility to report any posts which contravene the standards expected by BIPHA's Code of Conduct and this Policy.

Anyone reporting a concern, or who is the subject of such a report, will be given advice on the procedures which are used to tackle these issues.

Reporting a Concern

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, as is creating and maintaining the high standards of behaviour expected of people in the sport of Inline Hockey.



For these reasons, everyone is encouraged to report concerns of misuse or inappropriate usage of social media to the appropriate safeguarding officer within the BIPHA association and its members, or the relevant authority outside it.

The first point of contact will usually be the Club Safeguarding Officer, or the Chair of the club. Which level is the most appropriate will depend on the nature of the concern, but if it relates to a potential safeguarding issue, the matter must be reported to the National Designated Safeguarding Lead of BIPHA.

Threats of immediate harm or danger should be reported to the police and/or Children's Services or the Local Authority Designated Officer (where the concern relates to someone in a position of trust), contactable via your local authority and the Local Safeguarding Children Board and reported to the National Designated Safeguarding Lead of BIPHA, following the procedures outlined in the BIPHA Child Protection Policy

Whilst the law does not move as fast as technology, there is legislation and government guidance which applies to social media usage, including: -

- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Protection from Harassment Act 2003
- Defamation Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- Working Together 2013.

Prosecutions may be taken for comments/content posted online.





For example those which are offensive, incite hatred or are of an intimidating nature.

BIPHA may also take Disciplinary Action against individuals using social media inappropriately.



Useful contacts

There are several organisations who can provide advice and guidance on internet safety and usage, which have been referred to in the development of this policy. They are great resources to reference for the most up to date guidance.

-  [CPSU Online Safety](#)
-  [CPSU](#)
-  [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
-  [CEOP Safety Centre](#)

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