



OLA Social Media Conduct Policy

June 2025

Preamble

The Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA) strives to be a leader in fostering safe, inclusive, and healthy sport and activity environments for all individuals. The Social Media Conduct Policy identifies the standard behaviour which is expected of all OLA members and participants, which for purpose of this policy includes all players, guardians, parents, coaches, officials, volunteers, directors, officers, committee members, convenors, team managers, trainers, administrators and employees who are or may be involved in OLA activities and events. This policy is intended to preserve the integrity of the sport and foster a positive, respectful digital environment for all participants. Compliance is mandatory, and the OLA encourages all Individuals to uphold these standards to support the growth of lacrosse.

About the Ontario Lacrosse Association

The OLA exists to improve, foster, perpetuate and govern the sport of lacrosse within the province of Ontario. In addition to coordinating the administration and operation of the game, the OLA provides informative resources, technical development programs and additional supplies for those interested in developing the “fastest game on two feet.”

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA) encourages all members of our community to be positive ambassadors for lacrosse online. A constructive and respectful online presence helps “grow the game” and reflect the values of the OLA. This Social Media Conduct Policy sets clear expectations for all Individuals when engaging on social platforms. All Individuals are required to comply with this policy, in addition to the OLA Code of Conduct, across both online and offline environments.

Non-compliance with this policy may be considered misconduct or harassment under OLA’s existing disciplinary processes, or in certain circumstances, contravention of the law (e.g., concerning privacy, harassment, or hate speech). This policy is intended to educate and emphasize positive use of Social Media. The OLA is committed to increasing Social Media and digital literacy among our athletes, parents, coaches, and volunteers. Individuals are responsible for their online conduct, which may have real-world consequences for safety, personal reputation, and even opportunities like team selection or collegiate recruitment.

SECTION 2: Definitions

- S 2.1 Individuals** refers to all classes of membership defined in OLA’s bylaws (Director, League, Club, Life and Affiliated Members), as well as Participants (athlete, coach, trainer, manager, official, volunteer, parent/guardian or club representative), OLA staff, and Spectators at OLA-sanctioned events. All Individuals affiliated with the OLA are expected to uphold this policy.
- S 2.2 Designated Representative** is an Individual who serves in a leadership, spokesperson, or decision-making capacity on behalf of a club, team, league, or the OLA. This includes, but is not limited to, coaches, managers, executives, board members, social media managers, and any other person authorized to represent the organization in an official or public-facing role.
- S 2.3 Social Media** is any digital technology, platform, or application that enables users to create, share, or engage with content and communicate publicly or semi-publicly over the internet. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Snapchat), micro-blogging and messaging services (e.g., Twitter/X, TikTok, WhatsApp, Reddit), photo and video sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo), blogs, online forums, and other forms of online publication or discussion. If content posted on these platforms can be reasonably linked to the OLA or its members, it falls under the scope of this policy.
- S 2.4 Digital Communication** is private or direct messaging between Individuals through digital channels, including text messages, group chats, email, and direct messages on Social Media platforms. This policy applies to conduct through these private channels where such conduct constitutes bullying, harassment, threats, abuse, or other harmful behavior. Sharing private communication online without the consent of all parties involved is strongly discouraged and may itself constitute harassment.
- S 2.5 Official Social Media Account** is a Social Media profile or page created to represent an OLA member club, team, league, or program in an official capacity. Official accounts are managed by authorized persons and must reflect OLA’s values and standards.
- S 2.6 Personal Social Media Account** is any Social Media account that is created for personal use by an Individual and is not designated as an Official Social Media Account of a club, team, league, or the OLA.

SECTION 3: SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT GUIDELINES

- S 3.1 Positive Representation of the Sport.** Individuals are expected to represent the sport of lacrosse positively across all platforms. Content that promotes teamwork, achievement, community spirit, and respect for others is encouraged – and helps us promote our mission to grow the game. Disparaging, inflammatory, or divisive content undermines the integrity of the sport and will not be tolerated.
- S 3.2 Compliance with OLA Code of Conduct.** All forms of abuse, bullying, harassment, personal insults, or threats—whether directed at Individuals, groups, officials, teams, or the OLA itself—are strictly prohibited. Disputes or concerns must be addressed through appropriate internal channels, not through Social Media.
- S 3.3 Respect Others.** Under no circumstances should Social Media be used to attack, ridicule, or demean any Individual, team, or organization. Posting disparaging content about officials or the league brings the game into disrepute and will result in disciplinary action.
- S 3.4 Respect the Game.** Posting, sharing, or promoting photos or videos of fights, brawls, physical altercations or other damaging behaviour from OLA games or events is strictly prohibited. Content that sensationalizes violence, poor sportsmanship or disgraceful behaviour damages the reputation of the game and will result in disciplinary action.
- S 3.5 Responsibility for Content Shared.** Individuals are responsible for their own posts and should exercise sound judgment. Removing content after posting or using privacy settings does not excuse misconduct. Before posting, consider whether the content upholds the values of the OLA. Remember that any content you share could be seen by potential recruiters, coaches, schools, employers, or the media in the future.
- S 3.6 Protection of Privacy and Confidential Information.** Do not share personal, private, or confidential information about yourself or others. Respect private spaces such as locker rooms and team environments—capturing or sharing media from these areas is not permitted without explicit consent.
- S 3.7 Responsible Use of Official Social Media Accounts.** Official Social Media Accounts represent the entire team or organization. Content shared through these accounts must reflect OLA values, avoid controversy, and not be used for personal opinions, grievances, criticism of officials and opponents, or commentary on league matters. OLA member clubs, teams, and leagues must maintain security and control of their official channels. If an unauthorized Individual posts on an Official Social Media Account, the club may be held accountable.
- S 3.8 Use of Team-Specific Social Media Accounts.** To protect the privacy of minors, reduce organizational risk, maintain brand clarity, and ensure consistent standards across all OLA member clubs, the use of team-specific social media accounts for minor teams is not permitted under this policy. All official team communication on social media should occur through the club's main account(s), which are overseen by the club executive. Program-specific accounts (e.g., having separate accounts for Junior/Major teams, Women's Box/Women's Field, or Alumni) may be permitted where directly managed by the club executive and aligned with all standards outlined in this policy.

- S 3.9 Responsible Use of Personal Social Media Accounts.** All Individuals are expected to conduct themselves responsibly on their Personal Social Media accounts. While these accounts may not be officially connected to a club, team, league, or the OLA, Individuals should understand that their behavior online still reflects on the broader lacrosse community. Content that is disrespectful, harmful, discriminatory, or inflammatory is not acceptable, regardless of whether it is shared through a Personal Social Media account or Official Social Media account. Individuals should exercise good judgment, avoid engaging in online disputes, and remember that posts, comments, likes, and shares may be interpreted by others as endorsements. By using Personal Social Media accounts responsibly, Individuals help maintain a respectful environment and positive image for all participants in the sport.
- S 3.10 Heightened Expectations for Designated Representatives.** Individuals who are designated as representatives of a club, team, league, or the OLA are held to a higher standard in their online conduct. These Individuals must recognize that their activity on Social Media may be perceived as representing their team, club, league, or the OLA, even when shared from Personal Social Media accounts and even when not officially acting in that capacity. Participation in discussions, posts, likes, shares, and comments may be interpreted as endorsements or official viewpoints. Individuals in these roles are expected to lead by example in their online conduct and maintain a respectful, professional, and sportsmanlike tone at all times. They are required to avoid public disputes, commentary on league matters, or inflammatory online interactions. Those in leadership positions should understand that their personal posts may carry influence and reflect on the organizations they represent.
- S 3.11 Avoid Anonymous or Pseudonymous Misconduct.** Posting harmful, defamatory, or harassing content under anonymous accounts or pseudonyms does not exempt Individuals from accountability. Attempting to hide identity to harass or threaten others is not a defense; if an Individual is determined to be the source, that person will be held accountable.
- S 3.12 Reporting and Accountability.** Violations of this policy may be reported to the OLA or club representatives. The OLA will handle reports seriously and confidentially. The OLA and its member leagues are not expected to police Social Media 24/7, but we will take action when harmful conduct is brought to our attention. The OLA reserves the right to remove Individuals from OLA-sanctioned events if their online conduct violates this policy. This applies regardless of whether the misconduct occurred on public social platforms or through private Digital Communication. In cases of criminal behavior, the OLA may refer matters to law enforcement.

SECTION 4: CONSEQUENCES

Consequences for violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including:

- Written warnings or notices of violation
- Removal of offending content
- Required education or conduct review
- Formal apologies
- Suspension from activities
- Removal from events
- Suspension of access to Official Social Media Accounts
- Fines (where applicable)
- Referral to law enforcement
- Suspension or permanent expulsion in severe cases or for habitual offenders
- Any other outcomes as specified in the OLA's Code of Conduct

