



Policy Name: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY		Date of Approval: January 16, 2023	Activation Date: January 18, 2023
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1.0 GENERAL

Gymnastics BC (GymBC) is committed to creating a sports environment that is accessible, inclusive, respects their participants' personal goals and is free from all forms of maltreatment.

The welfare of all participants in the sport is one of GymBC's foremost considerations. In particular, the protection of athletes who are vulnerable individuals is the ongoing responsibility of each member of the gymnastics community. GymBC, as primarily a youth-serving organisation, recognizes that it has a special position in the gymnastics community in BC, which implies a responsibility to develop policies, procedures and standards that assist its members in achieving a Safe Sport environment.

Social Media (twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc.) plays an important role in everyone's job whether it be for engagement, promotion, or awareness. It is also an invaluable communications tool to help drive and promote gymnastics in British Columbia. However, if these tools are not used in an appropriate and respectful way, they may give rise to complaints from individuals or organisation alleging violations of relevant GymBC rules, Regulations and Policies; including complaints that individuals are not acting in the best interest of GymBC or are demonstrating unethical (unsporting) conduct and or behaviour.

It is expected that all members of GymBC use social media responsibly and respectfully. This includes public applications and media, but also private group chats and other types of media where members, athletes, volunteers, administrators and other members of the GymBC community may be impacted.

2.0 DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

GymBC is aware that individual interaction and communication occurs frequently on social media. GymBC cautions individuals that any conduct falling short of the standard of behaviour required by GymBC's [Complaint Management Handbook](#) will be subject to the disciplinary sanctions identified within GymBC's Complaint Management Process.

2.1 Definitions

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

- 2.1.1 "Social Media" – The catch-all term that is applied broadly to computer-mediated communication media such as I-Message, Messenger, WhatsApp, Blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, and Twitter.
- 2.1.2 "Individuals" – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, GymBC or a GymBC member club, including, but not limited to, GymBC Member Club Leaders (Administrators, Managers, and Board Members); GymBC Registered Coaches; GymBC Registered Athletes and Parents/Guardians of Athletes; GymBC Staff, Board Members, and Committee Members.
- 2.1.3 "GymBC Representatives" means any other person employed by or engaged in activities with GymBC, including but not limited to: Directors, Officers, Committee Members, Sub-committee Members and Staff of GymBC; Judges and other Officials; Volunteers; Team Managers; and Administrators.
- 2.1.4 "Case Manager" – The person or organisation appointed by GymBC to oversee management and administration of complaints.

- 2.1.5 “GymBC Activities” means all events that are sanctioned, sponsored or otherwise supported by GymBC, including but not limited to those ordinarily arising in the course of GymBC’s business (whether in person, over the phone or online. For the purposes of this Policy, “GymBC Activities” also includes other non-GymBC events and circumstances outside of the foregoing, when such conduct adversely affects relationships within GymBC (and its work and sport environment) and/or among its members or is detrimental to the image and reputation of GymBC. Such applicability will be determined by GymBC, in its sole discretion. Specific examples of GymBC Activities include:
- a) All provincial team training camps, competitions, selection events and other provincial team undertakings;
 - b) GymBC member club competitive and recreational programs and services;
 - c) Events owned and/or sanctioned by GymBC; involvement in BC Winter/Summer Games, Canada Winter/Summer Games or GymCan and other Canadian Gymnastics hosted and non-hosted competitions or activities;
 - d) Travel to and from 2.1.5.a), 2.1.5.b), and 2.1.5.c).;
 - e) Conferences, workshops, clinics and other branded GymBC events;
 - f) Meetings organized by GymBC or meetings at which GymBC staff, coaches, officials, volunteers, and/or others representing the organization are present.
 - g) Activities related to the general business of GymBC.

2.2 Scope

All conduct and behaviour occurring on social media may be subject to reporting as per GymBC’s Complaint Management Handbook at the discretion of the Case Manager.

3.0 APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to all Individuals and Representatives as defined in the Definitions.

4.0 CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR

Per GymBC’s [Complaint Management Handbook](#), the following social media conduct may be considered minor or major infractions at the discretion of the Case Manager:

- 4.1 Posting a disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, or otherwise negative comment on a social medium that is directed at an Individual, at GymBC, or at other individuals connected with GymBC;
- 4.2 Posting or sharing any Social Media posts that tag or otherwise provide contact information for minors. Given/first names should only be used to identify minors in posts;
- 4.3 Posting a picture, altered picture, or video on a social medium that is harmful, disrespectful, insulting, or otherwise offensive, and that is directed at an Individual, at GymBC, or at other individuals connected with GymBC;

- 4.4 Creating or contributing to a Facebook group, webpage, Instagram account, Twitter feed, blog, or online forum devoted solely or in part to promoting negative or disparaging remarks or commentary about GymBC, its stakeholders, or its reputation;
- 4.5 Inappropriate personal or sexual relationships between Individuals who have a power imbalance in their interactions, such as between athletes and coaches, Directors and staff, officials and athletes, etc.;
- 4.6 Any instance of cyber-bullying or cyber-harassment between one Individual and another Individual (including a teammate, coach, opponent, volunteer, or official), where incidents of cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment can include but are not limited to the following conduct on any social medium, via text-message, I-Message, Messenger, or via email: regular insults, negative comments, vexatious behaviour, pranks or jokes, threats, posing as another person, spreading rumours or lies, or other harmful behaviour.

5.0 INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Individuals acknowledge that their Social Media activity may be viewed by anyone; including GymBC.
- 5.2 If GymBC unofficially engages with an Individual in social media (such as by retweeting a tweet or sharing a photo on Facebook) the Individual may, at any time, ask GymBC to cease this engagement.
- 5.3 When using social media, an Individual must model appropriate behaviour befitting the Individual's role and status in connection with GymBC.
- 5.4 Removing content from Social Media after it has been posted (either publicly or privately) does not excuse the Individual from being reported in breach of GymBC's [Complaint Management Handbook](#).

6.0 BEST PRACTICES

6.1 For GymBC Clubs and Training Groups

Clubs and training groups may choose to set up their own social media "group" as a hosting site. These sites can be very useful in announcing training, coordinating travel, competition logistics etc.

When using Social Media clubs/coaches/parents/athletes should keep in mind that:

- a) Although most athletes under the age of 19 do have personal email addresses, all official club communication from the Individuals or GymBC Representatives should be sent to a parent/guardian email;
- b) No adult should communicate one-on-one with any athlete of minor age on any social media platform; and
- c) Athletes should be encouraged by coaches, managers, peers and parents to inform an adult they trust if they receive any communications that make them feel uncomfortable.

6.2 For Coaches, Officials, & Volunteers

Many volunteers deal with athletes and members under the age of 19. Extra care must be taken with this age group to eliminate the risks of misconduct; or perceived misconduct and

maltreatment. Unless an athlete/official/coach who is 19 years old or younger is a direct relation to a member, all Individuals or GymBC Representatives should generally:

- a) Not accept anyone as a friend on social networking sites or share their personal social web pages with anyone under the age of 19;
- b) Not make contact with anyone outside of the GymBC context via any social networking media;
- c) Not send personal messages of a non-gymnastics' nature to anyone under 19;
- d) Not engage in any personal conversations or social comments;
- e) Seek permission from parents and athletes prior to posting pictures or videos publicly;
- f) Keep team selection decisions and other official team business off of Social Media;
- g) Never require athletes to join team or organisational Social Media platforms; and
- h) Ensure that personal devices that have photo-taking functions are not used in a team locker/change room.

6.3 For Athletes

Athletes must understand that publicly accessible content posted to Facebook, Snap Chat, Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram, etc. as well as private team "group chats", are captured under GymBC's Social Media policy.

Athletes can expect that all media may be monitored by other Individuals, GymBC Representatives, external media outlets and many others. Any content could therefore be subject to sanctions.

Athletes must be mindful to follow the Conduct Code when posting material and interacting with others through Social Media. Athletes should:

- a) Set privacy settings to restrict who can search for you and what private information other people can see;
- b) Do not feel pressure to join any fan page, follow a feed or person or be "friends" with anyone. Coaches, fellow athletes, officials, gymnastics clubs, or GymBC may add you, but you are not required to do the same;
- c) Understand that recording images, video or audio capture are NOT permitted in locker/change rooms;
- d) Model appropriate behaviour on Social Media befitting your status as an athlete, and a member of your club and GymBC.
- e) No adult should communicate one-on-one with any athlete of minor age on any Social Media platform.
- f) Athletes should be encouraged by coaches, managers, peers and parents to inform an adult they trust if they receive any communications that make them feel uncomfortable.

7.0 PROCESS AND POLICY ALIGNMENT

If any person believes that an Individual or GymBC Representative's social media activity is inappropriate or may violate policies and procedures outlined in [GymBC's Complaint Management Handbook](#), they should report the matter to Gymnastics BC in the manner outlined in the handbook.

In addition to the policies and procedures outlined throughout the GymBC [Complaint Management Handbook](#), GymBC adopts and accepts all the language contained in the B.C. Universal Code of Conduct. As such, if any individual violates the [B.C. Universal Code of Conduct](#), they may also be subject to sanctions pursuant to policies outlined in the Gymnastics BC's Complaint Management Handbook.