

St. Albert Gymnastics Club Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy

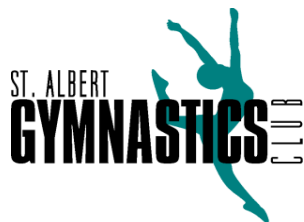
Preamble

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, SnapChat or a Facebook group.
2. St. Albert Gymnastics Club (SAGC) 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. SAGC 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

4. Terms in this Policy are defined as follows:

- a. 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.
- b. Interpersonal Communications – Communication that occurs between two or more Participants within a communication medium, including between Participants and coaches or other Persons of Authority.
- c. Maltreatment – Includes physical, psychological, and sexual maltreatment, as well as other types of misconduct such as neglect, grooming, and retaliation that are described in SAGC's Code of Conduct and Ethics, with definitions consistent with or exceeding those in the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS).
- d. Participants – Refers to all categories of individual members and/or registrants defined in the By-laws of SAGC who are subject to the policies of SAGC, as well as all people employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with SAGC. 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.
- e. Person of Authority – A Participant who holds a position of authority within SAGC including, but not limited to, coaches, managers, support personnel, chaperones, directors, and officers.



f. 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.

g. Public Communications – Communication that is or was posted publicly, such as through a Participant’s social media account.

h. 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.

i. 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.

j. True Sport – 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

k. 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

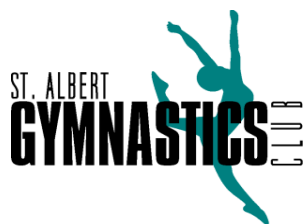
5. The following principles reflects SAGC’s values and guide this Policy:

a. SAGC is committed to the Responsible Coaching Movement and to making sport safer for everyone, particularly Vulnerable Participants.

b. SAGC is committed to the True Sport Principles and to ensuring that these principles are reflected by Persons of Authority who interact with Participants.

c. Conduct and behaviour that occur through Electronic Communications and Social Media – both public and personal – is subject to SAGC’s Code of Conduct and Ethics and Discipline and Complaints Policy.

d. Regular communication is an important requirement for engaging Participants, keeping them informed, and creating effective and healthy relationships.



e. An open, observable, and justifiable sport participation environment facilitates healthy exchanges among SAGC 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 SAGC’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 SAGC.
- 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 SAGC.
- 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.

f. Electronic Communications and Social Media must be used in ways that are appropriate for the context of the communication.

Guidelines

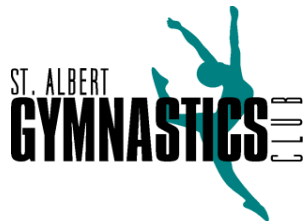
6. The following guidelines (Appendixes) have been developed to inform policy and practice:

- a) Leading Practices for Electronic Communications and Social Media Use
- b) Guidelines for Persons of Authority
- c) Guidelines for Participants
- d) Guidelines for Parents

Reporting Concerning Behaviour

7. An individual who believes Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate the SAGC’s policies and procedures should report the matter as outlined in SAGC’s Discipline and Complaints Policy.

8. 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.



9. Removing content from Social Media after it has been posted (either publicly or privately) does not excuse the Participant from being subject to the SAGC's Discipline and Complaints Policy.