

## YSA Communication and Social Media Policy

### 1. YSA Officials Communication Policy

1.1. The YSA Communication and Social Media Policy has been developed to provide guidelines for communicating:

- with the public;
- between YSA Officials; and
- between coaches and their team members/team parents

No policy can cover all forms of communication and therefore this policy is to provide recommended guidelines that should be followed in all current and future forms of communication. Each of the three categories of communication (public, YSA Official, and coach/player) will be covered in turn.

For the purposes of this policy, a “YSA Official” is defined as a person who has been authorized by the YSA Board to act and/or speak on its behalf. This would include YSA Board Directors and Officers

#### Public Communication

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing YSA-related topics in a public forum:

- **Respect YSA confidentiality:** it’s great to talk about and promote the work being done by YSA, but it’s not okay to publish confidential information. This would include such things as unpublished details with respect to finances, discussions with respect to decisions that have not been finalized or publicized, or details related to more confidential issues (for example, a disciplinary issue that has not yet been resolved)
- **Be honest:** when presenting YSA information in a public forum, do so using your real name. It is important when representing YSA to do so in a transparent and honest manner. If you have a vested interest in the topic being discussed, point it out. This is in everyone’s best interest as this material will be around for a long time.
- **Be respectful of the audience, the Association, and your colleagues:** our community reflects a diverse set of customer, values, and perspectives. As a representative of YSA, what you present on YSA-related matters must be consistent with the organization’s public position. With respect to topics that are not directly related to YSA (for example political subjects), it should be clear that you are speaking as a private individual and not as a representative of YSA. Finally, be sensitive to how others may interpret your public comments. What you may consider to be a funny and friendly ribbing of a colleague or an idea may not be taken as lightly by others
- **Protect our members, partners, and suppliers:** members, partners, or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced (for example, in a publicized image) without their permission. Care must be taken to avoid any perceived conflict of interest, particularly when referring to outside parties or interests

#### Communication between YSA Officials

Within YSA, we benefit from having members with a broad range of perspectives and interests. While members do not always agree with each other (nor should they), or with a YSA decision, communication between YSA Officials must always remain respectful. Where there is controversy, communications should remain factual, and must not disparage another party or perspective.

## Team Communications

Team Officials (Coaches/Managers) should always abide by the following approaches for all communications.

- **at least one rostered (2 if possible) Team Officials and a parent and/or player are included in any communications.** Communications should only communicate messages about soccer, scheduling, conflicts, and logistics related to the team's operation.

With regards to electronic forms of communication the above method would result in:

- no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, Skype, or other instant messaging (including but not limited to Google Messenger, AIM, snapchat, and the like) or other similar messaging features provided through social media sites and communication platforms.

## Specific Recommendations for Coaches (parent and nonparent)

- **Telephone** - It is recommended coaches should not engage in individual telephone conversations with a player. Any telephone conversation with a player should include a parent/guardian as part of the conversation.
- In certain situations, it may be appropriate for players to communicate with coaches for informational purposes (i.e. player cannot make practice, player is sick, player has injury, etc.). In this case it would be appropriate for a coach to confirm receipt of the communication, but not to engage in any conversation over the telephone. Conversations that require engagement should include a parent/guardian where appropriate.
- **Text Message** - It is recommended coaches do not communicate with players by text message and/or SMS message unless it is including a parent/guardian in the thread. In certain situations, it may be appropriate for players to communicate with coaches for informational purposes only (i.e. player cannot make practice, player is sick). In this case it would be appropriate for a coach to confirm receipt of message, but not to engage in any conversation over the topic via text message.
- **Email** - It is recommended Coaches engage in email communications with players only when parents are included as part of the communication. For example, a coach may email a player when the parent/guardian has been copied on the email.
- **Social Media** - There are many types of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, amongst others, and social media platforms change and new platforms are constantly being created. This policy is meant as a guideline for social media to assist Team Officials in the understanding of Social Media and is not inclusive of all social media platforms. As a general guideline, Team Officials should conduct themselves on Social Media in a manner that is positive and provides facts, not personal opinions. Slanderous comments may be subject to the YSA Discipline Policies.

To provide context, the following are examples with commonly known social media platforms.

- **Facebook** - It is recommended Coaches not be 'Friends' with any players on Facebook. It would be acceptable for a team to have a 'Facebook Group' for their team. Players, parents, and coaches are required to be members of such a group.
- **Instagram** - Coaches shall not direct message with players via Instagram. Any communication via Instagram must remain public.
- **Snap Chat** - Coaches shall not communicate with players via Snapchat as text messages, video chats. Coaches shall not be sharing images via Snapchat with players.

## Communication Policy Guidelines for Parents/Guardians/Supporters

It is recommended that Parents/Guardians/Supporters follow the policies listed above. Those who are found in violation of this policy may be subject to YSA disciplinary policies and process