

Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy

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Introduction

1. Communication can occur in person, through live virtual platforms like Teams or Zoom, and electronically via email, text, or on platforms like WhatsApp or a Facebook group.
2. Nordiq Canada recognizes that communication between all Participants should be guided by principles that ensure the safety of the Participants and maintain and strengthen healthy, effective relationships.
3. Nordiq Canada 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 Nordiq Canada'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 Nordiq Canada who are subject to the policies of Nordiq Canada, as well as all people employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with Nordiq Canada. 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 Nordiq Canada including, but not limited to employees, contractors, coaches, managers, coordinators, 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 Nordiq Canadas, 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 reflect Nordiq Canada’s values and guide this Policy:
 - a. Nordiq Canada is committed to the Responsible Coaching Movement and to making sport safer for everyone, particularly Vulnerable Participants.
 - b. Nordiq Canada 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 behavior that occur through Electronic Communications and Social Media – both public and personal – is subject to Nordiq Canada’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 Nordiq Canada 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 behavior consistent with the organization’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 Nordiq Canada.
 - **Observable** – Ideally two trained and screened coaches or Persons of Authority 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 Nordiq Canada.
 - **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 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 and Consent Form for Persons of Authority
- c) Guidelines and Consent Form for Participants
- d) Guidelines and Consent Form for Parents/Guardians

Implementation Plan

- 7. An implementation plan has been developed to assist Nordiq Canada, its coaches, Participants, and parents/guardians to apply the guidelines described in this Policy.

Reporting Concerning Behaviour

- 8. An individual who believes Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate Nordiq Canada's policies and procedures should report the matter as outlined in Nordiq Canada's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.
- 9. 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.
- 10. Removing content from Social Media after it has been posted (either publicly or privately) does not excuse the Participant from being subject to Nordiq Canada's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

APPENDIX A

Principles for Electronic Communications and Social Media Use

Consistent with the Responsible Coaching Movement, all communication should be **open, observable, and justifiable**.

Communication should respect the formal nature of the relationships between Persons of Authority and Participants, and is subject to Nordiq Canada's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.

- The means and associated expectations for how Nordiq Canada, coaches, and other Persons of Authority will communicate with Participants (and parents/guardians as appropriate) should be documented and communicated at the beginning of each season.
- Any Electronic Communications or Social Media interaction from Nordiq Canada, coaches, and Persons of Authority to Participants should be:
 - Necessary (time sensitive and/or specific to an athlete, and cannot be delayed until the next in-person meeting),
 - Administrative in nature (sharing a new Policy), and/or
 - Sport-specific (supporting Participant training and performance).
- When working with Vulnerable Participants, communication should be directed to parents/guardians.
- If communicating directly with youth or other Vulnerable Participants, parents/guardians should be copied.
- Persons of Authority are discouraged from initiating personal and private Electronic Communications or Social Media activities with Participants. Contact initiated by Vulnerable Participants should be rejected and/or blocked.
- Use only Nordiq Canada-approved Social Media Platforms, and only for public communication; avoid private messaging.
- Use virtual platforms (Zoom, MS Teams) only for scheduled events that are approved by Nordiq Canada. A minimum of one trained coach and one screened adult (preferably coaches) is recommended to be in attendance. Sessions should be recorded.
- The use of disappearing content platforms or content (Snapchat, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories) should be avoided.
- All Electronic Communications and Social Media activity between Persons of Authority and Participants should be recorded and shared regularly with Nordiq Canada and parent/guardian, and/or made available upon request.
- All Participants are expected to interact in a positive, professional manner consistent with Nordiq Canada's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*. All Participants should monitor their own Social Media content for consistency with the *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
- Any Participant can choose not to engage with other Participants (including Persons of Authority) on Social Media. Participants should not be required to engage on Social Media platforms to access team or Nordiq Canada information.
- An individual who believes Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate Nordiq Canada's policies and procedures should report the matter as outlined in Nordiq Canada's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.
- 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.

APPENDIX B

Guidelines and Consent Form for Persons of Authority

- All Electronic Communications and Social Media use between Persons of Authority and Participants should be open, observable, and justifiable.
- At the beginning of the season, document the means and associated expectations for how you will communicate with Participants, and inform Participants and parents/guardians.
- Choosing not to engage with Participants on Social Media is an acceptable strategy. Be prepared to inform Participants (and/or parents/guardians) why you have chosen not to engage in this space. Be consistent in how you respond to “friend” or “follow” requests.
- If communicating via Social Media is necessary or preferred, consider creating a professional Social media account for use in your role with Nordiq Canada, separate from your personal account. Provide access to other Persons of Authority and to Nordiq Canada so the account is open and observable.
- Annually review and update the privacy settings on all Social Media accounts and across devices.
- Always model appropriate behavior befitting your role and status in connection with Nordiq Canada. Whether for professional or personal use, all Electronic Communications and Social Media platforms should be considered “public” and permanent. Avoid emojis and language that could be misinterpreted.
- Participants or parents/guardians should not be required to engage on Social Media platforms to access information about your team or Nordiq Canada.
- Persons of Authority shall not demand access to a Participant’s private posts on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or other Social Media platforms.
- Ensure parents/guardians are aware of any Electronic Communications or Social Media interactions with a Vulnerable Participant in their care.
- Be prepared to share logs or records of your communication history with Participants with Nordiq Canada and parents/guardians. Become familiar with methods to save and download messages on platforms in use:
 - [Transferring iPhone messages](#)
 - [Saving text messages iPhone and Android](#)
 - [Saving and printing Instagram messages](#)
 - [Saving Chat History \(WhatsApp\)](#)
- Selection decisions and other sensitive team business should be shared in-person meetings or through official Electronic Communications (email) if in-person is not an option, rather than Social Media.
- The use of disappearing content platforms and formats (Snapchat, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories) is discouraged.
- Posting pictures or videos of Participants on your private Social Media accounts is discouraged. Consent must always be provided by Participants and parents/guardian, via Nordiq Canada.
- Never misrepresent yourself by using a fake name or fake profile on Social Media platforms.
- Avoid engaging Participants via Electronic Communications or Social Media while using any substances (alcohol, drugs).
- Avoid association with Facebook groups, Instagram accounts, Twitter feeds, or online communities with explicit sexual content or viewpoints that might offend or compromise your relationship with a Participant, their parents/guardians, or Nordiq Canada.
- If you believe Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate Nordiq Canada’s policies and procedures, report the matter as outlined in Nordiq Canada’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.
- Persons of Authority who have reasonable grounds to suspect that a Participant or a 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.

Guidelines for Virtual Video Sessions

- Virtual video sessions should be open, observable, and justifiable.
- Inform Nordiq Canada that you intend to communicate with Participants via video session. If you intend to provide instruction or skills training, your organization may need to sanction the session and/or parents/guardians of Vulnerable Participants may need to sign an agreement or waiver.
- Virtual video sessions using platforms such as Zoom, MS Teams, Google Connect, Adobe, should be recorded to document the interaction and be held in an “open” environment. Nordiq Canada, the Participant, and/or parent/guardians as appropriate should be permitted to view the recording.
- Virtual video sessions with groups of Participants should be attended by at least two trained and screened adults (preferably coaches). One-on-one video sessions should be recorded with permission and/or attended by another adult and/or the Participant’s parent/guardian (when applicable). One-on-one video sessions with a Participant should not take place without a parent/guardian’s knowledge.
- Provide the agenda prior to the virtual video session, along with the behavioural expectations and professional standards for all Participants. If there are any breaches of professional standards during the session, they must be communicated to parents/guardians of Participants after the session.
- Ensure you are dressed appropriately and in a neutral location (avoid personal spaces such as bedrooms or bathrooms).

Name of Person of Authority (print): _____

Organization (print): _____

Date: _____

1. I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that any communication that occurs on Electronic Communications and/or Social Media be open, observable, and justified.
2. I understand that it is my responsibility to log or record any communication that occurs on Electronic Communications and/or Social Media.
3. I understand that a Participant, parent/guardian, and/or Nordiq Canada may request that I cease communicating with the Participant on any Social Media platform.
4. I **UNDERSTAND AND AGREE** that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document, including the guidelines above, and that I have been provided with the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*. I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily.

Signature of Person of Authority: _____

APPENDIX C

Guidelines and Consent Form for Participants

- All Electronic Communications and Social Media use between Persons of Authority and Participants should be open, observable, and justifiable.
- Familiarize yourself with the means and associated expectations for how team staff/volunteers will communicate with Participants, shared at the beginning of the season.
- Engaging on Social Media is your choice:
 - You are not required to follow or accept invitations from coaches, teammates, competitors, officials, or other Nordiq Canada Participants. You can also choose to block individuals from following you.
 - Talk to your coaches and parents/guardians about how you would like to communicate about your sport participation.
- Protect your privacy. Set and annually review your privacy settings across platforms and on all devices to restrict who can search for you and what private information other people can see.
 - Remember – Depending on your privacy settings, content posted or shared on Social Media is not private or anonymous, and is considered public communication. Content is also almost always permanent because individuals may take screenshots of your content before it is deleted.
- If you are under the age of 18, make sure your parent/guardian is aware of any Electronic Communications and/or Social Media interactions you have with your coach or other Persons of Authority.
- Model appropriate behaviour on Social Media befitting your status as a Participant within Nordiq Canada. Interactions on Social Media must respect Nordiq Canada's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
- If you attend or host a video session, ensure you are dressed appropriately and in a neutral location (avoid personal spaces such as bedrooms or bathrooms).
- Do not post content or pictures of, or alluding to, participation in illegal activities by yourself or others.
- Do not engage with coaches or other Persons of Authority on platforms with disappearing content (Snapchat, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories).
- If you feel harassed or believe Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate Nordiq Canada's policies and procedures, report the matter to your parent/guardian, your coach, and/or as outlined in Nordiq Canada's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.
- Every Participant 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.

Name of Participant (print): _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (if Participant is a Vulnerable Person) (print): _____

Date: _____

1. I understand that Electronic Communications and Social Media use with my coaches and other Person of Authority must be open, observable, and justified.

2. I understand that engagement on Social Media is not required as part of my membership in this team or Nordiq Canada.
3. I understand that I may request that my coaches and other Persons of Authority cease communicating with me via Electronic Communications or Social Media platform(s).
4. **I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE** that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document, including the guidelines above, and that I have been provided with the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*. I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily.

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if Participant is a Vulnerable Participant): _____

APPENDIX D

Guidelines and Consent Form for Parents / Guardians

- All Electronic Communications and Social Media use between Persons of Authority and Participants should be open, observable, and justifiable.
- Familiarize yourself with the means and associated expectations for how team staff/volunteers will communicate with Participants, shared at the beginning of the season.
- Consider that Participants may discuss personal and non-personal matters through Electronic Communications or Social Media rather than face-to-face. You can inform Persons of Authority that they are not permitted to contact the Participant in your care directly using Electronic Communications and/or on any (or a specific) Social Media platform.
- Participants joining video sessions (on Zoom, MS Teams) must dress appropriately and avoid personal spaces (bedrooms, bathrooms).
- Consider joining any Public Communication that occurs on a Social Media platform between a Person of Authority and the Participant in your care (tag a coach and your Participant on a sport-related Twitter thread or add a comment to an Instagram post).
- You can request copies of any Electronic Communications and/or Social Media interactions between a Person of Authority and the Participant in your care.
- You can request to be copied on all Electronic Communications between team staff/theNordiq Canada and the Participant in your care.
- An individual who believes Electronic Communications and/or Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violateNordiq Canada's policies and procedures should report the matter as outlined inNordiq Canada's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.
- Every Parent/Guardian 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.

Name of Participant (print): _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (print): _____

Date: _____

1. I, being the parent or legal guardian of a Participant/Vulnerable Person, hereby grant [insert names of Persons of Authority] ("Persons of Authority") the permission to contact the Participant to support their participation and athletic development (not for personal purposes) as follows:

[insert nature of contact]

Sample 1: Through TeamSnap, email, and text for all types of communication, and through public posts on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

Sample 2: Through text, only in emergencies.

2. I understand that I may request to see a log or record of any communication that occurs via Electronic Communications and/or Social Media.
3. I understand that I may request at any time that the Person of Authority cease communicating with the Participant in my care via Electronic Communications and/or Social Media.
4. **I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE** that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document including the guidelines above, and that I have been provided with the *Electronic Communications and Social Media Use Policy*. I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____