



Social Media Policy

Effective: 29th May 2014

Endorsed by ESA Board

1. Introduction

Social media gives individuals, groups, organisations and businesses the opportunity to instantly share information with online communities. Blogs, forums, social networking and video sharing sites are the most popular types of social media sites, however, any forum which allows a user to upload and share information is considered part of the social media space. It is also important to note that information that is shared need not be written; it could take the form of an image or audio visual material.

Equestrian South Australia (ESA) supports the use of social media as a timely and effective method of communication. In addition to engaging with members of the equestrian community, social media can help the organisation reach members of the broader public and traditional media.

ESA proactively seeks positive media coverage and does so for the benefit of its athletes and members. Traditionally this media coverage has been through TV, radio and print media outlets however the rise of social media has widened this landscape. Given these changes, all ESA representatives, including employees, members, coaches and officials have the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the organisation simply by maintaining an online presence.

Whilst social media provides great opportunity to raise equestrian's profile and reach new audiences, it also has the potential to harm the reputation of the organisation, its athletes, members and stakeholders. It is crucial therefore that individuals representing ESA are aware of the implications of using social media.

The purpose of this document is to provide representatives of Equestrian South Australia with guiding principles for using social media. ESA encourages each of its representatives to use social media within the parameters outlined in this policy.

Persons bound by these guidelines include athletes, coaches, employees, independent contractors and other ESA members.

2. Scope

Individuals bound by this policy include athletes who have been named on an ESA state squad, ESA employees, coaches, officials, volunteers, and discipline committees including committee members (including but not limited to committee chairs and committee volunteers). For the purpose of this document, the above mentioned will be collectively referred to as ESA representatives. All forms of social media activity are covered under this policy, including, but not limited to:

- Creating and maintaining social or business networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn.
- Sharing audio-visual content on sites including Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest (photo sharing) and YouTube and Vimeo (video sharing)
- Authoring and commenting on blogs or forums
- Editing a Wikipedia page

3. Guiding principles

ESA representatives should be mindful that information shared on social media appears in public so careful consideration should be given to content before it is posted. Never forget that information shared within online communities could have implications for the sport and those associated with it.

Information which is shared online can be difficult to retract. A representative might be able to remove his/her original comments however the very nature of social media encourages a person to share information which makes it difficult to know where the information they post finishes up.

Representatives should assume that all posts and information they share via social media can be traced back to them.

Adhering to these guidelines will ensure the reputation of ESA, its athletes, coaches, officials, employees, volunteers and stakeholders is protected.

- Defamatory, disrespectful and hateful comments about individuals or organisations will not be tolerated.
- Representatives must not bring ESA or the sport of equestrian into disrepute.
- The use of obscene language and threatening comments targeted at an individual or organisation will not be tolerated. Comments which are contrary to the spirit and integrity of sport will not be tolerated.
- ESA representatives should ensure that comments made on social media abide by EA's Code of Conduct and are in line with EA's Member Protection Policy, specifically:
 - Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others
 - Refrain from any form of harassment of others
 - Refrain from any behaviour that may bring ESA, its members, member associations or affiliated clubs into disrepute.
 - An ESA representative who shares information online should consider themselves a spokesperson for the organisation and must never reveal confidential or sensitive information that could jeopardise ESA's relationships with its commercial or government partners.
 - Personal sites, blogs and accounts that have an ESA 'look and feel' and could be perceived as being ESA or one of its disciplines is strictly prohibited.
 - Discipline committees and committee members must seek approval to host discipline specific accounts.

Please note: athletes, coaches, officials and other representatives that are selected on teams and participate in major events should also adhere to the guidelines imposed.

4. Breach

If a representative fails to follow these guidelines ESA has the right to issue the representative with a take-down notice. Representatives who are found to not comply with a take-down notice will face disciplinary action.

Repeated breaches of this policy could lead to disciplinary action. ESA also has the right to administer sanctions and take legal action.

5. Legislation

As with any form of public communication, online communication can also be subject to legislation. Representatives should be mindful that unsubstantiated claims, false statements, defamatory, offensive and threatening comments could lead to prosecution.

6. Amendments/Interpretation

These Guidelines may be amended by ESA as it deems appropriate. The ESA Board will be the ultimate authority with respect to the interpretation and implementation of these Guidelines.

7. Conclusion

ESA understands that social media is a new method of communication and as such encourages its employees and representatives to seek clarification from the ESA Team if they are unsure what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate content.