



EQUESTRIAN  
AUSTRALIA

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Equestrian Australia (EA) is committed to promoting and protecting the image and integrity of equestrian sport in Australia by ensuring that all those involved in the sport act in accordance with our core values of Excellence, Integrity, Respect, Inclusivity, and Passion.
- 1.2. The core values define how we are expected to behave and interact with each other in the equestrian community and the public. Our vision is to inspire participation, develop excellence, and create an inclusive Australian equestrian community. This can only be achieved if our sport is one in which every Participant feels respected, welcomed and included, and equestrian sport has the trust and confidence of the public.
- 1.3. EA embraces the use of social media for the promotion, development and delivery of equestrian sport and is committed to ensuring that social media engagement connected with EA is lawful, professional and respectful.

## 2. Policy Overview and Purpose

- 2.1. This Policy aims to support all EA's codes and policies relating to conduct and inclusion and ensure that the core values, good reputation and positive behaviours are maintained by athletes, coaches, administrators, volunteers, parents, spectators, and officials.
- 2.2. This Policy has three main objectives:
  - a) to seek to ensure that all those who participate in equestrian sport are respectful to others and that they have regard to acceptable community standards when using social media;
  - b) to seek to support our Codes of Conduct and policies and deter publication of material that may be reasonably likely to damage the image of equestrian sport by adversely affecting or discrediting EA or any State Branch, club, team, competition/event, athlete, sponsor, official supplier, licensee, or any other Participant; and
  - c) to set expectations and protocols to ensure that social media posts are consistent with the values of EA and that posts made through its social media channels do not damage EA's reputation.
- 2.3. The speed and reach of modern-day communication means that any material that is posted online is often available immediately to a wide-ranging audience. Posts may be impossible or difficult to delete, be replicated endlessly, may be sent to or seen by people the publisher never intended or expected would see them, and posts may also be misinterpreted.
- 2.4. Social media enables users to create, share and upload content, and EA recognises that it is a very important tool in increasing fan engagement and promoting equestrian sport. EA fully supports online activity as a medium of self-expression; however, all Participants need to be very mindful of the fact that the use of social media in this way is not always free of consequence (personal and/or professional).
- 2.5. Deciding whether to make a particular comment or post certain material online is a matter that may, subject to the nature of the post, require careful judgement and consideration.

Those wishing to publish material online are strongly advised to think carefully about the possible ramifications and reflect before they go live with their post.

2.6. When posting in a personal capacity, Participants should always carefully consider whether there may be any scope for a third party to believe that the post may have been sanctioned/endorsed by other individuals/organisations the Participant may work for or be associated with. If so, Participants should ensure that before they post, they make it clear that the views that they are expressing are theirs alone and that they do not necessarily reflect the views of any other individuals or organisations. This does not, however, mean that Participants will not be in breach of this Policy or any EA codes or policies if their post is contrary to EA core values or they are in breach of any obligations as a Participant in equestrian sport.

2.7. This Policy may be reviewed and updated by EA from time to time.

### 3. Application and Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all of the following persons involved in equestrian sport, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity:

<b>Employees</b>	<b>Contractors</b>	<b>Support Personnel</b>		<b>Parents/Guardians</b>	<b>Members</b>
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<b>Athletes</b>	<b>Officials</b>	<b>Coaches</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Board Members</b>
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

People covered by this policy will be collectively referred to as 'Workers' or 'Participants'.

3.2. This policy applies to an individual's contact with media outlets, including journalists, in both a professional and private capacity when referencing EA and its related entities.

3.3. This policy also applies to an individual's use of social media in both a professional and private capacity. It also applies to all work-related activities, including any work-related event and/or activity, including conferences, competitions, work functions, work-related social functions, or business trips, including Participants' personal social media participation. Any information posted or published on social media should be treated as publicly available information.

3.4. This policy operates in conjunction with other relevant EA policies and any applicable Enterprise Agreements, Awards, employment contracts and/or applicable legislation.

3.5. For the purposes of this Policy, the term social media means any form of online or interactive application or other form or medium that enables users to create, display, share and/or upload content, including, but not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, Instagram)
- Business networking tools (e.g. Yammer, SharePoint, Teams)

- Video and photo sharing websites and apps (e.g. YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Pinterest)
  - Blogs and micro-blogging sites (e.g. Twitter/X, Tumblr)
  - Review sites (e.g. Yelp, Google Reviews)
  - Live broadcasting apps (e.g. Facebook Live, Instagram Live)
  - Forums or discussion boards (e.g. Google Groups, Reddit)
  - Geospatial tagging (e.g. Foursquare)
  - Online multiplayer gaming platforms
  - Online voting or polls
  - Online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia)
  - Email and instant messaging (e.g. SMS, MMS, WhatsApp, Skype)
  - Video on Demand and Podcasting
  - Any other website that allows individuals to use simple publishing tools
- 3.6. Displaying or transmitting content on social media includes, but is not limited to, posts, comments, images, liking or sharing content and links to other content etc.
- 3.7. Any use of social media is, or may become, public once it is posted and all those that are bound by this Policy are responsible for the content that they publish. Social media security and privacy settings do not prevent material from being published or shared and cannot be used as a defence to alleged breaches of this Policy.

#### 4. Values and Core Principles

4.1. EA's social media use shall be consistent with the following core values:

**a) Integrity:** EA will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about our own work or the work of other organisations or individuals. In addition, we will post in accordance with EA's Copyright and Privacy policies.

**b) Professionalism:** EA's social media represents the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and uniform tone. Staff and volunteers may, from time to time and as appropriate/authorised, post on behalf of EA using our online profiles, but the impression should remain one of a singular organisation rather than a group of individuals.

**c) Respect:** All social media interactions should demonstrate respect for others, including competitors, officials, volunteers, and the broader equestrian community.

**d) Inclusivity:** EA encourages an inclusive environment where all participants feel welcomed and valued, regardless of their background, experience level, or personal characteristics.

**e) Information Sharing:** EA encourages the sharing and reposting of online information that is

relevant, appropriate to our mission and aims, and of interest to our members and the equestrian community.

## **5. General Duties and Prohibitions**

### **General Duties**

- 5.1. All Participants must ensure that their conduct and behaviour is consistent with EA's core values at all times. This includes treating other people fairly and with respect and always seeking to ensure that they act in the best interests of equestrian sport when using social media and that they do not do anything that would result in the sport being brought into disrepute, discredit or public criticism, having regard to acceptable community standards.
- 5.2. Always be aware of the risk that other individuals (including the media) may seek to highlight or create a connection between a Participant's comments and/or activity on social media and their team, State Branch, Member Organisation or EA etc.

### **General Prohibitions**

- 5.3. Any content displayed or transmitted on social media is, or may become, public and must not:
  - be detrimental to the best interests, good image and welfare of equestrian sport, EA, any State Branch, or any squad, team, competition or event;
  - bring into disrepute, discredit or censure any athlete, equestrian sport, EA, any State Branch, or any squad, team, competition or event;
  - be critical of the performance of an official, athlete, team official, coach or employee or officer of EA or any State Branch;
  - be in relation to any matter that has been, is, or is likely to be, the subject of a police investigation; a disciplinary process under the EA Disciplinary Rules or Code of Conduct; or under the rules or regulations of the FEI, EA or any other competition organiser or State Branch; or
  - be reasonably likely to constitute a breach of that social media platform's terms of service, including any community guidelines or similar.
- 5.4. To ensure that the reputation and image of equestrian sport is protected and that all Participants and the public are respected, content of any type that is inappropriate, offensive or otherwise unlawful must not be displayed or transmitted on social media.
- 5.5. EA reserves the right to request a Participant to remove any social media content that it reasonably considers to be in breach of this Policy.

## **6. Content Guidelines**

- 6.1. Workers should be aware that content published online and on social media is, or may

become, publicly available, even from personal social media accounts. EA expects Workers to take reasonable steps to ensure that their social media use and public comments fall within the following parameters.

### **Professional Social Media Use**

- 6.2. When engaging in Professional Social Media Use, EA expects that Workers will:
- be professional and respectful;
  - promote the best interests of EA;
  - not include misleading or deceptive statements or inferences;
  - refrain from inappropriate language;
  - only include intellectual property (such as photos, videos and quotes) that EA has permission to use or that do not require permission to use; and
  - comply with EA's Privacy Policy.

### **Personal and Professional Social Media Use**

- 6.3. When engaging in Personal and/or Professional Social Media Use, Workers must also ensure that they:
- don't use a work email address to register personal social media accounts;
  - refrain from conduct that has the potential to damage EA's reputation;
  - don't make comments that are unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to, or about other Workers, athletes, officials or stakeholders of EA;
  - are mindful that their behaviour is bound by EA's Policies, Procedures and Code of Conduct, even outside work hours;
  - make clear that any views expressed in Personal Social Media use are their own and not those of EA (However, this will not necessarily protect them from breaching the Policy);
  - content that is obscene or sexually explicit (e.g. explicit language or nude images);
  - content that breaches Australian law, including any Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation;
  - content that advocates, condones or otherwise encourages the use of prohibited substances or illegal drugs; and
  - content that is discriminatory, vilifies, offensive, threatening, stalking, harassing or bullying any individual or group of individuals.
- 6.4. Employees and contractors should also be aware that their responsibilities to their employer and their employer's commercial partners may limit their ability to post freely or engage fully

in public discussions on social media.

## 7. Discrimination, Vilification, Harassment and Bullying

- 7.1. Inclusion and respect for others is crucial in ensuring that EA's core values are upheld and in protecting the reputation of equestrian sport. In order to create an environment where all Participants feel respected, welcomed and included, all forms of Discrimination, Harassment, Vilification and Bullying are prohibited in equestrian sport, including on social media.
- 7.2. Participants should be aware that their comments can impact a wide range of people (Participants and non-Participants) for example a comment made by a high-profile athlete can have a negative effect on a junior rider's ability to feel included and accepted in equestrian sport.
- 7.3. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to:
  - suggestive comments about a person's body or appearance;
  - gender-based insults;
  - sexist or racist comments, abuse or jokes;
  - homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments, abuse or jokes;
  - isolating a person or group, because of their race, religion, sexual orientation or disability;
  - threatening or advocating the use of violence against a person or a group of people;
  - abuse based on a person's age; and
  - sending text messages, emails or images of a sexual or racist nature etc.

### Definitions

- 7.4. **Discrimination** occurs when someone, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin; sex, pregnancy or marital status; age; disability; religion; sexual orientation; political or trade union activity or affiliation; or some other characteristic specified under anti-discrimination or human rights legislation.
- 7.5. **Harassment** means any type of uninvited or unwelcome behaviour (sexual or otherwise) towards a person that is offensive, humiliating, intimidating, insulting, abusive, belittling or threatening and is reasonably likely to cause harm to the person who is the subject of the harassment, whether or not that effect is intended.
- 7.6. **Vilification** means a public act, conduct or behaviour that incites hatred, serious contempt for, or revulsion or severe ridicule of, a person or group of people because of a particular characteristic they hold, as covered by applicable legislation.
- 7.7. **Bullying** means repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person, or a group of people, that creates a risk to their health and safety.
- 7.8. EA's expected standards of conduct and behaviour play a critical role in reflecting and

protecting the diversity of the communities of which we are a part and ensuring that every person is treated with respect and dignity and made to feel welcome and included in equestrian sport.

## 8. Professional Vs Personal Social Media Use

### Professional Social Media Use

- 8.1. The **Communications and Marketing Manager** may approve an individual to post on EA's social media accounts (**Approved Poster**). In determining who should be an Approved Poster, the Communications and Marketing Manager may consider:
- the extent of control EA has over the individual;
  - whether the individual has the appropriate communication skills;
  - what understanding the individual has of the risks of social media use; and
  - current and former responsibilities and how the individual performed in those roles.
- 8.2. Only Approved Posters should have access to social media account passwords and logins.

### Personal Social Media Use

- 8.3. Subject to this Policy, Workers should seek prior approval from the **Communications and Marketing Manager** before engaging in Personal and/or Professional Social Media Use about or connected with EA, save for promoting or supporting EA's activities.
- 8.4. Workers that are not Approved Posters may engage in Personal and/or Professional Social Media Use about or connected to EA without prior approval from EA, provided that the use complies with this Social Media Policy.
- 8.5. When participating in social media networks, Workers must not disclose confidential information belonging to EA or any other information the Worker is required to keep confidential.

## 9. Confidential Information and Inside Information

### Confidential Information

- 9.1. Confidential information, such as information regarding athlete contracts, customer and supplier information, financial and accounting information, marketing strategies, research and development information, personnel information and any other material specified as confidential, must not be inappropriately displayed or transmitted on social media.
- 9.2. Participants should be aware of the inadvertent or incidental display of this information, for example, congratulating an athlete for joining a new team online before it has been publicly announced.

### Inside Information

- 9.3. Participants need to be aware of the potential for Inside Information to be used inappropriately for sport betting purposes. To protect the integrity of equestrian sport, Participants must not display or transmit any Inside Information on social media.
- 9.4. Examples of Inside Information can include, but is not limited to:
- tactics and strategies;
  - team selections and intended substitutions;
  - injuries to/availability of athletes or horses;
  - investigations and/or suspensions; and
  - statistics and performance data.
- 9.5. Participants should also be aware of inadvertently displaying Inside Information on social media, for example posting an image from training showing an injured horse or athlete receiving treatment could potentially be used for inappropriate betting purposes by others.

## **10. Intellectual Property**

- 10.1. Participants must ensure that copyright law is respected when displaying and transmitting content on social media. Always obtain permission to use words, images or materials online that are not your own.
- 10.2. Intellectual property or imagery of EA or any State Branch must not be used on a Participant's personal social media unless the Participant has obtained prior written approval or the Participant is re-posting or sharing EA or State Branch social media content.

## **11. Privacy**

- 11.1. Participants also need to carefully consider any possible privacy issues before posting any information on social media.
- 11.2. Participants must obtain express permission from an individual (or if a minor, their parent or guardian) to use a direct, clearly identifiable image of that person on social media.
- 11.3. This is particularly important in equestrian sport where images may include not only people but also horses, and considerations around horse ownership and privacy should be respected.

## **12. Impersonation/Corporate Connection**

- 12.1. Participants must not impersonate or falsely represent any other person or organisation when using social media.
- 12.2. When displaying or transmitting on social media in a non-official capacity, Participants should consider, in light of what they are seeking to post, whether it is necessary to make it clear that any views expressed are their own, and not those of EA or any State Branch.

## **13. Fan and Community Engagement**

- 13.1. Whilst there are a number of requirements and regulations around the use of social media, EA understands the importance of social media in increasing fan engagement and promoting equestrian sport. To assist Participants in maintaining their ability to use social media and comply with this Policy, there are a number of principles set out below that should be observed.
- 13.2. Social media allows athletes and fans to interact and for athletes to show their personality and life off the horse. EA encourages athletes to engage with fans and promote equestrian sport so long as it is done with respect and integrity.
- 13.3. Participants should consider that anything said on social media is no different to saying it at a press conference. The general rule is, if you would not be comfortable saying it in front of the news media do not say it on social media.
- 13.4. Participants are reminded that commercial arrangements, such as State Bodies' sponsorship and partnership deals are dependent on the public perception of equestrian sport and as such any content displayed or transmitted on social media should not impact the way sponsors/partners or potential sponsors/partners view the sport or its Participants.
- 13.5. Participants should always use common sense. If Participants are unsure whether the content they wish to display/transmit is appropriate or not, they should seek advice first and remember that they are a Participant in equestrian sport.
- 13.6. The internet is not anonymous. Any content Participants display or transmit on social media can be traced back to them.
- 13.7. Some people may try to provoke, insult or offend Participants. The best way to avoid an issue is to ignore it and not respond. In serious cases, Participants should report the matter to the police and/or their State Branch or EA.
- 13.8. Participants should avoid commenting on or sharing content from users with offensive or inappropriate names or profile images.
- 13.9. Participants should use their best judgement and think before they post. Posting or commenting whilst upset, angry or intoxicated can lead Participants to do things they may not normally do, so Participants should avoid using social media when they are upset, following a disappointing competition result or when they have been drinking.
- 13.10. All Participants need to be aware that Defamation laws extend to social media and posting Defamatory content or sharing Defamatory content created by someone else may result in legal action being taken against them.

#### **14. Use of Social Media with Under 18s**

- 14.1. EA acknowledges the benefits of social media use within State Bodies and the importance of communication between Participants. This may, however, present a risk to child safety, particularly where social media can be used to groom or make inappropriate and unsupervised contact with children.
- 14.2. Wherever possible, any emails and text messages, etc., sent to a child should be copied to their parents or guardians and adult Participants should avoid accepting friend requests

from children.

- 14.3. Where a parent or guardian is not included in the communication, the Participants should abide by the following (in addition to the requirements set out previously in this Policy):
- Communication should only be in relation to specific club or competition-related activities;
  - Personal and social content should be limited to what is required to convey the message in a polite, friendly manner;
  - Any communication with children should not be used to promote an unauthorised social activity or to arrange unauthorised contact;
  - Parents should be made aware if there is a need for communication with children and children must not be asked to keep any communication secret from their parents; and
  - Communication with children should not occur using internet chat rooms or similar forums from personal profiles or accounts.
- 14.4. Participants are also reminded that anything they post on social media may be seen by children regardless of whether or not they were the intended recipients.

## **15. Official Social Media Use**

- 15.1. This Policy also applies when Participants are using social media on behalf of a State Branch or EA in an official capacity.
- 15.2. Participants using social media in an official capacity must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the reputation of the State Branch or EA is protected. All content should be carefully reviewed prior to being posted to ensure spelling and grammar are correct and the content is appropriate and will not be misinterpreted. All official use of social media must be factual and accurate.

## **16. Procedures And Guidelines**

### **Posting to Social Media**

- 16.1. Before social media posts are made, volunteers and staff should ask themselves the following questions:
- Is the information I am posting, or reposting, likely to be of interest to EA's members and stakeholders?
  - Is the information factual and true? Does it emanate from a reliable source?
  - Is the information in keeping with the interests of the organisation and in line with EA's mission, work, and core values?
  - Could the post be construed as an attack on another individual, organisation or project?

- Would EA's supporters (including sponsors) be happy to read the post?
- If there is a link attached to the post, does the link work, and have I read the information it links to and judged it to be an appropriate source?
- If reposting information, is the original poster an individual or organisation that EA would be happy to associate itself with?
- Is the tone and the content of the post in keeping with other posts made by EA? Does it maintain the organisation's overall tone?

16.2. If you are at all uncertain about whether the post is suitable, do not post it until you have discussed it with the **Communications and Marketing Manager**. A few moments spent checking can save the organisation big problems in the future. If in doubt, leave it out.

## 17. Damage Limitation and Crisis Management

17.1. In the event of a damaging or misleading post being made, the **Communications and Marketing Manager** should be notified as soon as possible, and the following actions should occur:

- The offending post should be removed;
- Where necessary, an apology should be issued, either publicly or to the individual or organisation involved;
- The origin of the offending post should be explored, and steps taken to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future.

17.2. If the mistake seems set to grow, or to cause significant damage to the organisation's reputation, revert to the Media Relations Policy and appropriate crisis management procedures.

## 18. Moderation Guidelines

18.1. EA is committed to protecting its reputation and maintaining a safe and friendly environment for its Workers and members.

18.2. From time to time social media forums may be hijacked by trolls or spammers or attract people who attack other posters or the organisation aggressively. In order to maintain a pleasant environment for everybody, these posts need to be moderated.

18.3. Freedom of speech is to be encouraged, but if posts breach the Content Guidelines in this Policy, users may be subject to disciplinary action.

18.4. The Moderator may from time to time turn the comments off on posts that become inflammatory or during periods when the site is unmonitored.

### Single Breach Response

18.5. If a post that breaches Content Guidelines appears only once:

- Remove the post as soon as possible;
- If possible/appropriate, contact the poster privately to explain why you have removed the post, highlighting EA's posting guidelines.

### **Repeated Breaches**

- 18.6. If a poster continues to post inappropriate content, or if the post can be considered spam:
- Remove the post as soon as possible;
  - Ban or block the poster to prevent them from posting again.
- 18.7. Banning and blocking should be used as a last resort, and only when the poster intends to continue to contribute inappropriate content. However, if that is the case, action must be taken swiftly to maintain the welfare of other social media users.
- 18.8. Moderation of social media posts, including any decision to block, ban and remove posts, ultimately lies with the **Communications and Marketing Manager**, but may, at their discretion, be delegated to responsible staff and volunteers.

## **19. Breaches and Disciplinary Action**

- 19.1. Any non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with this Policy will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the Codes of Conduct and/or the Participant's employment contract (where applicable). Disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the Codes of Conduct, up to and including termination of employment or engagement (where applicable).
- 19.2. Any complaints regarding conduct that may be a breach of this Policy should be reported through the mechanisms set out in the Codes of Conduct.

## **20. Related Documents**

- Social Media Procedures
- Privacy Policy
- Copyright Policy
- IT and Email Use Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Misconduct Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Discrimination Policy

### **Legislation & Industrial Instruments**

- Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Defamation Act (state and territory specific)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- State and National anti-discrimination legislation

## 21. Definitions

**Defamation** means false information about a person or group of people that damages their reputation or makes others think less of them, and is intentionally spread.

**Equestrian Sport** means all equestrian disciplines recognised by EA and the FEI, including but not limited to dressage, jumping, eventing, para-equestrian, driving, endurance, and vaulting.

**Inside Information** means information relating to the participation in or the likely or actual outcome or development of, any event which is known by an individual as a result of their role in connection with that event or their position within equestrian sport and which is not in the public domain.

**Member Organisation** means any organisation that is a member of or affiliated with EA.

**Participant** is as defined in paragraph 3.1 of this Policy.

**Policy** means the EA Social Media Policy.

**Professional Athlete** means any athlete who receives payment for their participation in equestrian sport through EA or a Member Organisation.

**Communications and Marketing Manager** means the person designated by EA to oversee and manage social media activities and compliance with this Policy.

**State Branch** means the state-based equestrian organisations that are members of EA.

**Worker** means all persons covered by this policy as defined in section 3.1.