



EQUESTRIAN
AUSTRALIA

Social Media Policy

Effective from June 2023

Minor updates June 2023 to change complaints handling process

Last Review in December 2017

This policy is also accessible on the Equestrian Australia (EA) website: www.equestrian.org.au

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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. 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 Australia (**EA**) 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 EA reach members of the broader public and traditional media.

EA 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 EA members and employees, have the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the organisation, simply by maintaining an online presence.

While social media provides a great opportunity to raise EA's profile and reach new audiences, it also has the potential to harm the reputation of EA, its athletes, members and stakeholders. It is therefore crucial that all EA members, employees of EA and other persons bound by this policy are aware of the potential implications of using social media.

The purpose of this policy is to provide persons bound by this policy with guidance on the best way to engage in social media to maximise value and minimise risk.

EA encourages all persons bound by this policy (refer to section 2 – Policy Application) to use social media within the parameters outlined in this policy to ensure that the reputations of EA, and its athletes, coaches, officials, employees, volunteers and stakeholders are protected.

Please note, this policy should be read in conjunction with the EA Member Protection Policy and EA Code of Conduct.

2. Policy Application

This policy applies to all members of EA, and EA's employees, officers (including the Board of Directors and National Discipline Committee Members), administrators, volunteers, national squad athletes, coaches, officials (including Veterinarian officials), team managers and State branches, as well as associated interested persons who have some form of 'duty' on behalf of EA.

3. What is social media?

Social media is any digital communication tool that can be used for public, social communication. This includes but is not limited to:

- social networking sites such as, Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn;
- content sharing platforms including Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest (photo sharing) and YouTube and Vimeo (video sharing);
- blogs and websites that allow commentary; and
- forums, discussion boards and online collaboration tools.

All forms of social media activity are covered under this policy. The absence or lack of explicit reference to a particular social networking site or application does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

4. Social media guidelines

When persons bound by this policy use social media the following guidelines must be considered.

a) It's still the real world

Social media is a form of communication and connection. Present yourself in social media as you would in person, via the telephone, in a meeting or in any other public forum.

b) Your content is everywhere forever

Assume everything you put on the internet, even if in private, can be read by anyone and can never be deleted. This is why you need to take particular care when communicating on social media.

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

Persons bound by this policy should assume that all posts and information they share via social media can be traced back to them.

c) You represent you

Make it clear that your views, that you post on social media, are your own and not those of EA.

When using social media, write in the first person and do not give any impression of EA's official endorsement of your comments. If someone asks you a question on social media about EA, direct them to the relevant person within EA.

You are personally responsible for your posts and comments on social media, including any impact on EA.

Establishing personal sites, blogs and accounts that have an EA 'look and feel' and which could be perceived as being EA or one of its disciplines (when it is not) is strictly prohibited.

EA officers including National Discipline Committee members are not permitted to administer discipline specific accounts on social media. Information that National Discipline Committees and Committee members wish to share with EA subscribers on social media must come through EA's national office and its authorised EA social media accounts. State Discipline Committees should refer to their State branch for rules specific to their State.

d) You reflect EA

Even if you don't identify yourself on social media as being associated with EA (whether as an employee, member or otherwise), you can still be linked to EA.

Think about what you say and how you're saying it.

Don't engage in any conduct on social media that could directly or indirectly damage EA's name or which may otherwise bring the reputation of EA or its member associations or affiliates into disrepute.

Comments that are contrary to the spirit and integrity of the sport of equestrian will not be tolerated.

e) Be kind and respectful

Be kind when on social media. Consider your audience and adopt a communication style that is appropriate.

Be yourself, but do so respectfully. In particular, respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.

f) Don't engage in illegal or unethical behaviour

Do not engage in any illegal or unethical behaviour when using social media. Respect copyright, privacy, anti-discrimination and harassment and intellectual property laws.

Do not post or respond to any material on social media that is threatening, derogatory, obscene, offensive, sexually explicit, pornographic, abusive, disparaging, racist, sexist, discriminatory, hateful, harassing, bullying or defamatory.

g) Think before you post

Use common sense and think before you post on social media. You should be mindful that information shared on social media appears in public so give careful consideration to content before posting it.

Never forget that information shared within online communities could have implications for the sport of equestrian and those associated with it.

h) Remain security aware

Be vigilant about the security of your social media accounts and take all reasonable steps to protect yourself. For example, don't share passwords or allow others to log on to your accounts.

5. Related policies

When using social media you are bound by other EA policies including EA's Code of Conduct and Member Protection Policy.

Please note also that athletes, coaches, officials and other representatives that are selected on teams and participate in major events such as the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games

and World Equestrian Games should also adhere to the guidelines imposed by the governing bodies of those organisations.

6. Breach of this policy

With respect to employees of EA, breaches of this policy or related policies may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

In respect of all other persons bound by this policy, breaches of this policy or related policies may lead to disciplinary action taken in accordance with the disciplinary measures set out in EA's Conduct and Disciplinary Policy.

7. Reporting a breach of this policy

Individuals who wish to report an alleged breach of this policy should follow the complaints procedure outlined in EA's Conduct and Disciplinary Policy.

8. Amendments/Interpretation

This policy may be amended by EA as it deems appropriate. The EA Board will be the ultimate authority with respect to the interpretation and implementation of this policy.

9. Further information

EA encourages all persons bound by this policy to seek clarification from the EA Integrity Team if they are unsure what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate content on social media.

Further resources that may be useful include:

- *Australian Federal Police - "Cyber-Bullying – Don't start it. Don't be part of it"* (<http://www.afp.gov.au/~media/afp/pdf/c/cyber-bullying-no-crops.pdf>)
- *Australian Federal Police – "Social Media Reputation Management"* (<http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/site/sites/thinkuknow.org.au.site/files/Factsheets/SocialMediaReputationManagement2014.pdf>)
- *ThinkUKnow Australia - <http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/>*
- *'Top 4' Strategies to Mitigate Targeted Cyber Intrusions – Mandatory Requirement Explained*