

Proposed Social Media Policy
for approval of Board Jan 2022

Athletes experience increased exposure to social media and it is important for athletes, coaches and all members of MESI to know how to act within a social media and virtual environment. The Social Media Policy will provide guidance on the following and should be read in conjunction with the Swimming USA Safe Sport Electronic Communications Policy and Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy.

1. Definition of social media and approved platforms

Social Media will include the following approved platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and MESI website ('Approved Platforms')

2. Role of Administrator / Athlete Representatives and monitoring of posts

Administrator

An administrator appointed by the MESI Governance Committee ('Administrator') will be responsible for the maintenance and oversight of all MESI Social Media pages and the acceptance of new members to these pages. Community guidelines for every page must be shared with new members and accepted by new members. The Administrator will sporadically monitor these pages to ensure adherence to guidelines and have the authority to remove any post which he or she deems to be against guidelines set in this policy. The Admin Vice Chair of MESI will have access to all social media platforms as additional Administrator.

The Administrator will provide guidance on what is permissible and resolve any questions on permissibility.

Athlete Representative

An Athlete Representative shall act as the main contact person in relation to their designated Social Media platform. It is possible for different Athlete Representatives to be appointed for every different platform. A maximum of four (4) Athletes Representatives may be appointed at a given time. The Administrator must keep a log of who has been appointed as Athlete Representatives for every platform and new appointments must be approved by the Administrator.

The Athlete Representative may delegate their administrative authority from time to time to another athlete provided this is approved by the Administrator in writing. When delegating this authority (for example for take-overs) it must be limited in time and a disclaimer must be included in the comments section which mentions that the views described in the post are those of the delegate (person taking over) and not of MESI.

3. Types of Social Media activity

Various Actions are possible within a Social Media environment and the following guidelines must be followed for each action:

Posting: Posts on pages of Approved Platforms can be made by the Administrator and the Authorised Athlete representative(s).

Commenting: Any athlete or member may comment on posts across all Approved Platforms. Comments must adhere to the guidelines stipulated when joining each different platform and must be respectful and in line with the Master Guidelines mentioned in item 4 of this policy below.

Tagging: Athlete Representatives may tag members of their LSC provided they ensure the person being tagged is credited correctly and that the Master guidelines and the Decision Tree is followed when tagging.

Sharing: Sharing is defined as the sharing of content, for example the content from platforms of another LSC. Content can be shared by the Athlete Representatives adhering to the Master Guidelines and Decision Tree in this policy.

Lives: Master Guidelines and Decision Tree must be followed when going live on any platform.

Note that for any Social Media action mentioned in the headings above the Decision Tree must be referred to in all instances. See item 5 below.

4. Master Guidelines

Posts containing the following will not be allowed to be published on any Approved Platforms:

- *obscene language, images or words of a sexual nature or nudity*
- *opinions or perceived opinions of a racial, homophobic, sexist or political nature*
- *language or action pertaining to or inciting violence of any nature*

Posts shall not portray any athlete/non-athlete/coach/team member in an inappropriate manner or bring that person under unnecessary scrutiny, criticism or cause adverse consequences for the persons included in the post. Posts shall not bring Maine Swimming into disrepute

These guidelines apply equally to all athletes, non-athletes, coaches , members and parents affiliated with MESI.

5. Use of decision tree

A Decision Tree based on the above Master Guidelines has been developed and will be maintained by the Governance Committee. This Tree must be used for all Actions on Approved Platforms to ascertain whether the contents are permissible and appropriate. If the Decision Tree does not provide sufficient guidance or is unclear, the Administrator should be approached and will have final decision making authority.

6. Privacy and Consent

All Privacy and Consent rules agreed to upon Club Registration with MESI will equally apply to Social Media and by agreeing to MESI Privacy and Consent rules at registration, athletes, coaches and members agree to be included in Social Media posts, pictures and articles from time to time on the Approved Platforms of MESI.

Bio's on Social Media pages of MESI shall be amended to reflect the implied consent given at club registration.

7. Sanctions for non compliance

Instances of non compliance among athletes will be reviewed by the Administrator in the first instance and a written warning will be given. Further escalation for serious or second infringements will be referred to the Admin Vice Chair.

Instances of non compliance among non-athletes will be reviewed by the Administrator in the first instance and a written warning will be given. Depending on the seriousness of the incident or repeat occurrence the matter may be escalated to the Executive Board.

8. Related policies

USA Swimming Safe Sport policy on Electronic Communications
USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

DECISION TREE

For all questions this is the key to use:

YES: go to the next question

NO: Do not post to social media

Not sure: speak to your Administrator

Questions:

1. Does the post contain obscene language, images or words of a sexual nature or nudity?
2. Does the post contain any opinions or perceived opinions of a racial, homophobic, sexist or political nature?
3. Does the post purport to or elicit violence of any nature?
4. Does the post expose or portray any athlete/coach/team member in an inappropriate manner?
5. Would the content posted about athletes/coaches/team members bring that person under unnecessary scrutiny, criticism or cause adverse consequences for the persons included in the post?
6. Does the post bring Maine Swimming into disrepute?