Masters Swimming Australia

Social Media Guidelines

Document History		Approved	Summary of Changes
Policy Name:	Social Media Guidelines		Policy covers representation of MSA in regard to social media
Introduced:	2012 Reviewed August 2018		
Previous Version	8-Feb-22		
Latest Update	Draft April 2024		Amended to 'policy' updated to new template with document history.
Current Version	November 2024		April Draft approved November 2024

Introduction

The Social Media Policy is approved by the Board of Masters Swimming Australia (MSA) and is in operation in respect of:

1. The Board, Directors , employees and office representatives of MSA

2. Members of committees and subcommittees established by the Board

3. Delegates and appointees of the Board, National representative members and other individual delegates and appointees

Other relevant policies

In addition to the MSA Constitution and By-laws, this document should be considered alongside the following listed policies.

- Member Protection

- Communications

- Privacy

To the extent of an inconsistency between this document and the Constitution and/or By-laws, the Constitution and/or By-laws will take precedence.

Policy and purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to individuals linked with MSA that are engaging in the social media environment. These guidelines outline MSA's expectations when an individual discusses the organisation, its members, staff, clubs or other MSA related issues in the social media environment. Social media is now a part of everyday like for a growing number on people and is changing the way communication takes place. MSA embraces the use of social media to increase profile of the organisation. Social media are works of user-created text, video, audio or multimedia that are published and shared online on a platform, such as a blog, wiki or video hosting sites.

Social media tools include:
- social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn,
- forums and discussion boards e.g. Yahoo! Groups, Google Groups
- blogs, including corporate, personal or media publication blogs.
- micro-blogs e.g. X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat
- video and photo sharing sites e.g. Instagram, YouTube, Flickr,
- wikis e.g. Wikipedia
- any other sites that allow individuals to publish comments and/or content.

MSA recognises that social media, online communities and online networks are a significant way that Australians are communicating and engaging with one another. MSA employees and volunteers are encouraged to engage online to discuss masters swimming with friends and communities and share information and build new connections.

MSA recognises that complete control over the social media space is impossible, but it is expected that individuals linked to the administration and governance of masters swimming adhere to these guidelines. It is also important to note that as the social media environment evolves, these guidelines will change to meet new requirements. It is noted any members that use personal social media tools are subject to the provisions of MSA Codes of Conduct.

Official MSA social media accounts and spokesperson

MSA's official social media accounts are administered by the General Manager, or by their delegation to another MSA staff member. While the General Manager is MSA's official spokesperson, the President may from time to time make comment in that capacity, as appropriate. No other Director or MSA member can represent themselves as an official spokesperson of MSA without the prior approval of the Board.

Masters Swimming Australia's top 10 online guidelines

1. If you are authorised to represent MSA through social media, we expect you to follow these guidelines.

2. Only those authorised by MSA have permission to represent the organisation through social media. If you do not have authority, then you must not imply that you are in any way authorised to speak on behalf of MSA.

3. If expressing your own views and opinions about masters swimming, please use a disclaimer. An example of a disclaimer is: "the views expressed in this post are mine only and do not necessarily reflect the views of MSA."

4. Please be aware that it is very easy for electronic communications to be traced in the social media environment.

5. If you are unsure of answering a question directed at you, please do not answer, but instead respond with: 'That's a good question. Let me check and I'll get back to you as quickly as I can', then contact the MSA General Manager.

6. Please be aware that it is very difficult to take-back or remove any comments or photos from the social media environment. Please be certain that your comments or photos will not be damaging to any parties.

7. Please do not respond directly to any media enquiries you receive online. Please refer any media to the MSA General Manager.

8. If you do make a mistake in the social media environment (i.e. accidently posting inaccurate information) please notify the MSA General Manager as soon as possible; who will advise on the best course of action.

9. When engaging in the social media environment please avoid "astroturfing". Astroturfing involves unethical influencing of online polls, rankings, or to increase web traffic to a website.

10. Please ensure you are not the first to make any MSA announcement unless you have received appropriate approval from the MSA General Manager. Do not include the MSA logos in your postings.

Engaging through Social Media

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

- Do not try to control – do not attempt to manipulate the direction of any online discussions.
- Avoid online fights - voice your opinion but avoid personal arguments and hostile discussions.
- Be transparent - identify yourself when engaging through any social media.
- Do not misrepresent - do not use fake identities in the social media environment or position your comments as if from another person.
- Be friendly - be mindful to behave to a high standard online as you would offline.
- Show consideration - do not use insulting, provocative, hateful, obscene or offensive language, nor harass and threaten others.
- Be fair - do not make defamatory or libelous comments.
- Obey social media rules - ensure you obey the Terms of Use of any social media platforms that you are using.
- Be a responsible global citizen – be sensitive to cultural diversity.
- The MSA Member Protection Policy provides codes of behaviour and MSA's position on individual responsibilities. Refer to the MSA website for more information.

PROTECTION ONLINE

- Protect your profile - you should protect your privacy by setting social media profiles to 'private' so that people cannot click into your profiles. Further guidance can be sourced from the Stay Smart Online & esafety.gov.au
- Protect yourself - do not use social media to share any of your personal information. Information including your email addresses, private addresses, phone numbers, or financial information should be protected.
- Protect others - do not post or discuss any personal information about others through social media.
- Do not invade the privacy of members – engage with members, but do not invade their privacy by engaging beyond an acceptable online response.
- Protect reputations - do not make any statement that might bring MSA into disrepute.

CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS

- You are legally liable – anybody can pursue legal action against you and/or MSA for your postings.
- Be accurate and informative - do not make any misleading or false statements.
- Be mindful of confidentiality - do not disclose any confidential information, whether that information belongs to MSA or any other person, unless authorised to do so.
- Post only your own content - do not post copyright material that infringes the intellectual property rights of MSA or others.