



AIS SOCIAL MEDIA PRINCIPLES & BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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OVERVIEW

The AIS recognises the value of social media as an important tool for athletes, coaches and staff of National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) to engage, interact, communicate, learn, promote and build a brand.

In addition to the value of social media, e-safety and reputation management is crucial in order to protect high performance (HP) sport stakeholders. The impact to careers, reputations and health can be significant when HP staff and athletes are subject to, or engage in, inappropriate social media use.

The purpose of this document is to provide NSOs with key principles (and associated guidelines) for building healthy social media engagement by athletes, coaches and HP staff.

The principles and guidelines can be used to assist NSOs to review current or establish tailored social media strategies specific to their unique needs. They are intended to operate in conjunction with other components of an organisation's relevant policies, such as its Member Protection Policy, IT/Email Policy and Privacy Policy.

Social Media Principles

The AIS Social Media Best Practice Principles for NSOs are:

Principle 1: Strategy and Responsibility

Principle 2: Digital Health and Wellbeing

Principle 3: Responding and Reporting

Principle 4: Education

Principle 5: Policies and Procedures

What constitutes social media?

Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Social media tools enable communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration, in real-time.

The types of websites and applications that are considered social media for the purposes of the AIS Social Media Best Practice Principles include, but are not limited to:

- Social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WeChat, etc)
- Media sharing networks (e.g. Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Vimeo, etc)
- Instant messaging (e.g. WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegraph, etc)
- Blogging and publishing networks (e.g. WordPress, Tumblr, Medium, etc)
- Podcasting platforms (e.g. Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, etc)
- Sporting team apps (e.g. TeamApp, Heja, etc)
- Discussion forums (e.g. Reddit, Quora, Digg, etc)
- Bookmarking and content curation networks (e.g. Pinterest, Flipboard, etc)
- Music sharing networks (e.g. Spotify, Soundcloud, Last.fm, etc)
- Gaming networks (e.g. Discord, Twitch, etc)
- Social review networks (e.g. Yelp, Zomato, TripAdvisor, etc)
- Social shopping networks (e.g. Amazon, Etsy, etc)
- Anonymous social networks (e.g. Whisper, etc)
- Sharing economy networks (e.g. Airbnb, Uber, Airtasker, etc)
- Online encyclopedias (e.g. Wikipedia, etc)
- Online dating apps (e.g. Tinder, Hinge, Bumble, etc)
- Other interest-based networks

PRINCIPLE 1: STRATEGY AND RESPONSIBILITY

PRINCIPLE: NSOs develop and implement a social media strategy. The strategy should consider the coordination and responsibility for social media, including communication; digital education; athlete and NSO promotion; and the management of inappropriate social media activity by athletes, staff, members and the broader public.

Social media is no different to any other area of a NSOs business or communications function – it requires consideration, investment and strategy to fully optimise its use.

Social media management can be a time-consuming task when an athlete or organisation has a large following and high levels of engagement. To effectively manage social media, the NSO should consider how coordination and responsibility between different areas of the business will operate. The NSO should consider its social media strategy, not only to effectively use social media but also to ensure the NSO is across any compliance obligations, including in relation to defamation and workplace health and safety issues where an online presence is part of an employee's job description. NSOs should also implement appropriate monitoring of social media in conjunction with their wider communications strategy.

Monitoring does not imply scrutiny at all times over content. Rather it is about engagement with other social media users and being able to engage in conversations and/or respond to arbitrary/inappropriate/spam messages. It is ensuring processes and systems are in place for social media content both outwardly (publishing of content) as well as inwardly (responding to content, be it genuine enquiry or inappropriate material).

PRINCIPLE 2: DIGITAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

PRINCIPLE: NSOs ensure that athletes and staff are provided guidance on how to use social media effectively and ethically for promotion, branding and networking both socially and professionally.

Due to the unique nature of sport and NSOs, the boundaries between work, volunteer time and social life can often be blurred. It is therefore essential that social media users make a clear distinction between the actions they take in a professional capacity and the actions they take or the things they say in a personal capacity.

NSOs should consider the development of guidelines or processes to help athletes and staff manage social media for their personal and professional benefit, and to avoid putting themselves in situations which could ultimately bring themselves or the NSO into disrepute. The guidelines should assist athletes, coaches and staff to understand their obligations under the NSO's Social Media Policy and help ensure healthy use of social media and reduce the risk of misuse.

PRINCIPLE 3: RESPONDING AND REPORTING

PRINCIPLE: NSOs ensure robust processes for dealing with any alleged or suspected breaches of their social media policies are in place. NSOs to ensure that athletes, coaches and staff are assisted or supported as required in the event of social media misuse (for example, cyber abuse).

It is important that NSOs consider implementing procedures for the identification and proportionate management of contraventions of the NSO's social media policies and for responding to inappropriate content and cyber bullying.

NSO procedures in this regard should consider both internal management procedures, as well as how and when matters should be referred to external processes.

This is also important to ensure the NSO minimises its risk arising from any inappropriate or defamatory content that is posted on its social media by third parties.

PRINCIPLE 4: EDUCATION

PRINCIPLE: NSOs ensure athletes, coaches and staff are educated in relation to the organisation's social media principles, policies, rules, guidelines and resources, and of the recourse and assistance available in the event of cyber bullying or cyber abuse.

NSOs should invest in social media education programs. Many athletes, coaches and staff will already know how to use technical features of social media but may lack an understanding of the 'effective' use of social media including digital wellbeing, healthy habits, digital reputation management and digital relationships.

Social media education should focus on highlighting the expected standards for social media use within the NSO and best practices, and provide reminders about accessing support for issues (e.g. eSafety Office resources). Education and training is particularly important where employees of the NSO have social media roles within their job description.

PRINCIPLE 5: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PRINCIPLE: NSOs have in place policies, procedures and rules to protect, promote and educate athletes, coaches and staff about using social media in a safe and appropriate manner.

To maintain good governance, it is important to implement a social media policy to ensure athletes and staff are provided guidance on how to use social media without breaching the rules of the organisation.

A quality social media policy provides athletes and staff with clear rules of engagement that are acceptable both internally and externally. NSOs should have in place a Social Media Policy, and other accompanying policies and/or rules, that work together to integrate areas such as:

- Codes of Conduct or disciplinary rules and processes
- Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Acceptable IT Use (including email) Policy
- Member Protection Policy (MPP)
- Child Protection Policy
- Privacy Policy, including data protection
- Photography and Image Policy
- Critical Incident Communications Plan
- Whistleblower Policy
- Any International Federation or IOC, etc. requirements for social media.

NSOs should have formal investigation and disciplinary processes applicable to social media policy breaches by athletes and staff (for example, under the organisation's Code of Conduct).

Adopting and implementing appropriate policies and procedures is important for an NSO to ensure it is complying with its ongoing workplace health and safety obligations.

APPENDIX 1 – AIS SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

1. Strategy and Responsibility

Social media strategy

NSOs are encouraged to build a social media strategy that is tailored to the unique needs of the sport. A social media strategy outlines how your NSO will use social media to assist in achieving the overall goals of the organisation. It should outline details of the:

- Goals/Objectives for using social media
- Audience being targeted
- Content to be shared
- Social Media Platforms where the NSO will establish a presence
- Monitoring procedures
- Tools used to assist with the implementation of the social media strategy
- Influencers/Circle of Influence that will assist the NSO in achieving their goals
- Advertising strategy to support organic social media efforts
- Measurement and Reporting practices to determine the success of the social media strategy
- Resources/Budget required to implement the social media strategy.

Goals/Objectives

What are the goals your NSO is trying to achieve by using social media? Is it to create or raise awareness of your sport; attract new members; increase engagement within your community; build member loyalty and increase retention; volunteer recruitment; deliver on sponsorship commitments, etc? These goals are not mutually exclusive, but an NSO may wish to focus a limited number initially instead of trying to cover every possibility.

Create SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based) objectives based on the NSO's goal for using social media. For example, if your goal is to raise brand awareness of your NSO, you might want to increase the number of times your NSO is mentioned on social media by 50%.

These can then be used to determine performance benchmarks to strive for and Key Performance Indicators that you can use to measure your performance over time.

As part of developing your strategy, you should also consider how social media will complement and enhance your other marketing goals/objectives (i.e. drive traffic to your website, increase email marketing subscribers, enhance your overall communications strategy).

Audience

A quality social media strategy will focus on targeting the right people, with the right messages, at the right time. To do this, your NSO needs to clearly understand the ideal audience(s) they are targeting.

This is often done by creating audience personas for each of the main audiences you are trying to attract and communicate with (e.g. athletes, coaches, parents, sponsors, etc). For each audience persona you need to determine their common characteristics, which include their demographics and psychographics.

Demographic characteristics include: age, gender, location, profession, income level, marital status, etc. Psychographic characteristics include: interest, hobbies, habits, motivations, values, etc.

Once your target audience(s) have been identified, your social media strategy should focus on attracting those audiences to follow and engage with your NSO on social media.

Content

Your NSO should develop an editorial mission that identifies the key topics and messaging that resonate with your ideal audience(s) and provides scope around what type of content is and isn't appropriate to share on social media on behalf of the NSO. This will help set you apart and give your sport a unique brand voice. Anyone creating or curating content to share on social media on behalf of the NSO should be guided by your editorial mission.

Content created for sharing on social media should also comply with the NSO Brand and Style Guide. This should include guidelines relating to the use of brand colours, fonts, logo and images and be consistent across each social media platform.

To assist in ensuring compliance with these guidelines, your NSO may consider developing templates for images and/or video posts.

The NSO should also develop Tone of Voice Guidelines to ensure any social media content and/or conversations are consistent with the brand voice. This is particularly important if there is more than one person posting content and/or responding to comments on behalf of the NSO across the various social media platforms.

To keep the audience engaged, it is important to share a mix of content topics that resonate with the various audience avatars, as well as mix up the content format (e.g. images, videos, links, lives, etc), as different people will have content format preferences.

This should be tested over time to determine what type of content resonates best, the best time to post, ideal content frequency, types of calls-to-action and other variables that may impact the level of reach and engagement your content receives.

NSO's should also develop a strategy for the use of hashtags and tagging for those platforms where these features are available. It may be beneficial to create a list of hashtags for use under different circumstances. This can be a way to increase the reach of your content, as well as a time saver if this information is already curated and easily accessible to those people posting on behalf of your NSO.

Creating content can be a time-consuming task for NSOs. To reduce the workload, NSO's should consider ways to repurpose content (e.g. taking an article written by a coach and creating it into several pieces of bite sized content, such as image posts). NSOs could also share user-generated content, which often performs well. This would involve creating processes for capturing this content, gaining permission to repost and then sharing that content via the NSO's social media channels.

Social Media Platforms

Once you have identified your goals, defined your audience and determined what type of content you plan to share, you can then determine which social media platforms are most appropriate for your NSO to develop a presence on.

The most important aspect in choosing which social media platform(s) to use is your audience. For the best results, you should develop a presence on those platforms where your audience is already present and are interested in communicating with you via that channel.

Not all social media platforms are the same and therefore you may have to adjust the type of content shared and the way that it is shared so that it is appropriate to the context of the platform.

For example, Twitter has a character limit, Instagram requires an image or video to post and Facebook has multiple places you can post information (e.g. newsfeeds, groups, stories, events, marketplace, Messenger, etc). The use of hashtags and tagging also varies between platforms.

Monitoring

NSOs should develop guidelines around when, where and how they respond to conversations, enquiries and/or inappropriate content on each of their social media profiles.

However, it's just as important that you also have systems and tools in place that allow you to monitor any conversations happening on social media that mention your NSO or other aspects of your sport that you would like to be aware of or engage in discussions about, regardless of where they happen online.

This could include cross-platform keyword alerts, following hashtags or monitoring platform-specific notifications from each of the social media platforms where your NSO has a presence.

Monitoring beyond just your own social media presence is especially important, as not all conversations about your NSO or sport happen on your social media profiles and therefore without tools in place to alert you of these conversations, it is often difficult to be aware of them in a timely manner.

Joining in conversations on social media (external to your own profiles) can also help boost brand awareness and credibility, as well as expose the NSO to new and relevant audiences.

Conversations on social media can escalate quickly, so it's important that the NSO has at least one person responsible for monitoring any alerts and have processes in place for escalating any potential issues as soon as possible once they are identified. Developing a procedure and assigning the responsibility for monitoring social media out of hours is also an important consideration.

Monitoring your NSO's social media is also important from a compliance perspective. Just like with any other form of public communication, there are various legal issues that can arise from the use of social media: where social media use is part of an NSO employee's job description, workplace health and safety obligations will be owed to those individuals in the same manner as any other task they are required to perform; there are also defamation laws that apply to content posted on social media, which may extend to the administrator of a social media page for third-party content; and privacy and data protection laws may also apply to content posted by the NSO. NSO's should also be mindful that comments by third parties on an NSO's website or other Social Media (a news article for example, or a forum), may cause an NSO to be in breach of Australian defamation laws. If you give an ability for people to say/write whatever they want on your Social Media, you need to have monitoring in place.

Tools

There are various tools available that can assist you with social media creation, monitoring, scheduling and reporting. Tools for managing social media workflow can also be useful for increasing efficiency.

There are various free or low-cost tools available for creating images, videos and other forms of content for sharing on social media, enabling your NSO to create large amounts of content on a low budget.

Scheduling tools can help save time and increase the chances of your NSO regularly posting content to the various social media platforms at the most appropriate times for generating the best level of engagement.

Monitoring tools allow you to be alerted about relevant conversations in a timely manner.

Reporting tools can ensure you are regularly measuring your performance against your objectives so that progress can be quantified.

Your NSO should determine which tools are most appropriate for your requirements and then make them available for use by those people within your organisation that are responsible for implementing the various elements of your social media strategy.

Influencers/Circle of Influence

It is natural for people to look to others for social proof and influence prior to making decisions. People may seek out social proof from friends, experts, celebrities, other users, the crowd in general and/or some other stamp of approval.

This could include past or present athletes and/or coaches, State Sporting Organisation, clubs or other high-profile personalities within the sport or wider sporting community.

Being endorsed by any of these groups that influence the NSO's audience can greatly assist your NSO in achieving your social media goals. An endorsement could be as simple as liking or leaving a positive comment on an NSO's post, through to sharing content about the NSO on their social media platforms.

NSOs can facilitate this by forming relationships with those people and/or organisations that have influence over their audience and actively engaging with them on social media. Formal strategic partnerships, with clear deliverables as part of that arrangement, may also be formed as part of the NSO's social media strategy.

Advertising

Most social media platforms have algorithms in place that determine who sees what content and when. As a result, not all of the content you share on social media is going to be seen by all of your followers. Also, sometimes you want your content to be seen beyond your current following.

Social media advertising allows you to increase the reach for your content, targeting your desired audience, specific to your objective for each piece of content you are promoting.

NSOs that invest in the production of content to share on social media may wish to consider a budget to strategically promote key pieces of content (or calls-to-action) to ensure they get the best possible reach and return on investment for the time put into creating it and/or the outcome being sought. This may not always be possible for many NSOs, and in such cases having influencers and strategy in place is all the more important.

Measurement and Reporting

It's important to regularly review your results against the performance benchmarks and Key Performance Indicators that you set when you established the social media goals and objectives for your NSO.

This includes determining what's working, what's not working and what you can improve upon across your social media channels. This includes auditing the success of the channels you are on, the content you are sharing and how well you are performing against your goals.

Platform-specific analytics, along with other metrics relevant to your goals, such as the amount of website traffic driven by a particular social media platform or membership growth statistics, can help determine the success of your social media strategy.

The strategy should outline what formal reports need to be created, including the content, frequency and who they should be shared with.

It is also a good idea to audit the social media presence of other organisations targeting the same audience as your NSO (e.g. businesses providing services for your athletes) to learn from their successes and mistakes. Reviewing the performance of others can assist in determining which strategies may or may not work for your NSO.

Resources/Budget

Whilst social media platforms are 'free' to use, there are associated costs with using them, such as staff wages, content production, social media advertising, etc. This needs to be budgeted for, along with the appropriate resource allocation, to effectively implement your social media strategy.

Where there is more than one person responsible for implementing the various elements of a NSO's social media strategy, the roles should be adequately defined, with backups assigned for some of those roles (e.g. posting, monitoring) to ensure there is no disruption to service.

There should also be a budget allocated for staff training.

Social media responsibility

NSOs should consider how responsibility for social media will rest within the organisation. Do all social media aspects sit within a single designated role, or spread across various roles? NSOs should consider how responsibility for the coordination of cross-organisational aspects of social media will be assigned, including:

- Promoting the NSO, athletes and coaches as appropriate on social media
- Organisational social media skills development
- Social media strategy development and/or implementation
- Privacy and compliance matters
- Monitoring social media use; and
- Actioning harmful or inappropriate social media.

NSOs should consider how responsibility will reside within the organisation for maintaining social media 'best practice' for engaging an audience as well as community management on social media, including:

- Being aware of social media content relevant to the NSO and its stakeholders: what is happening; how the NSO is being mentioned; brand reputation issues; misuse and response required.
- Recommending to all athletes, coaches, staff and members that they protect their own personal privacy by not including personal information in social media communications (for example, but not limited to, email addresses, residential addresses and telephone numbers).
- What is realistic for the size of your NSO – what might work for a small NSO may not be appropriate for a larger organisation.
- Responsibility for monitoring social media 'out of hours'.
- Events and opportunities to be in partnerships, share authentic/original content.
- Development of a yearly social media strategy for the organisation.

2. Digital Health and Wellbeing

Athletes, coaches and staff

Social media can be a valuable tool for athletes, coaches and staff to develop a personal brand, harness the power of fans/followers, and share their journey through stories and experiences. It is important that individuals consider the following:

1. Align your online behaviour to your values.
2. Before you post, ask yourself: "What is the purpose of the post? How does it align with my personal brand? What will it achieve?" Consider the '80/20 rule' – 80% professional and 20% personal (not necessarily private) posts. Fun posts that connect you to your audience. So for example, it might be about baking, gardening, parenting or pets. It helps when athletes come across as human beings!
3. THINK – Is it True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary and Kind?
4. Seek permission before mentioning someone in a post, especially children.
5. Ensure that content published is factually accurate, good quality information and authentic.
6. Make it clear that the stated views are your own and not the NSO's.
7. Be polite and respectful to all people you interact with and presume 'positive intent' – where the tone or perspective might be unclear, avoid jumping to conclusions and replying in a reactive way.
8. Determine the line you want to draw between your professional/public life and your private/personal one, have an understanding about the impact of revealing personal information to the public (especially in relation to location, dating and children).
9. Be mindful and notice how the activities you engage with online shape your mood and cognition, and the way this may then impact your training and/or performance.
10. Give yourself some downtime from social media prior to bed to allow your brain time to wind down and log off before falling asleep.
11. Manage your notifications – don't let them rule you!
12. Be wary of your actions online after consuming alcohol, and the impact that drinking may have on your sense of what is appropriate to post.

Social media can also negatively impact the reputation of athletes, coaches and staff. Consider avoiding the following on social media platforms:

1. Use proper complaints procedures or channels for genuine concerns instead of commenting on disputes and grievances publicly.
2. Avoid commenting on internal meetings and events (such as team selection and injuries).
3. Refrain from making promises regarding your NSO's operations or decisions.
4. Never share intimate images of other people without consent.
5. Avoid becoming involved in online debates with other people you suspect are being inappropriate.
6. Refrain from making excessive comments or posts on a particular issue.
7. Avoid making comments in the heat of the moment and/or in a reactive state of mind.
8. Avoid posting content that could be considered harmful.

Further guidance for HP Staff

The AIS understands that in today's fast-paced and ever-changing digital age, sometimes the best way to communicate to athletes is often via social media platforms.

Please consider the following before liaising and/or creating any chat rooms, blogs, group or event pages:

1. Ensure your athletes are only using those social media platforms where they meet the minimum legal age requirements for those platforms, as per the Terms of Service for each platform they are using.
2. All NSOs must clearly communicate what is, and what is not, appropriate between athletes and coaches with respect to social media communication. There is no set rule as to whether, for example, a coach should be able to text athletes directly or be 'friends' with athletes on Facebook. The important matter is that the NSO has considered it, formed a view, and applies it.
3. Where the athlete is a minor, emails, texts or other messages sent to them should be copied to their parent or guardian where it is practical to do so. Coaches and staff should refrain from 'friend requests' or 'follow', etc, on Social Media forums (other than designated coaching or sports admin forums).
4. If creating a group page and or group chat, you should invite the whole team, don't exclude individuals. Correspondence should be limited to disseminating training/competition information for example.
5. Selection communication should not be posted on any social media platform, unless prior contact has been made to those individuals either selected, not selected or de-selected prior to publishing.
6. Check with your manager or human resources department about applicable compliance or workplace health and safety issues, as the group pages are likely to fall within the NSO's 'workplace' for the employees in the group.

NSO

Some of the ways social media can help NSO's include allowing the NSO to:

- represent your sport's brand and values
- promote the sport
- attract fans, get feedback and build loyalty
- increase your market reach
- share with your online community of followers
- communicate with stakeholders
- exchange ideas to improve the way you operate
- recruit skilled staff or volunteers, or garner interest in an event
- deliver on sponsorship commitments
- increase traffic to your website
- keep an eye on your competitors.

NSO considerations prior to using social media include:

- If you are unprepared and operate your social media presence without planning or a strategy, you could waste valuable time and money.
- If you don't have a clear marketing or social media strategy, the benefits may be reduced. Additional resources to manage your online presence may be required.
- Social media is immediate and needs daily monitoring. If a social media presence is not actively managed, there is unlikely to be any real benefits.
- An NSO may receive unwanted or inappropriate behaviour on your site, including bullying and harassment. Social media exposure could attract risks such as negative feedback, information leaks or hacking, or legal risks such as liability in defamation.

3. Responding and Reporting

Responding to social media issues and concerns

The dangers and consequences of poor social media use include:

- Your online identity is highly visible and shareable. Everything you post builds a profile of who you are and what you value and this can impact your personal brand and reputation.
- The internet never forgets – your digital footprint is a permanent billboard.
- Social media interactions can have a significant impact on your mental health.
- What you post or others post to social media about you can impact your work/sport.
- You may be held personally liable for content harmful to others.

When online contact is a problem

Just like in life, not everyone is going to like you. Sometimes even innocuous posts can receive negative comments in reply. If you're going to be online, you need to expect this and have your psychological armour on. Just like in sport, your mental resilience is important.

Cyber abuse is behaviour that uses technology to threaten, intimidate, harass or humiliate someone – with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or even physically.

It can take place on social media, through online chat and messaging services, text, messages, emails, on message boards and in online forums that allow people to publicly comment.

Trolling is when someone makes a deliberately provocative comment or post and waits for people to take the bait. Online 'trolls' are not always bad – they can be mischievous and they can prompt people to talk about contentious subjects. For example, online activists have used trolling as a way to call out people who were being homophobic.

Trolling is not when someone makes a personal attack – that's 'flaming' or online hate.

If you find yourself on the receiving end of this kind of abuse, this may be when you need to consider taking further action and/or reaching out for advice and support from your Athlete Wellbeing & Engagement Manager (AW&E) and/or real-life support network.

Problem/mistake	Advice and guidance to the athlete
Athlete, coach or NSO receives negative feedback or criticism publicly	<p>First – pause!</p> <p>Breathe and take some time to consider your response prior to responding. Choosing not to respond at all may sometimes be the best response. Maintain perspective – take a step back from the situation and consider if it's worth your time and energy in defending.</p> <p>These issues can happen to varying degrees, and levels of seriousness, so it is important to consider the situation before engaging with the person or post.</p> <p>Often a good policy is to respond once and respond well – don't get sucked into the online 'tennis' and keep going.</p> <p>Humour can be a helpful tool to diffuse certain situations, but try to refrain from engaging in personal attacks.</p> <p>It's okay to look to correct incorrect facts or misrepresentations – but if you look to be defending a position too much, it may attract more scrutiny or ridicule.</p>

Problem/mistake	Advice and guidance to the athlete
<p>Athlete, coach or NSO experiences cyber abuse</p>	<p>If you are a victim of cyber abuse and or severe or sustained trolling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First, are you in physical danger? Are you receiving genuine threats of harm? Are they sustained in nature? Have your personal details – such as address or place of work – been posted online? Have nude or inappropriate images of you been posted without your consent? Is your reputation or employment at risk? If yes, make your AW&E Manager aware immediately. You may need to report directly to police or esafety.com.au (see section below). - Seek advice on how best to respond. For example, some comments should be ignored, some should be appropriately acknowledged, and some should be deleted. - Seek advice from your sport's Athlete Wellbeing Manager about which policies you can utilise and what support is available e.g. reporting through social media sites, using the eSafety Commission resources, referral to psychological service for support, use of third-party support to vet your proposed communications/responses. - Don't panic! Consider all the available facts and provide a well thought out and fact- based response. Don't rush! Take time to think about the best response and seek support on how to frame your reply. - Avoid using legal threats in response. Treat people as individuals, be friendly and personal, imagine replying as if they were standing in front of you. - You may choose to be corrective in response – for example, you may correct misinformation about you or your brand or NSO. But do not use aggression or abuse. Be polite. - Be a good bystander. Do not stand by and let teammates cop unfair or endless abuse. You may choose to report abuse against another person to the platform or police (taking the onus off the victim). After consideration, you may send the cyberhate target private or public support messages. <p>Be mindful of your own mental health. The various forms of cyber abuse can cause severe and ongoing physiological harm. This must not be underestimated. Check in with yourself and ask yourself how you're travelling.</p> <p>Check-in with your AW&E Manager, or the AIS Mental Health Referral Network.</p> <p>You may need to step away from social media for a period, or ask someone else to manage your accounts. You'll notice that it's hard to stop reading abuse against you. This isn't your fault. It's related to how the brain is wired and also, human socialisation. We naturally want to know if we're being bad-mouthed!</p> <p>However, if your mental health is being damaged, try to take a break from reading the flood of nasty messages (even for a short time).</p> <p>It's important to reach out to your real-life support network. When offline, talk about these feelings with your support network. Remind yourself of your good qualities and strengths.</p> <p>If the cyber abuse is causing you to lose productivity or making you stressed, help unravel the anxiety by asking yourself questions such as: is dwelling on the situation improving my life? Why am I still thinking about it? What could I be doing instead?</p>

Problem/mistake	Advice and guidance to the athlete
<p>Athlete, coach or staff sends inappropriate information / images / language on their profile</p> <p>Athlete, coach or staff share, likes or comments on offensive posts</p>	<p>Be aware that most of your content has visibility and you don't know who is watching your moves (i.e. not just fans but your sponsors).</p> <p>Note: All the various platforms are different in terms of their function. For example, a Facebook page is different to a Facebook personal profile and therefore the tools you can use to manage these problems are different. On the Facebook page you can set up filters so if anyone is using swear words or key terms, the comments do not show up. You can control who sees or shares, if your Facebook profile is private, but you can't stop screenshots and that content being shared with people beyond your intended audience.</p> <p>Sometimes it is best to remove a post as soon as possible, but definitely always seek advice if that content is being shared with people beyond your intended audience (consider how long the post was up for, how many people might have seen it, likelihood of screenshotting etc by others).</p> <p>If you post something that needs clarification or has drummed up attention for the wrong reason – adding an {EDIT} to the post to update it or correct aspects of it might be the best move to make. For example, if you posted something about a final score and you got the number wrong because of a typo, you might use this option.</p> <p>Apology? Sometimes yes: step into the light and take ownership of the mistake. The trick here is to let your fans know that you've made a mistake and are doing your very best to fix it. Often you can simply admit the mistake, fix it, and let your fans know about it.</p>
<p>Athlete, coach or staff shares polarising viewpoints on social issues</p>	<p>It's okay to have a clear position on a social issue, but equally, you have to consider who you will affect, get offside or isolate by promoting your position publicly.</p> <p>And if your sport, club or employer has a position on an issue that you personally don't support, your rights to have a say on the matter may be affected by your athlete agreement or employment contract. Freedom of speech is not the same as freedom from consequence.</p> <p>If you want to maintain your position you need to be prepared to have difficult conversations with stakeholders affected and look at possible consequences, including sponsor and potential sponsor's association with you.</p>

Problem/mistake	Advice and guidance to the athlete
Athlete, coach or staff spends too much time engaged with social media and asks for help	<p>Use the built-in tools installed on the operating system to set limits for the amount of time spent on social media each day and set boundaries around the times those apps are available.</p> <p>Seek additional help and guidance on developing habits that work within the demands of your life and create accountability for your actions.</p> <p>For some people with significant follower numbers, engaging an assistant to help you manage valuable messages and manage the community could be an option.</p> <p>Protect your sleep. Ironically you can use smartphone features to do this. Work out what time you need to go to bed in order to get optimum amount of sleep and get up on time.</p> <p>Adjust the display on your device of an evening from a blue tint to a more yellow tint, either on demand or automatically at sunrise and sunset. This can set a digital sunset and give your brain time to wind down and log off before falling asleep, therefore assisting your sleep. Sleep is vital for wellbeing: it's a crucial way that your body rests and repairs not only muscles but also codes learning and integrates memories. Some people choose not to have any devices in their bedrooms for this reason.</p> <p>Manage your notifications. There are now a range of tools built into the operating system of your smartphone to help you curtail the desire to constantly check and scroll. You can also download apps that help track and monitor your habits. Managing your notifications is a simple but effective way to reduce distractions. Notifications are designed to get your attention but you can turn these off, batch them so they don't drop in randomly and disrupt you or just select the most important ones. You can also turn your phone screen to grey scale so the colours don't distract you, work with your phone out of sight and put the apps that distract you into a folder several pages back from the home screen.</p>

Problem/mistake	Advice and guidance to the athlete
Mental health deteriorates	<p>When it comes to mental health, understand that it's normal to have ups and downs on a daily basis. But if you do go through a longer period, with consistent negative thoughts and feelings that start to affect your ability to function day-to-day, this is when it's important to ask for help: speak up and use your support network.</p> <p>The 'Apple' technique is helpful to deal with anxiety and worries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledge: Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind. - Pause: Do not react as you normally do. Do not react at all. Pause and breathe. - Pull back: Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Do not believe everything you think. Thoughts are not statements or facts. - Let go: Let go of the thought or feeling. It will pass. You do not have to respond to it. You might imagine it floating away in a bubble or cloud. - Explore: Explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then shift your focus of attention to something else – on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry, or do something else – mindfully with your full attention. <p>Beyond Blue has fact sheets about anxiety and offers other practical advice and resources at beyondblue.org.au.</p> <p>The Beyond Blue Support Service offers short term counselling and referrals by phone and webchat on 1300 22 4636.</p> <p>Lifeline services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone: 13 11 14 - Lifeline Text: 0477 13 11 14 <p>Kids Helpline – for children that may need support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone: 1800 55 1800 - Website: kidshelpline.com.au

Managing and reporting social media misuse

NSOs should ensure athletes and HP staff are made aware of the internal and external avenues to report inappropriate social media use.

Internal NSO reporting processes

NSOs should implement and promote a confidential process to allow the reporting of an alleged or suspected breach of a social media policy or alleged or suspected unethical or inappropriate practices (for example, under a whistleblower procedure).

The process might include direct reporting to the NSO's AW&E Manager.

NSOs should have formal investigation and disciplinary processes applicable to social media policy breaches by athletes and HP Staff (for example, under the organisation's Code of Conduct).

Documentation of the issue and follow up must be undertaken by the NSO as part of its record keeping.

Examples of social media policy breaches:

- Using your organisation's name, motto, crest and/or logo in a way that would result in a negative impact for the organisation, clubs and/or its members.
- Posting or sharing any content that is abusive, harassing, threatening, demeaning or defamatory.
- Posting or sharing any content that includes insulting, obscene, offensive, provocative or hateful language.
- Posting or sharing any content, which if said in-person during the playing of the game would result in a breach of the rules of the game.
- Posting or sharing any content in breach of your anti-discrimination, racial discrimination, sexual harassment or other similar policy.
- Posting or sharing any content that is a breach of any state or Commonwealth law such as those relating to defamation or anti-discrimination.
- Posting or sharing any material to your social media channels that infringes the intellectual property rights of others.
- Posting or sharing material that brings, or risks bringing your organisations, its affiliates, its sport, its officials, members or sponsors into disrepute. In this context, bringing a person or organisation into disrepute is to lower the reputation of that person or organisation in the eyes of the ordinary members of the public.

External regulatory reporting

For serious issues of cyberbullying or instances of image-based abuse, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner in Australia can help with advice on how to report incidents to social media services or the Office's complaints service itself.

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides assistance with common social media issues, including:

- cyberbullying
- image-based abuse
- cyber abuse
- offensive or illegal content
- sexting
- unwanted contact
- social engineering
- social networking.

In sport, cyberbullying may look like online racism; targeted threats; intimidation to team members and opposition players, coaches and teams; defaming of referees, coaches, management; or unsubstantiated claims of drug-taking or favouritism. Where issues arise and a young person under 18 years is the target, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner can help.

The Office works closely with social media partners to remove serious cyberbullying from the internet.

Image-based abuse – known as 'revenge porn', 'intimate image abuse', 'image-based sexual abuse' or the non-consensual sharing of intimate images – is another harmful online activity that can affect athletes. The Office of the eSafety Commissioner will provide assistance to individuals who have been subjected to image-based abuse.

To learn more about online issues, strategies and solutions –and how to use technology to your advantage – visit www.esafety.gov.au

4. Education

Social media education and information provided by an NSO should:

- Bring the sport's policies to life in an engaging way – highlight expected standards for social media use within your NSO, highlight best practices and provide reminders about accessing support for issues (e.g. eSafety Office resources)
- Be easily accessible on your website, newsletters, handbooks, etc.
- Be documented, so that a record is maintained of athletes, coaches and staff who have received education including the topics, updates to topics or content and dates completed. This education should be considered as part of new team member/athlete induction programs and reviewed at least biannually.
- Include the following:
 - > Clarity on the sport's policies and rules, as well as the behaviours expected when using social media
 - > Education on how to:
 - Comply with the NSO's Social Media Guidelines/Policies
 - Effectively manage the use of social media generally
 - Utilise social media to enhance your career
 - Clarify your values and portray an authentic identity online
 - Understand your limits of what you are comfortable to share/not to share
 - Report and manage incidents of cyberbullying and image-based abuse
 - Manage trolls
 - Get additional help and support, if required.

AIS social media education resources

It is recommended that NSOs educate athletes, coaches and HP staff in relation to the organisation's social media policies and procedures, guidelines and resources. The below resources and programs are available from the AIS to eligible NSOs.

1. Wellbeing Toolkit

The Wellbeing Toolkit consists of three modules that provide participants with practical, evidence-based tools to improve wellbeing and personal capacity.

2. LinkedIn Training

Programs available in the personal brand program and the career and education resources.

3. Managing your news and social media consumption during COVID 19

A one-page resource, produced by the AIS, that provides athletes with some tips to manage their news and social media consumption, while staying informed and connected.

4. Communication for Leadership

A program to develop effective communication skills for public speaking and media interviews.

5. Storytelling & Effective Communication Skills

An introductory program that aims to create confidence and capability in creating and delivering engaging and powerful presentations.

6. Digital Wellbeing [including cyber abuse module]

Designed to help athletes understand the purpose and impact of their online presence, as well as develop positive habits with their online interaction and activity.

7. GROW

A program comprised of four modules. Grow supports athletes to build resilience through a variety of personal skills and reflection activities. Grow also helps athletes understand the value of self-care strategies and how to effectively use their personal support network to promote wellbeing.

8. PERSONAL BRAND

Personal Brand program consists of four modules which help athletes understand and develop their personal brand in order to communicate effectively, create purposeful content and recognise potential partnership opportunities.

For more information about any of the above resources and/or registration advice, contact your AW&E National Manager who can liaise directly with the AIS Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement team.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of the AIS Social Media Principles & Best Practice Guidelines has been led by the AIS and in consultation with leading experts in the areas of social media strategy, legal frameworks, cyber-attack, trolling, digital wellbeing and education. The AIS sought guidance from resources developed by the e-Safety Commissioner, consulted with Play by the Rules and researched a number of professional leagues social media policies.



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