



Social Media Policy

Member, Athlete, Parent, Coach and Volunteer Guidelines

This policy explains how Wide Bay Sports Academy members and stakeholders must use social media in a safe, respectful and legally aware way. It reflects Australia's Social Media Minimum Age framework, which requires age-restricted social media platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from creating or keeping accounts.

Do not require, encourage, tag, direct-message or pressure an athlete under 16 to use an age-restricted social media account for WBSA activities. Communication with junior athletes should occur through approved WBSA channels and, wherever practical, through parents/guardians.

1. Purpose

This policy supports a safe, respectful and responsible online culture for Wide Bay Sports Academy (WBSA). It helps members enjoy the benefits of online communication while protecting athletes, families, staff, volunteers, partners and the Academy's reputation.

2. Who this policy applies to

- Athletes, parents/guardians, coaches, managers, officials, volunteers, contractors, employees, committee members and board members.
- Anyone posting about WBSA programs, athletes, events, partners, sponsors, facilities or staff.
- Anyone authorised to administer or contribute to official WBSA social media accounts.

3. Platforms covered

This policy covers social networking sites, video and photo sharing apps, messaging apps, livestreaming, review sites, blogs, forums, group chats and any online technology that allows users to create, post, share or comment on content. Examples include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, X, Threads, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Messenger and similar platforms.

4. Australian Social Media Minimum Age requirements

Australia's Social Media Minimum Age framework is now in effect. Age-restricted platforms are required to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from creating or keeping accounts. The legal obligation sits primarily with platforms; however, WBSA will align its member conduct, communications and child-safety expectations with the intent of the law.

WBSA position	Practical requirement
Under-16 athletes	Must not be required or encouraged to create, keep or use an age-restricted social media account for WBSA participation.
Communication	Program information should be sent through parent/guardian email, approved booking/communication systems, official website updates, or other age-appropriate channels.
Direct messages	Coaches, staff and volunteers must not use private social media DMs as the primary communication method with junior athletes. Use parent/guardian-inclusive channels wherever practical.
Photos and tagging	Do not tag minors, publish identifying details, or post images of athletes without appropriate WBSA media consent and child-safety consideration.

5. Official WBSA social media use

- Only authorised people may post, comment or respond on behalf of WBSA.
- Official accounts must reflect WBSA values: respectful, inclusive, safe, professional and athlete-centred.
- Do not publish confidential information, injury details, personal contact details, selection discussions, internal matters, financial information or sensitive child-safety information.
- If a mistake is made, notify the WBSA Executive Officer or authorised administrator promptly so it can be corrected or removed.

6. Member conduct online

When posting or commenting about WBSA, members must use common sense and remember that online content can be public, permanent, searchable and shareable.

- Be respectful to athletes, coaches, officials, schools, clubs, parents, sponsors, partners and opposing organisations.
- Do not post bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexualised content, offensive language, threats, defamatory comments or material that may bring WBSA into disrepute.
- Do not misrepresent yourself as speaking for WBSA unless authorised.
- Do not use WBSA logos, images, slogans or branding on personal accounts without approval.
- Respect copyright. Use original content, short attributed excerpts or links rather than copying someone else's work.

7. Photos, videos and athlete information

- Parent/guardian consent is required before publishing identifiable images or information about minors.
- Avoid posting athlete surnames, school details, locations, training times, injury information or other details that may identify or expose a child to risk.
- Do not post accident, incident, medical, disciplinary or controversial content.
- If an athlete, parent/guardian or WBSA requests that content be removed, comply promptly where it is reasonable and safe to do so.

8. Group chats and messaging

- Group chats must remain relevant to WBSA activities and be respectful at all times.
- Where junior athletes are involved, include a parent/guardian or use WBSA-approved systems where practical.
- Do not send private, secretive, late-night, inappropriate or personal messages to junior athletes.
- Report concerning messages, bullying, grooming behaviour, threats, harassment or unsafe content immediately.

9. Reporting a concern or breach

Report inappropriate or unlawful online content relating to WBSA, its members, athletes, staff, volunteers, partners or sponsors to the WBSA Executive Officer, Chairperson or authorised safeguarding contact as soon as possible. Where required, WBSA may refer matters to police, eSafety, a sporting body, school, child-safety authority or relevant platform.

10. Breaches and consequences

Breaches may result in content removal requests, education, warnings, restricted access to WBSA activities, suspension, removal from a program, termination of employment/engagement, referral to a relevant sport body, or referral to authorities. Outcomes will depend on the nature, seriousness and risk of the conduct.

11. Review

This policy should be reviewed at least annually, or earlier if laws, eSafety guidance, platform requirements, child-safety obligations or WBSA operating practices change.

Reference note

This policy has been prepared with reference to the existing WBSA Social Media Policy and current Australian Government / eSafety information about the Social Media Minimum Age framework. It is a practical member policy and is not a substitute for legal advice.