

AEF - Social Media Policy

Purpose

The AEF recognizes that social media is a valuable tool for communication, connection, and promotion of equestrian activity in Alberta. This policy establishes expectations to ensure online activity reflects professionalism, respect, and integrity, while protecting the reputation of AEF, its members, and the equestrian community.

Application

This policy applies to:

- All AEF staff, board members, and general members.
- Both professional and personal use of social media where posts or interactions may reasonably be connected to AEF or the equestrian community.
- While AEF does not monitor or manage members' personal accounts, members remain responsible for ensuring their online activity aligns with AEF's Code of Conduct and Ethics, Safe Sport framework, and Discipline and Complaints Policy.

Standards of Conduct

Prohibited behaviours include:

1. Posting disrespectful, hateful, discriminatory, or offensive content.
2. Sharing harmful, misleading, or embarrassing media.
3. Creating or contributing to online spaces that disparage AEF, its members, staff, board, partners, or the equestrian community.
4. Cyber-bullying, harassment, threats, impersonation, or vexatious behaviour.
5. Sharing confidential or proprietary AEF information.
6. Posting images or personal data of others (especially minors) without consent.

Roles and Responsibilities

AEF Staff – Professional Role Online

- Use social media to positively promote AEF's mission, values, and programs.
- Share accurate, timely, and respectful content on official AEF accounts.
- Maintain professionalism and alignment with organizational messaging.
- Refer disputes or negative posts to the Executive Director

Staff and Board – Personal Role Online

- Recognize that personal posts may reflect on AEF.

- Clearly distinguish personal opinions from AEF's official positions (e.g., "opinions are my own").
- Avoid content that could harm AEF's reputation, relationships, or credibility.
- Model respectful behaviour when interacting with colleagues, members, athletes, officials, and stakeholders.
- Do not pressure athletes, members, or stakeholders to follow personal accounts.

Board of Directors – Governance Role

- The Board provides governance and strategic oversight of AEF, not operational management of communications.
- Official AEF social media is managed by staff in alignment with approved strategies and policies.
- Board members are encouraged to support AEF's online presence positively by sharing and celebrating posts.
- When businesses, clubs, individuals or organizations are featured on AEF social media, they must be recognized AEF Members or partners.

Interactions with Members and Athletes

- Uphold Safe Sport standards in all online interactions.
- Avoid private, one-on-one communication with minor athletes; include parents/guardians when necessary.
- Respect privacy and personal boundaries in all online exchanges.

AEF Responsibilities

AEF will:

- Monitor and manage official accounts for professionalism and compliance.
- Provide training and resources on safe social media use.
- Address complaints through the Discipline and Complaints Policy.
- Support staff, board, and members' right to personal expression, provided it does not conflict with AEF values or policies.

Reporting and Accountability

- Concerns about inappropriate social media activity (by members, staff, or board) must be reported in writing to the Executive Director.
- Removing or editing content after posting does not remove accountability.

- Violations may result in corrective or disciplinary action, including suspension or termination of membership.

Best Practice Guidelines

- Be respectful, inclusive, and professional in all posts.
- Use professional language; avoid ambiguity or sarcasm that could be misinterpreted.
- Regularly review privacy settings on personal accounts.
- Seek consent before posting about others, especially minors.
- Avoid posting unsafe, reckless, or misleading information.
- Remember that online activity is often permanent and public.
- Celebrate equestrian activity and AEF's positive role in Alberta.

Closing Statement

All AEF members, staff, and board share responsibility to uphold integrity, inclusivity, and professionalism in online spaces. By modelling positive and respectful behaviour, we strengthen AEF's reputation, foster trust, and uphold the values of safety, community, and care for horses and people that define our work.