

Australian Federation of Sleddog Sports
Policy Statement - Social Media Code of Conduct

Background

Social media has become an integral part of day-to-day communication for individuals as well as businesses.

Social media is defined as the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Social media may include but is not limited to magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, social networks e.g. Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. Technologies include blogging, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-posting, music-sharing, crowdsourcing and voice over IP.

Its ability to capture community sentiment and shape opinions is driven by its dynamic and immediate nature.

What constitutes ethical behaviour can be somewhat ambiguous when engaging in social forums, however Australian Federation of Sleddog Sports (AFSS) believes all its members, affiliated clubs and affiliated club members should uphold the highest ethical standards displaying respect, honesty and integrity.

This Social Media Code of Conduct aims to provide guidelines on best practice behaviour when using social media and what to do if a member is subjected to or witnesses online behaviour that breaches these guidelines.

Guidelines

- Abide by AFSS Constitution, Rules and Regulations.
- Be reasonable and respectful – do not post malicious, misleading or unfair content in relation to AFSS, AFSS members, AFSS affiliate clubs, AFSS Affiliate Club members, members of other affiliated bodies, other sled dog clubs, people associated with any of the forgoing or members' dogs.
- Be accurate – any comment posted which could be potentially defamatory should be able to be factually substantiated.
- Do not act in a manner that is prejudicial to the interests of AFSS, AFSS affiliated clubs or the sled dog community at large.
- Act in a manner that is consistent with good community expectations, promoting a safe environment that is free from bullying or harassment.
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information.
- Identify and manage potential conflicts of interest.
- All statements, opinions, images or representations expressed or published by individual members of any kind or nature are their own and their responsibility. The Australian Federation of Sleddog Sports and all affiliated clubs are not liable for any such conduct.

The same values that apply in the real world also apply in the virtual world and in social media exchanges.

Despite the seemingly unregulated nature of social media, the law is applicable to online content. Postings online (and similarly in email or text messages) are subject to the law in areas such as defamation, racial discrimination, intimidation, bullying including cyber bullying and breaches of confidentiality.

Breach of the Social Media Code of Conduct

AFSS continually monitors activity in relation to the organisation and its members.

AFSS takes compliance with this policy seriously. In the event of a Breach of the AFSS Social Media Code of Conduct, the AFSS Constitution, Rules, Regulations or Codes a disciplinary process may be initiated by AFSS. Where a breach of these codes is established, either formal warnings or other penalties may apply or if it is of a serious nature the offending member/s may be reported to other lawful authorities such as local law enforcement.

Reporting a Breach of the Social Media Code of Conduct

In the event a member is subjected to or witnesses online behaviour they believe may be a breach the AFSS Social Media Code of Conduct it should be reported immediately to an AFSS Committee member including, if possible, screen shots and/or screen recordings of the relevant online content.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. The AFSS Committee reserves the right to refuse to investigate a complaint if it considers the complaint to be trivial or vexatious in nature.
2. The AFSS Committee may be unable to investigate a complaint that is unsubstantiated or the reasonable accuracy of details of the complaint cannot be verified.

Consultation or advice

This policy has been developed to provide guidance for AFSS members, affiliated clubs, affiliated club members and other parties associated with AFSS.

Any members who are unsure of their rights, liabilities or actions online or need clarification should contact a member of the current AFSS committee.