



1. Background and Applicability

1.1. Those connected to the Alberta Cheerleading Association (ACA) have a responsibility to maintain a positive image of the ACA and the sport of cheerleading. This policy applies to all members of ACA (regardless of membership category), employees, volunteers, contractors, officials, and agents of ACA.

1.2. This policy applies to any posts, photographs, video, status updates and any other item that can be published on social media which mentions or directs attention to the ACA, ACA members, staff, Directors, coaches, officials, athletes, schools, clubs, athletes' family members and supporters.

1.3. The ACA recognizes and appreciates the value of social media and the importance of social networking to all of its stakeholders. The ACA also respects the right of all school and club participants, and ACA personnel to express their views publicly. At the same time, we must be aware of the dangers that social media and networking can present.

1.4. The purpose of this policy is to educate the cheerleading community on the risks of social media and to ensure all ACA members, staff, Directors, coaches, officials, athletes, schools, clubs, athletes' family members and supporters are aware that conduct deemed to be inappropriate may be subject to disciplinary action by the ACA.

2. Social Media Guidelines

2.1. The ACA holds the entire cheerleading community who participates in social media and networking to the same standards as it does for all other forms of media including radio, television, and print.

2.2. Disparaging comments, remarks of an inappropriate nature, or comments that could be perceived as such about the ACA, members, staff, Directors, coaches, officials, athletes, schools, clubs, athletes' family members or supporters will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.

2.3. It should be recognized that social media comments are on the record and instantly published and available to the public and media. Everyone including ACA members, schools, clubs, athletes, corporate partners, and the media can review social media communications. You should conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times.

2.4. Refrain from divulging confidential information of a personal, school, club or ACA related nature. Avoid revealing business or strategy that could provide another school, club or individual a competitive advantage. Furthermore, do not discuss injury information about any athlete. Only divulge information that is considered public.

2.5. Use your best judgment at all times – pause before posting. Once your comments are posted they cannot be retracted. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for your comments as they are published for the public record.

2.6. If requested to participate in an online network, as a direct result of your affiliation with or participation in the ACA then we recommend that you seek approval from your school, club or the Association.

2.7. If posting or responding to a comment regarding the ACA, there is a big difference in speaking “on behalf of the ACA” and speaking “about”. It is important that all members are aware of the implications of engaging in forms of social media and on-line conversations that reference the ACA and/or the members’ relationship with the ACA and its brand/image. Never speak “on behalf of the ACA” unless you are granted express permission to do so by the ACA.

3. Social Media Violations

3.1. The following are examples of conduct through social media and networking mediums that are considered violations of the ACA Social Media Policy and may be subject to disciplinary action by the ACA.

3.1.1. Any statement deemed to be publicly critical or detrimental to the welfare of a member organization, the Association or an individual.

3.1.2. Divulging confidential information that may include, but is not limited to the following: athlete injuries; athlete movement; cheerleading strategies; or any other matter of a sensitive nature to a member, the Association or an individual.

3.1.3. Negative or derogatory comments about any of the ACA Board, staff, programs, stakeholders, athletes, or any member of the ACA.

3.1.4. Any form of bullying, harassment or threats against any ACA Director, staff, stakeholder, athlete, or any member of the ACA.

3.1.5. Photographs, video or comments promoting negative influences or criminal behavior, including but not limited to: drug use, alcohol abuse, public intoxication, hazing, sexual exploitation, etc.

3.1.6. Online activity that contradicts the current policies of the ACA or any of its members.

3.1.7. Inappropriate, derogatory, racist, or sexist comments of any kind, in keeping with ACA policies and rules on these matters.

3.1.8. Online activity that is meant to alarm other individuals or to misrepresent fact or truth.

4. Discipline

4.1. The ACA will investigate reported violation(s) of this policy. If the investigation determines that a violation has occurred, the ACA President and/or Board of Directors will impose an appropriate suspension. Any appeal of the suspension will be dealt with as set out in Association policies.



5. Summary

5.1. When using social media and networking mediums, the cheerleading community who are members of the ACA or otherwise affiliated with the ACA should assume at all times they are representing the ACA and its member school or club and always conduct themselves in accordance with the ACA's values.

5.2. Should the identity or image of any member of the ACA be used in Social Media and Networking without the Individual, Club, School or Association authorization, this is considered to be identity theft. Please notify the ACA office immediately.

6. Enforcement

6.1. Failure to adhere to this Policy may permit discipline in accordance with the Association's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.