



## HSA TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT: SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY



### PURPOSE

**HSA** is aware that our members utilize social media as a primary means of communicating with peers and connecting with members and those outside of our team. **HSA** views social media as an important tool for communicating our team's successes and opportunities for athletic and individual development. We value good sportsmanship as a means to empower our members. We strive for a culture in which our members strengthen each other through positive interaction and working toward common goals. We believe that our program is worthy of praise, and we expect our members to promote and exemplify **HSA** values and standards.

### APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to anyone affiliated with **HSA**, including coaches, officials, volunteers, swimmers and parents. Social media refers to all social networking sites, including but not limited to: personal blogs, X (Formerly Twitter), Facebook, YouTube, SnapChat, Instagram, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Tumblr and Flickr. It also encompasses group messaging, texting or emailing. Any personal social media accounts created or administrated by **HSA** members that can be reasonably interpreted as being representative of **HSA** in any way\* are subject to the contents of this policy.

**Your social media content can and will be reviewed by athletic recruiters, potential higher education institutions and potential employers.**

\*(using group or team names, nicknames or abbreviations, acronyms or symbolic representation of the team or its assets or employees)

### CYBERBULLYING & CYBERSTALKING

Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

**CYBERBULLYING** involves the use of electronic information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, harassing, intimidating and hostile behavior by an individual or group through personal attacks or other means that harms others, whether intentional or not.

**CYBERSTALKING:** Cyberstalking involves the use of electronic information and communication technologies to communicate words, images, or language directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person. Harassing, intimidating, and hostile mean any electronic communication that is perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic including race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability or disability or any other characteristic related to athletic performance that a reasonable person should know under the circumstances:

1. will have the effect of harming another athlete or has the effect of substantially interfering with another athlete's performance or opportunities or;
2. has the effect of having a negative impact on another athlete's emotional or psychological well-being or;

3. has the effect of insulting or demeaning another athlete to cause disruption in or substantial interference with practice, any swim meet, or any other **HSA** related activity or;
4. has the effect of creating a hostile environment for any athlete at any USA Swimming activity or swim meet or;
5. has the effect of substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any **HSA** practice, workout, or other events or swim meets of any other club or high school.

#### **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**

- Members are expected to show respect to others, including members of **HSA** and the wider community.
- Members are expected to give respect to the reputation and good name of **HSA**.
- When using social media, members are expected to refrain from harmful actions:
  - Do not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten others, even jokingly.
  - Do not make defamatory comments.
  - Do not impersonate or falsely represent another person.
  - Do not use offensive, vulgar, profane or threatening language.
  - Do not post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic or promotes violent or illicit behavior.
  - Do not post content that can be interpreted as racist, biased, or misleading.
  - Do not post content that would embarrass others.
  - Do not post content that harms the reputation and good standing of **HSA** or those within it.
  - Do not post photos, videos and comments that are sexual in nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
  - Do not post photos, videos, comments or images showing the personal use of alcohol, drugs and/or tobacco.
  - Do not post anything depicting or encouraging unacceptable behaviors such as violent or illegal activities (for example, sexual harassment, cutting or self-harm, vandalism, underage drinking or illegal drug use).
- When using social media, members are expected to ensure the following best practices:
  - **Respect the confidentiality of others.** Never post personal information about anyone else that could leave another person vulnerable to online abuse, bullying, identity theft or exposure to inappropriate content.
  - **Be positive and always take the higher road.** When disagreeing with others' opinions remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that is becoming antagonistic, ask **HSA** Coaches or club Directors for advice on how to disengage from the dialogue in a polite and respectful manner that reflects well on the team and does not create undue liability.
  - **Encourage others to engage in positive interactions on social media.**

Commented [1]: should we include the word illegal here. Otherwise a coach or official that happens to post a benign picture with alcohol to their social media could be deemed as violating the policy

### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS**

In the event that cyberbullying or cyberstalking occurs, the incident will be addressed promptly and seriously. Any athlete who is experiencing or aware of such behavior is encouraged to speak with their parent/guardian(s), a trusted adult, their coach or a member of **HSA's** Board of Directors. When reporting the incident, the athlete should provide any relevant electronic communications, such as messages, screenshots, or social media posts, that constitute evidence of the cyberbullying or cyberstalking. Preserving this evidence is essential to support a thorough and effective investigation.

Although there is no formal deadline for reporting incidents, prompt reporting enables **HSA** to take immediate action to resolve the issue and prevent further harm. Upon receiving a report, the Head Coach will initiate an investigation. If the Head Coach is personally involved in the incident, the investigation will instead be conducted by an Officer of the Board of Directors.

### **GUIDELINES**

**For Coaches and Volunteers aged 18-24:** **HSA** recognizes that many young coaches will have been members of the club before becoming a coach and will have been friends with their fellow members, some of whom will be younger swimmer members. It is therefore possible that they will have contact details for those members and will be friends with them on social networking sites. In these circumstances **HSA** accepts that it would be inappropriate to require such friends to be removed from their social media contact lists. The coach is, however, advised to inform the Directors and/or Supervisory Coaches of any friends on their networking sites that they may also coach and to follow **HSA's** Electronic Communication Policy. Any Coaches under the age of 18 shall follow the guidelines applicable to Swimmers Under 18.

**For Swimmers Under 18:** Do not ask your coach to be your friend on any social networking site. They will refuse, as to accept would be a breach of good practice. Use the internet responsibly and don't place yourself at risk. Never post or give out personal information via social media. Always remember that any communications, comments, videos or photos that are posted on social media may be shared or seen by more people than intended. Never share any photos of yourself, family or friends that you would be embarrassed to have your family see. Coaches are obliged to share with authorities any communication that involves a threat to self or others. On your personal accounts, never post content that would misrepresent **HSA** in a derogatory manner. Even when on your own time, you are a representative of **HSA** and people may interpret your online postings or social media interactions as though they were official **HSA** statements or supported by the team

### **DISCIPLINE**

Breach of this policy by an individual or group will be reviewed by the Head Coach and or an Officer of the Board of Directors and dealt with according to the severity of the violation. The results of the investigation may include, but are not limited to, immediate temporary suspension from the Club or immediate permanent expulsion from the Club. **HSA** takes cyberbullying and cyberstalking seriously. This type of bullying and stalking is counterproductive to the team atmosphere and team spirit **HSA** wants to maintain and foster on a daily basis.



As a member of **HSA**, I understand the importance of ensuring and maintaining a safe environment for my team. If I choose to participate in any electronic communications (e.g., texting, e-mail), interact on a social networking site(s), or use social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) I must avoid inappropriate and offensive behaviors. If my social media profile and its contents or other electronic communications are found to be inappropriate in accordance with the behaviors listed below, I understand that I will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with **HSA** Code of Conduct. I also understand that it is essential to provide the coaching staff with respect and the authority to coach the team. I agree with the following statements:

- ☐ I will refrain from any use of social media that would detract from a positive image of **HSA** or be detrimental to a positive team environment.
- ☐ I understand the Policy and Guidelines as stated above and I agree to follow them.

I understand the above expectations and that my failure to adhere to them may result in disciplinary action.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Athlete Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date