



The Greatest Game of All

QRL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



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Policy overview and purpose

Social media is changing the way we communicate.

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This policy has been developed to inform our community about using social media so people feel enabled to participate, while being mindful of their responsibilities and obligations. This policy provides practical guidance allowing all parties to benefit from the use of social media, while minimising potential risks and protecting those involved.

This policy assists to establish a culture of openness, trust and integrity in all online activities.

This policy should be made available to all those engaging with a club or league. It also includes details of breaches of the policy.

In circumstances where guidance about social media issues has not been given in this policy, we suggest you use common sense or seek out advice from your Division Manager.

Underlying principles

This policy complements the Queensland Rugby League core values:

- Courage
- Inclusiveness
- Excellence
- Teamwork

Coverage

This policy applies to all persons who are involved with the activities of Rugby League clubs and competitions as defined in the **NRL Member Protection Policy**.



Scope

Social media refers to any online tools or functions that allow people to communicate and/or share content via the internet.

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This social media policy applies to platforms including, but not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Yammer, etc.)
- Video and photo sharing websites or apps (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr, Vine, etc.)
- Blogs and micro-blogging platforms (e.g. Tumblr, WordPress, Blogger, etc.)
- Review sites (e.g. Yelp, Urban Spoon, etc.)
- Live broadcasting apps (e.g. Periscope, Meerkat, Facebook Mentions, etc.)
- Podcasting (e.g. iTunes, Stitcher, Sound cloud, etc.)
- Geo-spatial tagging (e.g. Foursquare, etc.)
- Online enciclopedias (e.g. Wikipedia, etc.)
- Instant messaging (e.g. SMS, Skype, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc.)
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. World of Warcraft, Second life, Xbox Live, etc.)
- Online voting or polls
- Public and private online forums and discussion boards
- Any other online technologies that allow individual users to upload and share content.

This policy is applicable when using social media as:

1. An officially designated individual representing a club or league on social media; and
2. If you are posting content on social media in relation to a club or league that might affect their business, products, services, events, sponsors, members, or reputation.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media where it is not related to or there is no reference to a Rugby League competition or club or its business, competitions, teams, participants, products, services, events, sponsors, members, or reputation.



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Policy

You must adhere to the following policy when using social media related to Rugby League, its business, products, competitions, teams, participants, services, events, sponsors, members, or reputation.

Use common sense

Whenever you are unsure as to whether the content you wish to share is appropriate, seek advice from others before doing so or refrain from sharing the content to be on the safe side.

When using social media, the lines between public and private, personal and professional, may be blurred. Remember, you are an ambassador for the game.

Protecting your privacy

Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy.

When posting content online there is potential for that content to become publicly available through a variety of means, even if it was intended to be shared privately. Therefore, you should refrain from posting any content online that you would not be happy for anyone to see, even if you feel confident that an individual would never see it.

Where possible, privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to limit access. You should also be cautious about disclosing your personal details.

Honesty

Your honesty—or dishonesty—may be quickly noticed in the social media environment. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue or misleading. If you are unsure, check the source and the facts before uploading or posting anything. It is recommended to err on the side of caution – if in doubt, do not post or upload.

Do not post anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. Be transparent and honest. Use your real name, be clear about who you are and identify any affiliations you have.

If you have a personal stake in something you are discussing, point it out. If you make an endorsement or recommendation about something you are affiliated with, or have a close relationship with, you must disclose that affiliation.



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The web is not anonymous. You should assume that all information posted online can be traced back to you. You are accountable for your actions both on and offline, including the information you post via your personal social media accounts.

Use of disclaimers

Wherever practical, include a prominent disclaimer stating who you work for or are affiliated with (e.g. member of club) and that anything you publish is your opinion and that you are not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble — it may not have legal effect.

Reasonable use

If you are an employee of the game, you must ensure that your personal use of social media does not interfere with your work commitments or productivity.

Respect confidentiality and sensitivity

When using social media, you must maintain the privacy of the club or league's confidential information. This includes information that is not publicly accessible, widely known, or not expected to be shared outside of the organisation.

Remember, if you are online, you are on the record—much of the content posted online is public and searchable.

Within the scope of your authorisation by the club or league, it is perfectly acceptable to talk about the club or league and have a dialogue with the community, but it is not okay to publish confidential information of the club or league. Confidential information includes things such as details about litigation, unreleased product information and unpublished details about team selections, coaching practices, financial information etc.

When using social media, you should be considerate to others and should not post information when you have been asked not to, or where consent has not been sought and given. You must also remove information about another person if that person asks you to do so.

Permission should always be sought if the use or publication of information is not incidental, but directly related to an individual. This is particularly relevant to publishing any information regarding minors. In such circumstances, parental or guardian consent is mandatory.



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Gaining permission when publishing a person's identifiable image

You must obtain express permission from an individual to use a direct, clearly identifiable image of that person.

You should also refrain from posting any information or photos of a sensitive nature. This could include accidents, incidents, or controversial behaviour.

In every instance, you need to have consent of the owner of copyright in the image.

Complying with applicable laws

Do not post or link to content that contains illegal or indecent content, including defamatory, vilifying or misleading and deceptive content.

Abiding by copyright laws

It is critical that you comply with the laws governing copyright in relation to material owned by others.

You should never quote or use more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and you should always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying

The public in general, and your club or league members, reflect a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view.

You must not post any material that is offensive, harassing, discriminatory, embarrassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, hateful, racist, sexist, or otherwise inappropriate.

When using social media, you may also be bound by the games values and Code of Conduct as well as Anti-Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policies as defined in the **NRL Member Protection Policy**.

Avoiding controversial issues

Within the scope of your authorisation by the club or league, if you see misrepresentations made in the media, you may point that out to the relevant authority in your club or league. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is based on fact and does not discredit or belittle that party.



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Dealing with mistakes

If your club or league makes an error while posting on social media, be up front about the mistake and address it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses your club or league of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), address it promptly and appropriately and if necessary, seek legal advice.

Conscientious behaviour and awareness of the consequences

Keep in mind that what you write is your responsibility, and failure to abide by this policy could put your membership or position within a club or league at risk.

You should always follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites in which you participate.

Branding and intellectual property of the game

You must not use any of the club, league or game's intellectual property or imagery on your personal social media without prior approval.

Intellectual property includes but is not limited to:

- trademarks
- logos
- slogans
- imagery which has been posted on official social media sites or website.

You must not create either an official or unofficial presence using the organisation's trademarks or name without prior approval.

You must not imply that you are authorised to speak on behalf of the club, league or game unless you have been given official authorisation to do so.

Where permission has been granted to create, or administer an official social media presence for the club or league, you must adhere to the relevant Branding guidelines.



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Policy breaches

Breaches of this policy are taken seriously by the QRL and will be dealt with in accordance with the processes detailed in QRL Rules Part 5.5 Disciplinary Tribunals.

Breaches of this policy include but are not limited to:

- Using names, motto's, crests and/or logo in a way that would result in a negative impact for the organisation, clubs, and/or its members.
- Posting or sharing any content that is abusive, harassing, threatening, demeaning, defamatory or libellous.
- Posting or sharing any content that includes insulting, obscene, offensive, provocative or hateful language.
- Posting or sharing any content, which if said in person during the playing of the game would result in a breach of the rules of the game.
- Posting or sharing any content in breach of the games code of conduct or members' protection policy.
- Posting or sharing any content that is a breach of any state or Commonwealth law.
- Posting or sharing any material to our social media channels that infringes the intellectual property rights of others.
- Posting or sharing material that brings, or risks bringing Rugby League, its affiliates, its sport, its officials, members or sponsors into disrepute. In this context, bringing a person or organisation into disrepute is to lower the reputation of that person or organisation in the eyes of the ordinary members of the public.