



## **VFA Social Media Policy**

### **Introduction**

The VFA Social Media and Communication Policy has been developed to serve the best interests of its members. Social networking through the use of internet-based and other electronic social media tools are integrated into everyday life. The VFA recognises and embraces the use of the internet and social media to improve and increase the flow of information, shaping public thinking about our organisation, members and sponsors.

The VFA is committed to supporting your right to interact knowledgeably and socially through electronic communication, blogging, wikis and via social media.

This policy provides guidelines relating to opening up a respectful and knowledgeable interaction with people on the internet. It also seeks to protect the privacy, confidentiality and interests of current and potential VFA members.

### **Philosophy**

One of the main strategic aims of the VFA is to build and expand the awareness of the VFA brand in the wider community and develop initiatives to maximise the commercial value of the VFA. This is done, in part, by the various channels of social media available to us.

### **Definition**

Social media is defined in this policy as interactive platforms via which individuals and communities create and share user-generated content.

Social media technologies take on different forms; including websites, internet forums, web blogs, social blogs, wikis, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking.

### **Stakeholders**

This policy applies to the following persons affiliated with the VFA, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary position:

- VFA Board members
- VFA employees and volunteers
- Players
- Coaches and Club Administrators
- Umpires
- State team officials and athletes
- Support personnel

(referred to within this policy as ‘VFA Users’)

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the VAFA Social Media and Communication Policy is to provide VAFA Users with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of internet communication and social media.

Players, coaches, administrators and supporters are on social media and the VAFA embrace this medium as a means of communicating and interacting with the competition's participants. These guidelines will help VAFA Users make appropriate decisions about the use of electronic communication and social media tools for both professional and personal use.

VAFA employees and officials are encouraged to use social media to help promote the league, however, official communications on league matters should come from one authorised VAFA source. Examples of official communications include information those regarding tribunal matters, press releases and player transfers, as well as comment on external press addressing VAFA matters.

The VAFA recommends clubs also consider procedures to ensure their official messages are also provided through an authorised club source.

## **Guidelines**

The VAFA embraces the value of using electronic communication tools and social media to build more meaningful relationships with its members. If you are a person affiliated with the VAFA using SMS, emails, adding news to the VAFA website, social media, or if you are discussing the VAFA or VAFA business-related issues in your personal use of social media platforms, you are required to follow this policy.

Electronic communication and social media tools include:

- SMS and emails
- Websites
- Social networking sites such as Facebook, Linked In
- Video and photo sharing websites such as Flickr, You Tube, Multiply
- Micro-blogging sites such as Twitter
- Weblogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications
- Forums and discussion boards
- Online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia
- Any other web sites.

VAFA Users are personally responsible for the content of their posts online.

At a minimum, the policy expects VAFA Users to respect differences, appreciate the diversity of opinions and speak or conduct themselves in a professional manner when using social media. They have a responsibility to ensure that:

- Any information about the VAFA is informed and factually accurate
- If you notice inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to the VAFA that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, you should report this the VAFA
- If you are offering your personal perspective on the VAFA, be mindful that your commentary and opinion does not cause damage to the VAFA or its interests

- Internet postings should not include the VAFA logos unless permission is asked for and granted

In conducting social media activities, VAFA Users should:

- **Be aware** - Always remember that your social media usage is publicly visible. Consider what you publish and with whom you share information and be alert for potential adverse inferences which may be drawn from content you publish.
- **Be polite** – VAFA prohibits conduct on social media which is obscene, threatening, discriminatory, defamatory, insulting to another party or any conduct that would not otherwise be acceptable in the general workplace or sporting field.
- **Respect the law** – This includes the laws governing:
  - defamation, discrimination, harassment and copyright, and you should attribute work to the original author or source, where possible; and
  - privacy, meaning you must not disclose other people’s personal information in conducting electronic communications and social media activities.
- **Comply with VAFA’s policies** – when publishing or sending materials, which includes principles outlined in the Privacy Policy, and the Member Protection Policy

**VAFA Users are *encouraged* to**

- seek permission before identifying other people, including staff members
- have your Social Networking profiles are set to private
- always log out of social media on your smart phones, laptop, public computer
- only accept Social Networking friends request from people you know and trust
- not start or join any offensive or controversial social media group.

## **Complaints**

The VAFA aims to provide an easy to use, confidential and trustworthy procedure for complaints based on the principles of natural justice. Any person may report a complaint about a person/s or organisation bound by this policy if they reasonably believe that a person/s or a sporting organisation has breached this policy.

A complaint should be reported to the VAFA in writing to the Media and Communications Coordinator Nick Armistead by email at [nick@vafa.com.au](mailto:nick@vafa.com.au). A complaint may be reported as an informal or formal complaint. All complaints will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially.

## **Breaches and Consequences**

Any VAFA User who is found to have sent inappropriate electronic communication, uploaded inappropriate website content or engaged in blogs that harass, offend, intimidate or humiliate may face investigation by the VAFA. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, which will be determined at the discretion of the VAFA. In serious cases, such as members publishing false or misleading comments about another person in a public domain may result in suspension from games or official positions.

Any publication on social media that does not comply with these guidelines may be used in disciplinary proceedings.

For queries or comments please contact Nick Armistead by email at [nick@vafa.com.au](mailto:nick@vafa.com.au).