

Victorian Athletic League Social Media Policy (2022/23)

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The Victorian Athletic League Inc. (herein identified as the VAL or "the League") embraces the use of social media as a way of connecting and communicating to our members, and the wider community.

The objectives of social media are to:

- Showcase our sport to our members and the wider community;
- Showcase our event sponsors;
- Promote our events and competitors;
- Broadcast any news or major developments relating to the League;
- Highlight the success of our athletes, coaches, and volunteers;
- Acknowledge and communicate the VAL's rich history of professional running;
- Open lines of communication with stakeholders;

1.2. Scope

The following guidelines aim to ensure that participation on social media:

- Is consistent with the VAL's Constitution, Regulations and Code of Conduct;
- Is consistent with the VAL's core values: To promote professional athletics as an welcoming, enjoyable and healthy sport for people of all categories and abilities.
- Establishes a culture of respect, openness, trust, and integrity in all online activities related to the VAL;
- Provides practical guidance so all parties can benefit from the use of social media;
- Minimises potential risks and protects those involved;

When publishing content regarding the VAL and/or its members or affiliates, you must comply with this policy. This policy equally applies to any personal blogs or groups you may operate.

In circumstances where guidance about social media issues has not been given in this policy, we suggest you seek out advice from the VAL by contacting the VAL office on val@val.org.au

1.3. Policy statement and coverage

The VAL respects your right to use social media as a medium for your personal communication and self-expression. However, the VAL requires all employees, members, volunteers, and associated affiliates, to ensure that the interests of our employees, members, volunteers, and associated affiliates and that the reputation and operations of the League is protected. This also includes life members, committees and sub-committee members, patrons, coaches, athletes, officials, contractors, spectators and family members.

2. Definitions

Social media is the term used for web-based applications that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media occur in a variety of formats, including chat rooms, forums, discussion boards, online gaming platforms, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, microblogging, internet for podcasts, pictures, video, and rating and social bookmarking, other online platforms that allow individual users to upload and share content.

Examples of social media include, but are not limited to:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Forums
- Blogs
- YouTube

3. Policy Guidelines

This policy is applicable when using social media:

- As an officially designated individual representing the VAL on social media who has undertaken and successfully completed the eSafety course provided by the Australian Government; and
- If you are posting content on your personal social media accounts in relation to the VAL that might affect the reputation and image of the VAL's business, products, events, sponsors, members, or any other person detailed in paragraph 1.3. of this policy.

3.1. Management of VAL social media

The VAL office is responsible for managing all official VAL social media accounts. Only those authorised by the VAL President and/or Executive Officer, should undertake social media activity in an official capacity on behalf of the organisation. If you become aware of any negative or damaging comment made about the organisation or its members, on any social media outlet, please inform the VAL office immediately.

3.2 Use of personal social media when following or mentioning the VAL or its members

You are encouraged to use your own social media outlets to access VAL updates, news or developments. As a part of VAL's community, you are an extension of the VAL brand. To protect the reputation, interests and integrity of the VAL brand and its members, you are expected to adhere to the following guidelines when using your personal social media accounts to discuss any matter related to VAL, its members and all persons defined in paragraph 1.3:

- You should always obey the law – do not post any material that is prejudicial, defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, obscene or threatening, discloses other people's personal information intellectual property or a trademark;
- Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about other members, athletes, officials, or any person highlighted in paragraph 1.3. This may amount to cyber-bullying which could result in disciplinary action or criminal proceedings under the Criminal Code Act 1995
- Do not post any material that may bring VAL into disrepute, or otherwise embarrass the League or impinge on the integrity of its brand;
- Do not imply the VAL endorsement of personal views or imply authorisation to speak on behalf of VAL;
- Do not use the VAL's name to endorse products, causes or opinions;
- You must maintain the privacy of VAL confidential information. This includes information that is not publicly accessible, widely known, or not expected to be shared outside of the League. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, details about litigation, unreleased product information and unpublished details about our financial information and confidential Board matters.

- 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
- You must obtain prior permission from an individual to use a direct, clearly identifiable image of that person.
- It is critical that you comply with the laws governing copyright in relation to material owned by others and the VAL's own copyrights and brands. In every instance, you need to have consent of the owner of copyright in the image.
- If you are an employee of the VAL, you must ensure that your personal use of social media does not interfere with your work commitments or productivity.

3.2.1 This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media where it is not related to or there is no reference to the VAL or its business, competitions, teams, participants, products, services, events, sponsors, members, or reputation. However, any misuse of social media in a manner that does not directly refer to the VAL may still be regulated by other policies, rules or regulations of VAL.

3.2.2 Within the scope of your authorisation by the VAL, if you see misrepresentations made about the VAL in the media, notify the VAL office immediately.

4. Policy Breaches

Breaches of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Using the VAL's name, motto, crest 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 said in person during the conduct of the sport would result in a breach of the rules of the sport;
- Posting or sharing any content in breach of VAL's Regulations and policies;
- 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 VAL, 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 the public;

5. Procedure for resolution of a breach to this policy

5.1. The VAL office will formally email you regarding a breach to this policy .

5.2. You will be contacted via telephone by the VAL office to discuss the breach of this policy, and asked to remove any material relating to the breach.

5.3. If the matter is not resolved, the matter will be elevated to the VAL Board for further consideration, and where necessary, disciplinary action taken at the discretion of the Disciplinary Committee under the rules of the VAL Constitution.

6. Consequences of this policy

The VAL may request that you delete any information contained on any social media platform that is in breach of this policy. A breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, at the discretion of the VAL Board as per the VAL's constitution and Regulations.

Employees or volunteers with Service Agreements to the VAL, who breach this policy may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or cancellation of volunteer agreement, in accordance with the VAL's constitution, Regulations or any other relevant policy.

7. Policy Review

This policy will be annually reviewed by the VAL Board to ensure continued effectiveness and improvement. As social media is a fast-developing means of communication, any suggestions that may improve these guidelines are welcomed and encouraged.

8. Related policies and applicable law

8.1 Internal

- Victorian Athletic League Constitution
- Victorian Athletic League Regulations and Handicap Regulations
- Victorian Athletic League's Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- Victorian Athletic League's Volunteer Service Agreement contracts
- Victorian Athletic League's Child Protection Policy
- Victorian Athletic League's Member Protection Policy
- Victorian Athletic League's Photography Policy

9.2 External

Any bullying, harassment, victimisation, discrimination or defamation that has taken place via social media may be affected by the following legislation:


- Criminal Code Act 1995 (Commonwealth);
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth);
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth);
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Commonwealth);
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth);
- Defamation Act, 2005 (VIC)

Document History:

DATE	VERSION #	ACTION TAKEN / UPDATED
SEPTMEBER 2022	1.0	New document.

 **Phone**
03 4239 0211

 **Email**
VAL@VAL.ORG.AU

 LEVEL 1, 31 AUGHTIE DRIVE,
ALBERT PARK, VICTORIA 3206