



SWPSA DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Schools Water Polo South Africa

Effective June 2026

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Promote safe, respectful and professional digital communication;
- Protect the welfare and privacy of participants, particularly minors;
- Establish standards for social media and online conduct;
- Safeguard the reputation and integrity of SWPSA and school water polo;
- Provide guidance for the responsible use of digital platforms and technology.

This Policy forms part of the SWPSA governance framework and must be read together with:

- The SWPSA Code of Conduct;
 - The SWPSA Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
 - The SWPSA Disciplinary Procedure;
 - The SWPSA Tour Conduct Annexure.
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2. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to:

- Players;
- Coaches;
- Managers;
- Team staff;
- Referees and officials;
- Administrators;
- Volunteers;
- Parents and guardians;



- Tour personnel;
- Any person participating in or representing SWPSA.

This Policy applies to:

- Social media platforms;
- Messaging applications;
- Email communication;
- Group chats;
- Online forums;
- Websites and digital publications;
- Video-sharing and streaming platforms;
- Any digital communication associated with SWPSA.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All digital communication connected to SWPSA must be:

- Respectful;
- Professional;
- Safe;
- Honest;
- Inclusive;
- Responsible;
- Appropriate for school sport environments.

Participants must recognise that:

- Online conduct may have real-world consequences;
- Private communications may become public;
- Digital content may be permanent;
- Behaviour online may impact player welfare and the reputation of SWPSA.



4. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

All participants must:

- Communicate respectfully;
- Consider the welfare of players and others before posting or sharing content;
- Use appropriate language and tone;
- Respect confidentiality and privacy;
- Follow SWPSA policies and directives;
- Avoid conduct that may bring SWPSA or school water polo into disrepute.

Participants must not:

- Engage in cyberbullying or harassment;
 - Share discriminatory, racist, sexist, abusive or offensive content;
 - Share confidential information without authorisation;
 - Post misleading or defamatory content;
 - Use digital platforms to intimidate or humiliate others.
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5. SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT

Participants using social media must:

- Conduct themselves responsibly;
- Respect teammates, opponents, referees, officials and organisers;
- Recognise that they may be viewed as representatives of SWPSA;
- Ensure content reflects the values of school sport.

Participants must not:

- Publicly attack or ridicule participants, officials or organisations;
- Share content that is discriminatory, threatening or abusive;
- Engage in online arguments or hostile exchanges;
- Post content that undermines the integrity of competitions or selection processes;
- Share inappropriate photos or videos involving minors.



6. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION WITH MINORS

6.1 Professional Communication

All communication between adults and minors must:

- Be professional and appropriate;
 - Relate to legitimate sporting or organisational matters;
 - Be transparent and accountable;
 - Respect safeguarding principles.
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6.2 Approved Communication Channels

Where reasonably possible, communication with minors should occur through:

- Team groups;
- Official communication platforms;
- School or club systems;
- Channels that include parents or guardians where appropriate.

Adults should avoid:

- Secretive communication;
 - Excessive private messaging;
 - Late-night or inappropriate communication;
 - Non-essential personal communication with minors.
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6.3 Prohibited Conduct

Adults must never:

- Send sexually suggestive or inappropriate messages;
- Request inappropriate images;
- Engage in grooming behaviour;
- Share offensive or explicit content;
- Use digital communication to manipulate or isolate minors.



7. GROUP CHATS AND TEAM COMMUNICATION

Group chats connected to SWPSA should:

- Serve a clear sporting or organisational purpose;
- Be administered responsibly;
- Maintain respectful conduct;
- Include appropriate adult oversight where minors are involved.

Group chats must not:

- Become platforms for bullying or exclusion;
- Be used to spread rumours or confidential information;
- Include inappropriate humour, language or content.

SWPSA reserves the right to intervene where group communication becomes inappropriate or harmful.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Participants must respect the confidentiality of:

- Team matters;
- Selection discussions;
- Disciplinary matters;
- Safeguarding concerns;
- Medical information;
- Internal governance discussions.

Participants may not:

- Share confidential screenshots or recordings;
- Publish private conversations without consent;
- Circulate rumours or unverified allegations.



9. PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND MEDIA CONTENT

Images and video involving players must be handled responsibly.

Participants must:

- Respect player dignity and privacy;
- Avoid inappropriate or exploitative imagery;
- Obtain consent where required;
- Follow venue and event photography rules.

Participants must not:

- Share embarrassing or degrading content;
 - Manipulate or misuse player images;
 - Share inappropriate changing-room or accommodation images;
 - Use media content to bully or harass others.
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10. OFFICIAL SWPSA COMMUNICATION

Only authorised persons may:

- Issue official SWPSA statements;
- Speak on behalf of SWPSA publicly;
- Publish official announcements or disciplinary matters.

Participants must not falsely imply that they are representing SWPSA without authorisation.

11. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Participants interacting with media must:

- Represent SWPSA professionally;
- Avoid inflammatory or controversial statements;
- Respect confidentiality obligations;
- Avoid public commentary on unresolved disputes or disciplinary matters.

Media engagement involving minors should prioritise player welfare and privacy.



12. CYBERBULLYING AND ONLINE HARASSMENT

SWPSA prohibits:

- Cyberbullying;
- Online intimidation;
- Harassment;
- Public shaming;
- Exclusionary conduct;
- Anonymous abuse.

Examples include:

- Offensive group messages;
- Humiliating posts or memes;
- Fake accounts targeting participants;
- Spreading rumours online;
- Sharing private information maliciously.

Reports of cyberbullying will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

13. DIGITAL SECURITY AND RESPONSIBLE USE

Participants are encouraged to:

- Protect passwords and accounts;
- Exercise caution when sharing personal information;
- Report suspicious or harmful online conduct;
- Use secure and appropriate digital platforms.

SWPSA may issue additional digital security guidance where required.



14. REPORTING CONCERNS

Concerns relating to:

- Online abuse;
- Inappropriate communication;
- Safeguarding concerns;
- Cyberbullying;
- Privacy breaches,
should be reported promptly to:
- SWPSA officials;
- Safeguarding representatives;
- Team management;
- Appropriate authorities where necessary.

Where minors are involved, safeguarding procedures shall apply.

15. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Breaches of this Policy may result in:

- Verbal or written warnings;
- Removal of content;
- Restriction from communication platforms;
- Suspension from activities;
- Disciplinary proceedings;
- Referral to schools or governing bodies;
- Referral to law enforcement or safeguarding authorities where applicable.

Serious or repeated breaches may result in removal from SWPSA activities.



16. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

SWPSA encourages education relating to:

- Responsible social media use;
- Online safety;
- Cyberbullying prevention;
- Digital safeguarding;
- Professional communication standards.

Education may be provided to:

- Players;
- Coaches;
- Managers;
- Parents and guardians;
- Officials and administrators.

17. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This Policy:

- Takes effect on 1 June 2026;
- Applies to all SWPSA activities and affiliated events;
- Shall be reviewed periodically by the SWPSA Executive Committee.

Approved by:

SWPSA Executive Committee

Date: 5 June 2026