



Social Media Policy

Version	Date	Author	Changes
2.0	May 2025	M Carpenter	Full Revision & Update
1.0	July 2021	M Carpenter	Initial Version
Approved: <u>Sept 2025 (MMcK)</u>			

Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the standards and expectations for the use of social media by all Rowing Ireland stakeholders, including staff, board members, athletes, volunteers, and affiliated groups. It ensures responsible use that protects the reputation of Rowing Ireland and supports its values of respect, inclusion, and professionalism.

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube
- Messaging platforms used for public communication such as WhatsApp, SMS, Discord
- Content shared via email, blogs, forums, and comments on digital media

Official Use of Rowing Ireland Social Media

Rowing Ireland maintains one verified official account per platform.

- Use of the Rowing Ireland logo or brand must be authorised in writing by the CEO.
- Only designated staff or volunteers, approved by the Communications Lead, may administer official Rowing Ireland social media channels.
- Communications from official Rowing Ireland accounts must reflect the organisation's values and tone – inclusive, respectful, and focused on promoting the sport positively.
- Official posts must use “we” rather than “I” to represent the collective voice of the organisation.

General Principles for All Stakeholders

- Be mindful that online activity, even on personal accounts, can be linked to Rowing Ireland.
- Use good judgement: “If in doubt, leave it out.”
- Never disclose confidential, non-public, or sensitive information.
- Respect privacy, copyright, and brand protection laws.
- Avoid posting content that could be interpreted as defamatory, discriminatory, or damaging to Rowing Ireland, its stakeholders, or the rowing community.

Expectations for Staff, Board Members, and Athletes

Personal Accounts:

- Avoid commenting on rowing-related controversies or decisions – these may be perceived as the official position of Rowing Ireland.
- Re-share official Rowing Ireland posts rather than creating your own interpretations.
- Do not post in a way that undermines sponsors, partners (e.g. Sport Ireland, Sport NI), or team morale.
- Always comply with Data Protection, Libel and Defamation laws – these apply to personal social media content.

Confidentiality and Security:

- Do not disclose selection decisions, internal communications, or event planning unless already public.
- Athletes must not announce selection or deselection until Rowing Ireland makes the information official.

Team Member Guidelines at Events

- Do not post tactical plans, confidential logistics, or photos of others without permission.
- Refrain from posting negative comments about:
 - HP team members
 - Competitors
 - Coaches or support staff
 - Event organisers or sponsors
- Maintain professionalism when wearing team kit or posting sponsor-related content.
- Be cautious when tagging locations or live updates for security reasons.

Offensive or Inappropriate Content

- Never post offensive, discriminatory, or disrespectful comments regarding race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or any other personal attribute.
- Avoid sharing images or videos that could embarrass yourself or others.
- Swearing, sarcasm, or negative venting may be screenshot and shared out of context – assume everything posted is public, even in private groups or messages.

Managing Official Accounts

- Only authorised individuals may post on official Rowing Ireland accounts.
- If content is contentious or unclear, consult the Communications Lead before posting.
- Always frame results and performances constructively – even in defeat, find a positive message.
- If an account is compromised (hacked), report it immediately to the Communications Officer or your line manager
- Do not engage in arguments or controversial conversations online. If a thread turns hostile, block the user and report the incident.

Handling Public Queries

If contacted via public comments or direct messages:

- Acknowledge serious queries publicly with a short, polite response.
- Direct individuals to contact the appropriate email address or phone number for resolution.
- Do not allow the public to post private information like emails or phone numbers in public threads.

Branches, Committees, and Groups

- Any sub-groups within Rowing Ireland (e.g. committees or event pages) must seek approval from the CEO to establish or manage social media channels using Rowing Ireland branding.
- These accounts must:
 - Adhere to this policy
 - Uphold the same tone, branding, and standards
 - Be overseen by a named administrator approved by Rowing Ireland

Breaches of Policy

- Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to formal warnings, suspension, or dismissal.
- All users must remember that social media content can be used in legal proceedings or internal investigations.

Policy Compliance

This policy is binding on all Rowing Ireland staff, board members, committee's athletes, volunteers, and affiliated administrators. It will be reviewed annually or as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or digital best practice.