



# Riding Pony Stud Book Society Ltd

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## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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### 1. Introduction

Social media gives individuals, groups, organisations and businesses the opportunity to instantly share information with online communities. Blogs, forums, social networking and video sharing sites are the most popular types of social media sites; however, any forum which allows a user to upload and share information is considered part of the social media space. It is also important to note that information which is shared need not be written; it could take the form of an image or audio visual material.

RPSBS Ltd supports the use of social media as a timely and effective method of communication. In addition to engaging with members of the equestrian community, social media can help the organisation reach members of the broader public and traditional media.

RPSBS Ltd proactively seeks positive media coverage and does so for the benefit of its members. Traditionally this media coverage has been through TV, radio and print media outlets however the rise of social media has widened this landscape. Given these changes, all RPSBS Ltd representatives, including employees, members, and officials have the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the organisation simply by maintaining an online presence.

Whilst social media provides great opportunity to raise RPSBS Ltd's profile and reach new audiences, it also has the potential to harm the reputation of the organisation and its members. It is crucial therefore that those individuals representing RPSBS Ltd are aware of the implications of using social media.

The purpose of this document is to provide representatives of RPSBS Ltd with guiding principles for using social media. RPSBS Ltd encourages each of its representatives to use social media within the parameters outlined in this policy

This policy extends to RPSBS Ltd members and representatives when they use social media in an official capacity or when referring to RPSBS Ltd matters in a private space

### 2. Scope

Individuals bound by this policy are RPSBS Ltd employees, members, officials and volunteers. For the purpose of this document, the above mentioned will be collectively referred to as RPSBS Ltd representatives.

All forms of social media activity are covered under this policy, including, but not limited to:

- Creating and maintaining social or business networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn.
- Sharing audio-visual content on sites including Flickr and Pinterest (photo sharing) and YouTube and Vimeo (video sharing).
- Authoring and commenting on blogs or forums.
- Editing a Wikipedia page.

### **3. Guiding Principles**

RPSBS Ltd representatives should be mindful that information shared on social media platforms appears in the public sphere so careful consideration should be given to content before it is posted. Never forget that information shared within online communities could have implications for the sport and those associated with it.

Adhering to these guidelines will ensure the reputation of RPSBS Ltd representatives remains protected:

- Information shared online by RPSBS Ltd representatives should be honest. Defamatory or disrespectful comments about individuals or organisations will not be tolerated. Once information is shared online it can be difficult to retract. A representative might be able to remove his/her original comments however the very nature of social media encourages people to share information which can make it difficult to know where information is posted.
- Representatives must never bring RPSBS Ltd or the sport of equestrian into disrepute. Representatives should assume that all posts and information they share with online communities can be traced back to them.
- When posting in online communities, representatives should uphold RPSBS Ltd's values and protect the RPSBS Ltd brand at all times.
- RPSBS Ltd members should refrain from publishing confidential or sensitive information.
- Personal sites, blogs and accounts that have an RPSBS Ltd 'look and feel' and could appear to represent RPSBS Ltd are strictly prohibited.

### **4. Breach**

If a representative fails to follow these guidelines RPSBS Ltd has the right to issue the representative with a take-down notice. Repeated breaches could lead to suspension of membership rights and/or disciplinary action

### **5. Legislation**

As with any form of public communication online communication can also be subject to legislation. Representatives should be mindful that unsubstantiated claims, false statements, defamatory, offensive and threatening comments could lead to prosecution.

### **6. Conclusion**

RPSBS Ltd understands that social media is a new method of communication and that the Society has no control over personal, social or business networking sites particularly Facebook accounts. The Society encourages members to discuss problems with the National Secretariat, a Board member or a State Committee member rather than expressing negative comments which has the potential to stimulate unsubstantiated opinions.