



## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define social media, as well as establish procedures for creating an overall social media presence. The policy is designed to assist Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) employees, interns, volunteers and athletes engaged in social media on behalf of the organization on a state and/or local program level in understanding the legal, policy, and institutional implications of opening and maintaining social media accounts in an official capacity.

## **II. Scope**

The policy applies to any pre-existing or proposed social media networking websites established by and representative of Special Olympics Pennsylvania on a state and local program level. Therefore, this directive applies to each SOPA Social Media Participant who, in an official capacity and on behalf of the Special Olympics: (1) opens a social media account in the name of SOPA; (2) posts SOPA content on a social media account opened in the name of Special Olympics; (3) speaks or claims to speak on behalf of the SOPA on a social media account; or (4) is responsible for overseeing and maintaining an official Special Olympics presence on a social media site.

Important note about personal social media activities: This policy is not intended to limit, restrict, or monitor personal social media activities outside of Special Olympics, using personal computers and other devices. However, the line between public and private, personal and professional, is often blurred in social media. By using a Special Olympics title, identifying oneself as a Special Olympics employee/volunteer or by other affiliation with Special Olympics, stating or implying that one's statements are official or endorsed by Special Olympics, or posting non-public Special Olympics content or other information, the interests and reputation of the organization are potentially affected.

## **III. Defining Social Media**

Special Olympics PA (SOPA) defines social media as including all forms of public, Web-based communications and expressions made public to many audiences.

Social media includes social networking sites (Facebook/Twitter), video and photo sharing websites (Flickr, YouTube, etc.), blogs, discussion boards/forums (Google groups, Yahoo! Groups, etc.), bookmark sites, and Linklog sites.

## **IV. Social Media Use Guidelines**

1. All images used on any social networking page must be approved by the subject in the photograph. When medical releases are signed by an athlete's parents/guardian, permission to use their athlete's photo is granted by default. However, if at any time a request is made by the subject for a photo to be taken down, it must be done so promptly.
2. All Special Olympics language guidelines should be followed. Language guidelines can be found on the SOPA website under "[Press Room](#)."
3. No profanity shall be used on any Special Olympics Pennsylvania page, and such use should be monitored on the posts of fans/friends.

4. In accordance with monitoring language of comments/posts, content should also be limited to subject matter concerning Special Olympics and not personal commentary or any non-Special Olympics related content
5. Posts may not include comments that are derogatory in any way, including reference to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, color or disability.
6. Posts may not include discussions concerning the use of alcohol, drugs, sexual behavior or bullying.
7. In order to respect the privacy of staff, volunteers and athletes, no personal information concerning any individual should be posted.
8. Any citations or references of donors or sponsors are not permitted without the donor/sponsor's approval.
9. Event/fan pages for state level fundraisers, competition and events should be created at the state level. Local programs should link to these sites on their own pages to help maintain consistent messaging.
10. Any Special Olympics Pennsylvania local program sites or pages are subject to review by the SOPA Communications Director.
11. All SOPA and SOI rules and regulations that apply to employee activities of proprietary and confidential information apply to online activity.
12. The copying, publishing or transmission of any content protected by copyright laws is prohibited on social media. This includes copyrights or logos of Special Olympics.

#### **V. Special Olympics Pennsylvania's Social Presence**

As of today, Special Olympics Pennsylvania is active on the following websites.

##### **Facebook:**

- **Special Olympics PA's Main Page:** [facebook.com/specialolympicspa](https://www.facebook.com/specialolympicspa)
- **Law Enforcement Torch Run:** [facebook.com/SOPALETR](https://www.facebook.com/SOPALETR)
- **Polar Plunges:** [facebook.com/PolarPlungePA](https://www.facebook.com/PolarPlungePA)
- **Beaver Stadium Run:** [facebook.com/BeaverStadiumRun](https://www.facebook.com/BeaverStadiumRun)

**Twitter:** @SpecialOlympipa or [twitter.com/specialolympipa](https://twitter.com/specialolympipa)

**YouTube:** [youtube.com/user/SpecialOlympicsPA](https://www.youtube.com/user/SpecialOlympicsPA)

**Blogspot:** <http://www.specialolympicspa.blogspot.com/>

**Flickr:** [flickr.com/photos/specialolympicspennsylvania/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/specialolympicspennsylvania/)

## VI. Social Media Standards and Etiquette

Any Special Olympics Pennsylvania employee or volunteer engaging in social media dialogue as an official representative of the organization is required to meet the following standards:

- **Be Responsible**  
Say what is on your mind, but be cautious that you are representing the organization. Remember that you are speaking directly on behalf of the organization.
- **Be Accountable**  
Don't behave differently online than you would in any other public setting. Give a timely response and monitor your conversation.
- **Consider Your Audience**  
Our fans and followers are parents, athletes, coaches, teachers, volunteers, area directors, donors, sponsors/partners and staff. Consider what you are publishing and make sure it caters to the needs of these individuals without alienating anyone. For example: If posting from or about an event, consider what each one of these groups following from home or on their phone from the event would want to know.
- **Bring Value**  
When deciding whether to post information, decide how much value this will bring to others. Consider the journalistic five W's and H (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How). How does this impact the people you are communicating with and why do they care?
- **Pick Your Battles and Accept Your Mistakes**  
Don't pick fights and be the first to correct your own mistakes. If a Facebook fan says something in poor taste, respond to them politely and honestly and try to answer the question or correct the facts. If you don't have all the facts, do not make them up. Check with a SOPA staff member who has knowledge about the subject before providing an answer or ask this staff member to follow up directly.
- **Be Respectful**  
Always take a moment to think of what you're saying and how it could be interpreted by different parties. Consider how your words reflect the organization's mission and make sure you are being a good representative of SOPA.
- **Protect Confidential and Copyrighted Information**  
The online community has the power to speak out and have their voices heard. Businesses and non-profit organizations must respond honestly, openly and transparently. However, this doesn't mean blaring out private information before it becomes public. If it's questionable, keep it quiet.