

District 308 Athletics

Social Media Policy

Participation in athletics at District 308 schools is a privilege, not a right. While the District does not prohibit student-athletes from participating in social media avenues such as Twitter, Facebook, Google +, Blogs, Snapchat, etc., all postings and writings must be in compliance with the guidelines set forth by your code of conduct and student handbook, applicable Illinois and federal law, as well as IHSA, conference and District bylaws, policies, rules and regulations.

Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites have dramatically increased in popularity over the years. As such, fans, media, faculty, future schools and employers as well as other officials may have the information you post about yourself to social media avenues sent directly to them. Protect yourself, your team and your school by adhering to the guidelines below. The District student-athlete code of conduct can, in some circumstances, extend to online activity, and civil and criminal laws can also apply to online activity; as a result, the responsibility for your social media postings falls squarely on you.

School District 308 reserves the right to take action against currently enrolled student-athletes that engage in online and social media behaviors that violate applicable laws, polices, rules, and regulations. This action may include education, counseling, suspension and/or removal from the team.

School District 308 reserves the right to regularly monitor student-athletes' public profiles and the materials posted on those accounts to ensure compliance with this policy.

When participating in social media activity, please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Make sure your social media activity is in compliance with applicable Illinois and federal law, as well as IHSA, conference, and District 308 bylaws, policies, rules, and regulations.
2. Consider setting your security settings so that only your friends can view your profile or feeds. If you do not know how to do this, please contact your counselor or the athletic office for assistance. Do not give out your passwords to anyone. Make sure to change your passwords regularly.
3. You should not post your e-mail, home address, local address, telephone numbers, social security number, birthdate, banking information or other personal information as it could lead to unwanted behavior such as stalking or identity theft.
4. Be aware of who you add as "friends" or "followers" to your social media venues. Many people may not have your best interests at heart and may look to take advantage of you or seek unwanted interaction.

5. Use common sense. Respect differences, appreciate the diversity of opinions and speak or conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. For example, you should refrain from posting items that are physically threatening, defamatory (e.g., false statements that are damaging to a person's reputation), obscene, in violation of copyright law, unlawfully harassing or discriminatory, bullying, or items that are materially disruptive to the District, school, department of athletics, or your team.
6. Monitor what others post about you and remove posts from your social media page as you determine necessary.
7. Make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your responsibilities as a member of your team. In this regard, do not engage in social media activity sixty minutes before your upcoming athletics event or during competition or other official athletic department or team events. Additionally, do not engage in social media activity between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. of the night before your teams athletic event/competition. Give yourself a break from social media, get some rest, and get ready for your event/competition.
8. Do not post any information that is proprietary to the athletic department, which is not public information such as tentative or future schedules, team playbooks or strategies, or information that is sensitive or personal in nature, such as travel plans or itineraries.
9. Behave on social media as you would in front of a crowd of strangers – be proud of where you come from and where you are at. Do not let anyone have a reason to dilute that pride by sullyng your name through social media comments.
10. Remember, a great deal of damage can be done in just 140 characters, so think before you Tweet. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of a social media comment, do not share it.
11. Try to conduct yourself as if you were doing a live interview with a media organization. There is no such thing as privacy on your social media pages. The speed with which a negative comment can spread in social media can be staggering. The best advice is to imagine that ESPN is sitting in your room and double-checking your comments before you decide to hit the SHARE or TWEET button. Once you post your comment, it may last in cyberspace forever, including being accessible to colleges or future employers.

Social Media Discipline Procedures

If a student-athlete's social media activity is found to be inappropriate in accordance with this policy, he/she may be subject to the following penalties:

- A written warning
- A meeting with the Director of Athletics and Head Coach

- Penalties as determined by the athletic department, including but not limited to, possible suspension from his/her team, removal from his/her team and/or loss of some or all of his/her playing time.

Student-Athlete Acknowledgement and Agreement

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the School District 308 Athletics Social Media Policy. I understand that if I fail to adhere to this policy, I may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion from my team.

Student-Athlete Name

Date

