



Manta Rays Swim Team (Inc.)

FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube and blogging represent a growing form of communication for not-for-profit organisations, allowing them to engage their members and the wider public more easily than ever before.

However, it is also an area in which rules and boundaries are constantly being tested. This policy acts in conjunction Manta Rays Swim Team Inc. (MRST) Media Relations Policy in order to maximise our social media reach while protecting our public reputation.

In addition, local and state media are vital partners in achieving the goals of MRST. In order to maximise the advantages of media presentation and minimise the risks of media misrepresentation it is necessary to establish guidelines for how media contacts will be conducted.

It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media. The organisation welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to debate issues in the public arena.

In dealing with the media, staff, Board members and other volunteers should be conscious that they may be seen as representatives of the organisation and should therefore avoid making comments or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the long-term reputation of MRST.

SOCIAL MEDIA

MRST may choose to engage in social media such as:

- Facebook
- Google+
- Twitter
- WordPress/Blogger
- YouTube/Vimeo

MRST seeks to encourage information and link-sharing amongst its members and volunteers, and seeks to utilise the expertise of its members and volunteers in generating appropriate social media content.

At the same time, social media posts should be in keeping with the image that MRST wishes to present to the public, and posts made through its social media channels should not damage the organisation's reputation in any way.

MRST's social media use shall be consistent with the following core values:

- **Integrity:** MRST will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about its own work, the work of other organisations, or individuals. In addition, it will post in accordance with the organisation's Copyright and Privacy policies.
- **Professionalism:** MRST's social media represents the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and uniform tone. Staff and volunteers may, from time to time and as appropriate, post on behalf of MRST using its online profiles, but the impression should remain one of a singular organisation rather than a group of individuals.
- **Information Sharing:** MRST encourages the sharing and reposting of online information that is relevant, appropriate to its aims, and of interest to its members.

MRST should seek to grow its social media base and use this to engage with existing and potential members, donors and stakeholders. At the same time, a professional balance must be struck which avoids placing the organisation's reputation at risk.

MEDIA & MARKETING

MRST works with the media in order to

- advocate for the goals of the organisation
- promote the work of the organisation
- inform the public of the details of the organisation
- assist in fundraising for the organisation

It is the responsibility of all members and volunteers to ensure that effective media relations are maintained in order to achieve the aims of MRST.

MRST operates on the values of

- **Honesty:** The organisation will never knowingly mislead the public, media or staff on an issue or news story.
- **Transparency:** The organisation will promote openness and accessibility in our dealings with the media, whilst complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.
- **Clarity:** All communications with the media will be written in plain English
- **Balance:** Information provided to the media by MRST will as far as humanly possible be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely.

MRST should seek to establish and maintain a good and open relationship with the media. It is important that the organisation works with the media to communicate important public information messages about its work and its goals.

RESOLVING ISSUES AND COMPLAINTS

Any issues or complaints in relation to social media, marketing or advertising may be made via email: dmonts11@gmail.com

MRST may amend this policy from time to time.