

IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



Why does the ITA need a social networking/media policy?

Given the explosive popularity of social networking/media/computing many of our family, friends, students and instructors are actively engaging in it.

For the purpose of this policy, social networking/media/computing refers to the use of web-based and mobile applications for social interaction and the exchange of user generated content. Please note that from this point forward the term “Social Networking” will be used. Social networking channels include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, blogs, review sites, forums, online communities, location based networks and any similar online platforms.

Considering the public nature of social networking and the almost immediate speed at which information can spread, without guidelines in place you and the ITA are exposed to risks. These risks range from an individual inadvertently publishing personal confidential information, to students posting offensive content that causes serious damage to the ITA’s or your own reputation.

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in online social networks. By virtue of identifying yourself as a Taekwon-Do participant and/or ITA member/instructor within a social network, you are now connected to your students, peers and seniors as well as the general public. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your position and with how Taekwon-Do and the ITA should be represented.

As mentioned already, social networking blurs many of the traditional boundaries between private and personal communications. Be thoughtful about what you publish. You must make sure you do not post information of any other person or organisation in any online social networking platform. For example, ask permission before posting someone's picture in a social network or publishing in a blog a conversation that was meant to be private.

It is important to note that the ITA supports open dialogue and the exchange of ideas via all communication channels including social networking. The ITA regards blogs and other forms of online discussion as forums for communication and learning, as well as for building relationships between individuals and groups, for helping others and having fun.

Use your best judgement and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of the ITA. Also, while it is fine for instructors and students to disagree, please don't use your external blog or other online social networking to air your differences in an inappropriate manner.

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The ITA expects its members to exercise personal responsibility whenever they participate in social networking.

By providing these guidelines on what is appropriate and what is not appropriate, our social networking policy will help you assess content being posted and mitigate any risks.

The ITA's Social Networking Guidelines

1. Be helpful and supportive in your communications and encourage your students, family and friends to do the same. Our image is developed largely by our interaction with others. We all want that image to be a positive one. Your tone, your openness and your approachability can help with that, just as they can with your own personal "brand".
2. Be respectful to everyone. Remember that courtesy is one of the tenets of Taekwon-Do.
3. Each individual is responsible for what they post online.
4. When relevant make it clear that the words and thoughts you write online are your own and not those of the association. Use a disclaimer such as: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the ITA's objectives, positions or opinions."
5. The ITA believes in transparency and honesty, The ITA discourages the use of posting online anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. When discussing topics relevant to Taekwon-Do and/or the ITA, you must use your real name and be clear who you are.
6. Identify yourself and speak in the first person (I not we).
7. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be judicious in disclosing personal details.
8. You are legally liable for anything you write or present online.
9. You can be sued by others for commentary, content, videos, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing or libelous.
10. You are encouraged to share your insights, express your opinion, and share information as appropriate, especially when it is helpful to others.
11. Try to add value to what others are doing and saying. Provide worthwhile and positive information and perspective. The ITA is best represented by its members and instructors and what you publish may reflect on the association.
12. Please post knowledgeably and accurately and, when relevant, in a professional manner.
13. Be quick to correct your own mistakes and admit when you are wrong. Doing so can help to restore trust.

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14. We do not live in a cultural vacuum. An online audience comes from various ethnic and religious backgrounds and reflects a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenities etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion.
15. Do not engage in conduct that could be seen as unacceptable behavior.
16. Do not pick fights. When you see misrepresentations made about Taekwon-Do or the ITA by other bloggers, you may certainly use your blog or add comments on the original discussion to point that out. Always do so with respect, stick to the facts and identify your appropriate affiliation to the association. Also, if you speak about other associations, you must make sure that what you say is factual and that it does not disparage other organisations. Avoid unnecessary or unproductive arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end and you may negatively affect your own, and the ITA's, reputation in the process. Don't try to settle scores or goad others into inflammatory debates. Here and in other areas of public discussion, make sure that what you are saying is factually correct.
17. Please be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy online.
18. Your online presence can reflect on your affiliations e.g. to Taekwon-Do and the ITA. Be aware that your actions captured via images, videos, posts, or comments may reflect on your affiliations.
19. Unless given permission to do so you should not speak on behalf of the ITA, nor allow it to appear that you do so.
20. When appropriate, please direct others to the official website and social networking accounts of the ITA.
21. Avoid revealing any confidential information, especially that of others.
22. Do not identify students/ITA members without permission.
23. Do not cite or reference others without their approval. If you do make a reference, link back to the source if possible.
24. Always respect copyright and trademark laws, including logos.
25. Do not plagiarise others.

Finally, use your best judgement. Remember that there are always consequences to what you publish. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review the suggestions above and think about why that is. If you're still unsure, seek advice from others with experience e.g. your own instructor. Ultimately, however, you have sole responsibility for what you post to your blog or publish in any form of online social networking.

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