

## US Equestrian Social Media Community Guidelines

Creating a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for all equestrians and fans is vital to our vision and mission. These community guidelines provide guidance for engaging with US Equestrian-owned social media accounts as well as general, public-facing accounts.

### **US Equestrian Social Media Accounts**

US Equestrian-owned social media accounts can be found on all major social media platforms (including, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and LinkedIn). US Equestrian-owned accounts include US Equestrian and our subsidiary accounts (i.e. USA Jumping, USA Dressage, USEF Eventing, USEFNetwork, etc.). We encourage all fans, athletes, and members to follow and engage with these accounts for informative and entertaining equestrian content.

US Equestrian has a team of individuals who monitor US Equestrian official social media accounts, including comments posted to our social media channels and messages sent directly to us.

To ensure a safe and non-discriminatory environment, we will not tolerate any form of abuse or discrimination including:

- Racism
- Homophobia
- Sexism
- Hateful, abusive, and offensive language
- Sexual harassment
- Incitement to violence

We will remove comments that breach these social media community guidelines, and, if necessary, block users that continue to violate our policy.

While we take a proactive approach to dealing with comments and messages that violate our policy, due to the sheer volume of posts on our social media channels, there may be instances where you spot the comment/s before we do. In this case, please report the post/s as outlined below.

### **Public Social Media Accounts** **(Non-US Equestrian Accounts)**

We know that social media is much more than just the US Equestrian accounts. When crafting these guidelines, we sought to also address those accounts that are public-facing, but not owned by US Equestrian.

At its best, the social media community is a great place to find and connect with fellow horse-enthusiasts. For those times when social media is not at its best, it can be tough to know what to do next.

The below guidelines should help direct you on your next steps.

**Block users and report any incident to the respective social media platform.**

You can block any user that is causing you harm or distress. If you encounter any abusive, hateful, or discriminatory comments online, we strongly advise that you report this directly to the respective social media platform where you witnessed the incident. Each platform has its own reporting procedure, and we would advise following their processes. You can find out more about reporting directly via the platforms here:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter \(X\)](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

**Reporting Incidents**

**(either from US Equestrian or public social media accounts)**

If you have witnessed something that you believe violates our community guidelines, please report it to US Equestrian via email ([social@usef.org](mailto:social@usef.org)).

To support reports, please provide the following:

- A screenshot of the content you are reporting;
- The date and time of the posting;
- The username of the poster;
- The social media channel; and (when possible)
- A link to the original US Equestrian post where the comment was left.

We will review these reports on an individual basis before deciding on an appropriate course of action.

The decision on whether to act remains at our discretion. Any decision not to act does not constitute an endorsement by US Equestrian of the content.

All reports will remain confidential and anonymous. We will acknowledge your report, and we may reach out if we require any further information. Please note that it will not always be possible to provide an update on the outcome; however, this does not mean that we have not reviewed the report nor acted.

**Report Crimes to the Police**

If you feel that you have been the victim of or have witnessed a crime on social media, you should report this to the police.

Where possible, we will assist the authorities/police should they wish to act on any reports made by ourselves or our online community in relation to any behavior that has occurred on our social media channels.

While we discourage engaging with any offensive or abusive posts, we would suggest keeping a note of any comments or messages of this nature. You can keep a record of online abuse by taking a screen shot of the comment/message, be sure to include the author's username and the time and date of posting. You can do this on your smartphone, tablet, laptop, or computer. Keeping a record may be helpful should you decide to report this later.

### **Get to know the definitions of Bullying and Harassment**

Depending on your age, the standards for social media bullying/harassment differ under [USEF Safe Sport Policy](#).

#### **Bullying (Minors)**

Repeated and/or severe behavior(s) that are:

1. Directed at a Minor,
2. Aggressive, and
3. Intended or likely to hurt, control, or diminish the minor emotionally, physically, or sexually.

#### **Cyberbullying/Social Media Bullying**

Any action that meets the above definition of bullying and occurs on the internet.

- Examples include the use of rumors or false statements about someone to diminish that person's reputation; using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate, or humiliate someone; socially excluding someone and asking others to do the same.

#### **Harassment**

Repeated and/or severe conduct that:

- Causes fear, humiliation, or annoyance,
- Offends or degrades,
- Creates a hostile environment (as defined by the USEF Safe Sport Policy), or
- Reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability, or
- Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Whether conduct is harassing depends on the totality of the circumstances, including the nature, frequency, intensity, location, context, and duration of the behavior.

***Conduct may not rise to the level of harassment if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views and/or positions.***

Harassment does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved athlete performance.

### **How to Report Bullying and Harassment**

Non-sexual misconduct may be reported to USEF by submitting an [Incident Report Form](#), or e-mailing/calling a representative on the Athlete Protection Team:

- Sarah Gilbert, USEF Safe Sport Senior Program Manager  
[\(859\) 225-6915](tel:(859)225-6915)  
[sgilbert@usef.org](mailto:sgilbert@usef.org)
- Lauren McDowell, USEF Safe Sport Program Manager  
[\(859\) 225-6964](tel:(859)225-6964)  
[lmcdowell@usef.org](mailto:lmcdowell@usef.org)
- Text an anonymous report via RealResponse:  
[\(855\) 682-8733](tel:(855)682-8733) or [2USEF \(28733\)](tel:2USEF(28733))