

Social Media Policy

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by candidates and titleholders of Miss Vermont Scholarship Organization and its related companies (MVSΟ). For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, Snapchat, Tumblr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, email and the Internet.

MVSΟ candidates and titleholders are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. MVSΟ candidates and titleholders are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as a MVSΟ contestant or representative (other than as an incidental mention of affiliation with MVSΟ in a personal blog on topics unrelated to MVSΟ).

Notwithstanding the previous section, this policy applies to all uses of social media, including personal, by current Miss Vermont (MVSΟ) titleholders, as their position with MVSΟ would be well known within the community.

Publication and commentary on social media carry similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that MVSΟ candidates and titleholders must otherwise follow.

Setting Up Social Media

Assistance in setting up social media accounts and their settings can be obtained from MVSΟ's Treasurer, Emily Asch. You can reach her by phone or email at (802) 238-4656 or treasurer@missvermont.org.

Social media identities, logon ID's and usernames may not use the MVSΟ's name without prior approval from the Executive Director, Barbara Wilkinson.

Don't Tell Secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your involvement with MVSΟ and have a dialog with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our internal communications, financial information, unannounced events, unannounced titleholders, etc. We must respect the communities that MVSΟ operates within regarding the confidentiality of private conversations with its members. We must also be mindful of the competitiveness of our industry and other pageants.

Protect Your Own Privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the MVS0 website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you are affiliated with MVS0. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty, or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out, but be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

Respect Copyright Laws

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including MVS0 copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Respect Your Audience, MVS0, and Its Sponsors

The public in general (as well as MVS0's candidates, titleholders, sponsors, and volunteers) reflect a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the MVS0 website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of MVS0.

Protect MVS0 Business Partners, Suppliers & Sponsors

Business partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a private engagement. It is acceptable to discuss general details about kinds of projects and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for a partner or supplier (e.g., Partner 123) so long as the information provided does not violate any non-disclosure agreements that may be in place with the partner/supplier or make it easy for someone to identify them. Your blog is not the place to conduct business with any MVS0 partner or supplier. Identifying sponsors and their product or services is acceptable and encouraged.

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about MVS0 in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad competitors or others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct.

Be the First to Respond to Your Own Mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly. It is better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Think About Consequences

Consider what might happen if a MVS0 candidate or titleholder is in a meeting with a community member, and someone pulls out a printout of your blog and says "This person at MVS0 says that product sucks." Saying "Product X needs to have an easier learning curve for the first-time user" is fine; saying "Product X sucks" is risky, unsubtle and unprofessional. Once again, it's all about judgment. Using your blog to trash or embarrass MVS0, our sponsors, volunteers, or other contestants or participants, is dangerous and ill advised.

Disclaimers

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they represent, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble; it may not have much legal effect. The social media advisor can provide you with applicable disclaimer language and assist with determining where and how to use it.

Don't Forget Your Day Job

Make sure that blogging, and other social media, does not interfere with your job, schooling, or other personal and MVS0 commitments.

Social Media Tips

The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about. Quality matters. Use a spellchecker. If you're not design oriented, ask someone who is if your blog looks decent, and take his or her advice on how to improve it. The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a hazard of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.

Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the Miss Vermont or Miss Vermont's Outstanding Teen Competition, loss of title, and loss of non-reimbursable fees. The MVSO board of directors and the executive director will determine all violations, and their consequences.

Titleholder Responsibilities

In the event you are awarded the job of Miss Vermont or Miss Vermont's Outstanding Teen, you understand that you will be required to make regular weekly social media posts following a schedule that will be given to you at your Titleholder Orientation. This schedule is subject to change from time to time as directed by your contestant coordinator, the sponsorship coordinator, or the marketing and social media coordinator, and will pertain to items, not limited to, event promotion and sponsorship acknowledgement.

Commitment Statement:

While representing myself as a candidate for a title, my actions and conduct will be representative of the integrity and esteem of the Miss America Organization and the MVSO. I acknowledge that, as a candidate for Miss Vermont or Miss Vermont's Outstanding Teen, I am an official representative of the MVSO and I will not engage in any action or behavior that could be perceived by the MVSO as contrary to the MVSO, the Miss America Program or its elements.

Candidate Name

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (if required)

Signature

Date