



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

As social media and networking continue to increase in popularity, MHSAA Registered officials must understand the importance of participating in various communication platforms in an appropriate and ethical manner befitting the position of an impartial arbiter. Violations of the standards included in this guideline, which are determined as unbecoming of an official and in violation of the “Code for Athletic Officials,” may cause the suspension of an official’s registration with the MHSAA.

1. Officials should always treat social media communications as public, even if they are created with private intentions. Electronic communications are never completely removed from platforms, and you should expect that your communication may be read by anyone at any time.
2. Officials should recognize that their conduct online reflects on local associations, assigners, partners, and the wider officiating community.
3. Officials serve as ambassadors and should promote the avocation in a positive light by expressing pride and professionalism in online and social media communications.
4. Officials may not malign or openly criticize another MHSAA official in any form of public or shared electronic communication.
Such actions are unprofessional and undermine the sports officiating avocation.
5. Officials may not post or publicize critical comments about players, coaches, administrators, or schools for which they work.
6. Officials may not engage in online communication that purports to be speaking on behalf of the MHSAA.
7. Officials should not engage in online debate or discussion about specific plays, rulings, or controversies in which they were involved.
8. Officials should avoid publicly posting specific details for their (or others’) game assignments prior to the conclusion of the contest.
9. Officials have unique access to privileged information and should not share other officials' personal details or assignment information without their expressed consent.
10. Officials shall never have personal electronic communication devices on their person during a contest and should never record or simulcast live action of a contest unless permission is granted by the schools and/or the MHSAA. In potential or expected emergency situations, officials should leave their phones with the school administrator.
11. Officials are prohibited from connecting with students ("follow," "friend request," "direct message," etc.) on any social media platform, including public sites, private sites, and direct messages of any kind with high school or junior high/middle school students.
12. Officials shall not commit any acts or omissions that would be detrimental to the best interests of the MHSAA, officiating colleagues, the schools, or athletes involved in MHSAA activities.