

Social media policy – Season 16 (2024/25)

Training for Lazer Cheer Academy is a privilege. Athletes and parents at Lazer Cheer Academy are recognised and known in the local and National areas and could also be seen as role models in the community. As athletes/ parents/ guardians/ team parents you have the responsibility to always portray Lazer Cheer Academy and yourselves in a positive manner. Sometimes this means doing things that are an inconvenience to you but benefit the whole team. Tiktok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites have increased in popularity globally and are used by the majority of athletes from over 6 years old in one form or another. Parents should be aware that the minimum age for these social media sites are 13 years old and if a parent allows their child to join these sites earlier than 13 years old, it is their own responsibility to monitor their athletes account and Lazer Cheer is not responsible for what your athlete does on social media.

Athletes and parents/guardians should be aware that third parties - including the media, schools, the cheer community, and future employers - could easily access your profiles and view all personal information. This includes all pictures, videos, comments, and posters. Inappropriate material found by third parties affects the perception of the athlete and Lazer Cheer Academy. This can also be detrimental to an athlete's future employment options.

Examples of inappropriate and offensive behaviours concerning participation in online communities may include depictions or presentations of the following:

- Photos, videos, comments, or posters showing the personal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco e.g., no holding cups, cans, shot glasses etc.
- Photos, videos, and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
- Pictures, videos, comments, or posters that condone drug-related activity. This includes but is not limited to images that portray the personal use of drug paraphernalia.
- Content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual or entity (examples: use of profanity, derogatory comments regarding another cheerleading program, squad member or cheer community; taunting comments aimed at a cheerleader, coach, Team mum or team at another cheer program and derogatory comments against race and/or gender). No posts should depict or encourage unacceptable, violent, or illegal activities (examples: hazing, sexual harassment/assault, gambling, discrimination, fighting, vandalism, academic dishonesty, underage drinking, illegal drug use).
- Information that is sensitive or personal in nature or is proprietary of Lazer Cheer Academy, which is not public information.

LAZER CHEER ACADEMY LTD WILL NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY NEGATIVE FEEDBACK REGARDING PUBLIC POSTS OR INJURIES CAUSED WHILST FILMING PRIVATE TRAINING OUTSIDE OF THE GYM. SO PLEASE DO NOT POST VIDEOS AND "TAG" or ASSOCIATE LAZER CHEER ACADEMY LTD IN ANY WAY WITH ANY PUBLIC POSTS WHICH INVOLVE TRAINING WITHOUT APPROPRIATE SAFETY MATS.

Tagging us in videos filmed in the gym is encouraged so that we can support and celebrate athlete progression using our well monitored platform.

HOMEWORK (SET OR ADVISED BY COACHES ONLY) VIDEOS CAN BE POSTED IN THE PRIVATE SQUAD GROUPS OR FACEBOOK SEASON 16 NOTICE BOARD.

If an athlete's profile and its contents are found to be inappropriate in accordance with the above behaviours, they will be subject to the following penalties:

1. A warning. Parents/ guardian and athletes in question will be asked to come for a meeting and a warning will be issued.
2. A second violation of the Lazer Cheer Academy Social Media Policy will result in dismissal of all Lazer Cheer Academy training including open gyms. Fees for upcoming competitions and training will not be refunded.

For your own safety, please keep the following recommendations in mind as you participate in social media websites:

- Set your security settings so that only your friends can view your profile "private settings".
- You should not post your email, home address, local address, telephone number(s), or other personal information as it could lead to unwanted attention, stalking, identity theft, etc.
- Be aware of who you add as a friend to your site or accept to "view" your personal information.
- Consider how the above behaviours can be reflected in all social media applications.
- Consider how detrimental it is to have "parent run" social media sites for younger athletes and consider if public exposure of a young person is necessary.

If you are ever in doubt of the appropriateness of your online public material, consider whether it upholds and positively reflects your own values and ethics as well as Lazer Cheer Academy's. Remember, always present a positive image, and do not do anything to embarrass yourself, the team, your family, or the cheerleading program.

Athletes are not allowed to have Coaches on social media unless they are over the age of 18 – if athletes attempt to add coaches they will be declined. All athletes can communicate with coaches either through their parents or publicly on the squad Facebook pages. We understand that some parents know and are friends with coaches - so are allowed to have coaches on social media. Parents are however **NOT** allowed to message coaches private accounts about anything to do with cheer – you **WILL** be ignored. All messages need to go through the 'Chelsea Mandy Cheer Foreman' account.

****Online ambassadors for companies****

We do **not** encourage athletes to look for ambassador opportunities as there are very few legitimate opportunities and many require you to buy a starter package which is not how ambassadors should be. Our focus is to protect athletes online and therefore we do not want to encourage photos of athletes in athletic clothing being public on other people's social media for anyone to see. There have been instances in the UK where fake companies have messaged children directly for photos to be featured on their social media accounts – this may seem exciting for young athletes who do not fully understand the dangers, so we recommend that if you choose to allow your athlete to have social media accounts that you monitor them regularly.

If you would like your child to be an ambassador for any company, you **must** first check with Coach Mandy or Coach Chelsea. The final decision as to whether this company is appropriate for a Lazer Cheer athlete to promote will be made by Coach Mandy and Chelsea. Failure to speak with Mandy and Chelsea prior to becoming an ambassador could result in dismissal from Lazer Cheer Academy.

Team whatsapp/snapchat groups

- We do not recommend you being part of any 'team' groups on social media other than the facebook ones we set up and monitor. Often an athlete is missed off as they may not have social media and this can cause issues within a session when they rightfully feel left out.
- Messages can be interpreted incorrectly on social media and whilst you may not mean to cause harm to someone, something you write might end up hurting someone's feelings and could jeopardise your place on the team – it just is not worth it.
- International teams will have a whatsapp group created, ran and monitored by the coaches of that team for the purpose of instant communication whilst in another country.

All cheerleaders involved in training with Lazer Cheer Academy in season 16 MUST adhere to this policy.