



Walnut Hills Athletics Policy on Student-Athlete Social Networking and Media Use

Walnut Hills Athletics recognizes and supports its student-athletes right to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of online social networks. In this context, however, student-athletes must remember that playing and competing for Walnut Hills is a privilege, not a right. Student-athletes represent the University and are expected to portray themselves, their team(s), and Walnut Hills High School in a positive manner at all times. Any online postings must therefore be consistent with federal and state laws, as well as team, Athletics Department, School and District rules, regulations, and policies.

The use of social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. by student-athletes is supported by the Athletic Department provided that:

- No offensive or inappropriate pictures are posted;
- No offensive or inappropriate comments are posted;
- Any information placed on the website (s) does not violate Walnut Hills and Walnut Athletics codes of conduct;

Student-athletes should keep the following in mind when participating on social networking websites:

- Before participating in any online community, understand that anything posted online is available to ***anyone in the world. Any text or photo placed online becomes the property of the site(s) and is*** completely out of your control the moment it is placed online - ***even if you limit access to your site***. A re-tweet of a posting that you thought was private can make it very public.
- Do not post anything that you would not want read by your parents, your coach, a college admissions counselor or a future employer. You should not post any information, photos or other items online that could embarrass you, your family, your team, the athletics department or Walnut Hills High School. **This includes information that may be posted by others on your page.**
- Never post your home address, local address, phone number(s), birth date or other personal information. You could be a target of predators. Carefully consider how you want people to perceive you before you give them a chance to misinterpret your information (including pictures, videos, comments, and posters).

Similar to comments made in person, the Department of Athletics will not tolerate disrespectful comments or behavior online, such as:

- Derogatory or defamatory language;
- Comments that create a danger to the safety of another person or that constitute a credible threat of physical or emotional injury to another person;
- Comments or photos that describe or depict unlawful assault, abuse, hazing, harassment, or discrimination; selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other illegal or prohibited conduct, including violating the University's Policy on Harassment and Discrimination.
- Any information placed on the website that violates Bowie State University, Bowie State Athletic Department or student athlete codes of conduct.

Coaches and athletics department administrators may monitor these web sites. Student athletes could face discipline and even dismissal for violations of team, department, university and/or NCAA policies.