

## **APPENDIX 23: POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATORS OF INTERNET COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

(See 2005-080, 2005-098, 2006-008, 2011-017, and 2016-015)

### **Purposes of Internet Communication Services**

- To stimulate member, Local Group, and community related Mensa activities
- To provide a forum for the exchange of opinions and ideas among Mensa members
- To facilitate communications for groups, officers, and National Office staff
- To promote the overall health and growth of the American Mensa organization
- To aid Mensans in pursuing the ideals of Mensa as expressed in the MIL Constitution.

### **Definition, Requisition, and Administration of Internet Communication Services**

Internet Communication Services include Web sites, social media platforms, elists, chat, threaded discussion groups, newsgroups, and electronic directories. Officially recognized group Web sites shall be considered to be electronic extensions of the newsletters, and as such, shall be subject to the same guidelines as the newsletters as applicable within the electronic medium. Three categories of services are defined.

- Services supporting official functions of the national organization. The administrator of such a service will be a member of AML, unless the service primarily supports the functions of one or more staff members. The Executive Director will designate a staff member for each service to support its operation.
- Services supporting official functions of regions, Local Groups, and Special Interest Groups. These will be established upon request, subject to available resources and approval of the RVC, Local Secretary, or national SIGs Officer. Regions and groups will be responsible for maintaining and governing these services once established, and for adherence to the Minimum Standards.
- Additional services based on member interests. These services may be created upon request of individual members, subject to approval by the Communications Officer (or designee) based on overall value to the membership and available resources.

All services are subject to the same Minimum Standards set forth below. Each Internet Communication Service has at least one administrator whose duties include facilitating and monitoring use of the Service and maintaining general compliance with the Service's guidelines. If a member/administrator's membership lapses, administrative duties will devolve back to any co-administrators or to the staff administrator until a new member-administrator is assigned.

AML reserves the right to revoke Internet Communication Services for violation of established Minimum Standards. It is expected that the administrators at the national, regional, Local Group, and SIG levels will notify [OnlineAbuse@americanmensa.org](mailto:OnlineAbuse@americanmensa.org) of any violations of the Minimum Standards so that steps can be taken to investigate the allegations and revoke the Internet Communication Service if appropriate.

### **The Minimum Standards for AML Internet Communication Services**

1. Internet Communication Services must comply with all relevant federal laws, plus applicable local and state laws, including regulations regarding copyrights, obscenity, marketing scams, etc.
2. Users may not improperly post or distribute any confidential information or information that would infringe upon the proprietary, privacy, or personal rights of others.
3. Use of the Mensa name and logo must adhere to the current standards for Name and Logo Use.
4. The following disclaimer must be prominent for members agreeing to use these Internet Communication Services. In the case of social media platforms, elists or newsgroups, this disclaimer should be posted at least quarterly:

*American Mensa, Ltd. accepts no responsibility for the opinions and information posted via its Internet Communications Services by its members or guests. Additionally, American Mensa is not liable for damages resulting from information transmitted via these Services or from any interruption or failure of these Services.*

5. Opinions and information posted via chat, discussion AMCs or elists remain the property of the poster. Content from national or regional Web sites remains the property of the national organization and content from group Web sites remains the property of the pertinent group, unless otherwise noted.

**Online Membership Directories.** Membership directories are defined as organized lists of members' names and contact information, possibly including Personal Data Questionnaire answers. Groups may make electronic versions of their directories available for download from secure areas of their Web sites and may email links to the secure download to local members to facilitate access and use.

Because members are able to change their information and release preferences daily via the AML Web site, but groups and RVCs only receive updated membership data once a month, maintenance of regional and group online directories is not allowed according to the terms of the Membership Data Agreement as referenced by ASIE 2005-078.

According to ASIE 1986-062 (Last amended by 1998-129), only the American Mensa Committee, or its designee, may authorize the commercial use of the American Mensa, Ltd. membership list or any portion thereof. Members may use membership directories to facilitate personal, noncommercial communication with other members and for the benefit of their Local Group, a respective regional Mensa group, or AML. Groups shall include a disclaimer to this effect when publishing rosters.

The Communications Officer, Committee, pertinent RVC, Local Secretary, SIG Coordinator or National Office Staff will investigate complaints about any misuse of members' information and may limit the offender's directory access if misuse is determined.

**Minors.** Internet Communication Services are well suited for supporting the interaction and participation of young Mensa members. To protect the privacy of children and the rights of parents, parental notification and consent is required before a minor may subscribe to a Service. This one-

time parental consent is valid for any other AML-hosted Service unless the parent or administrator note otherwise.

As part of Minimum Standard #1, all Internet Communication Services hosted by AML must comply with The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), effective April 21, 2000, which applies to the online collection of personal information from children under 13. See [www.coppa.org](http://www.coppa.org) and [www.ftc.gov/privacy/coppafaqs.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/coppafaqs.shtm) for more details.

**CAN-SPAM Act.** As part of Minimum Standard #1, all Internet Communication Services hosted by AML must comply with the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act), which establishes requirements for those who send commercial email and gives consumers the right to ask emailers to stop spamming them. Currently, listservs, elists and national e-newsletters are not included because members can subscribe and unsubscribe at will. Administrators may choose to be courteous and note commercial postings as advertisements. It is recommended that "Mensa" be used in subject lines so subscribers will be better able to sort pertinent messages from spam.

For Internet Communication Services to which members are subscribed without their specific request, such as elists for office-holders, administrators must:

- Include an opt-out in emails sent from a given service. The National Office includes [www.us.mensa.org/optout](http://www.us.mensa.org/optout) in official communications. Administrators are encouraged to use the same link so that there isn't confusion between opting out at the local level vs. nationally.
- Include a postal address in the footer of the email. Administrators are welcome to use a local address or the National Office address for this.
- Include a notice at the top of the email that it is an advertisement if the email is commercial in nature.
- Comply within ten business days if the member requests that email not be sent again. When a member opts-out with the National Office, his/her Mensa notices release is changed from "yes" to "no" and the administrators are notified.

### **Guidelines for Administrators of Internet Communication Services Supporting Official Functions of the National Organization**

**Staff Support.** Internet Communication Services supporting official functions of the national organization will each have a National Office staff liaison responsible for subscribing/unsubscribing members and technical issues. Unless otherwise indicated, staff will not have independent administrative status.

**Administration.** For all Internet Communication Services supporting official functions of the national organization, a member/administrator will be identified by office or function; staff liaisons will be assigned by the Executive Director. A list of administrators will be made available upon request to the National Office.

### **Responsibilities of Administrators.**

- Develop the Internet Communication Service’s guidelines regarding purpose, membership and posting limitations, parental consent requirements and procedures for minors, standards for appropriate and inappropriate content, disciplinary and appeal procedures, etc. and have it approved by the Communications Officer or designee.
- Apprise subscribers of the Internet Communication Service’s guidelines. Ensure that the contents of the Internet Communication Service adhere to the guidelines for that particular Service.
- Implement reasonable and rational disciplinary action(s).

**Rights of the Administrators.**

- Change the Internet Communication Service’s guidelines, provided subscribers are notified in advance.
- Declare off-topic discussion threads to be "closed," gently reprimand subscribers, suspend subscribers from posting, hold subscribers’ posts for administrator review before posting, and unsubscribe members from the Service.

**Removal of Administrators.**

- Administrators can be replaced by the Communications Committee.
- The Communications Committee or National Office Staff will investigate complaints about administrator decisions as necessary, after which the Communications Committee may decide to remove the administrator or to terminate the Internet Communication Service.
- The Communications Committee may rescind an administrator’s decision if it conflicts with the Minimum Standards, the guidelines established for that service, or the governing documents of AML.

**Guidelines for Administrators of Services Supporting Official Functions of Regions, Local Groups, and Special Interest Groups**

**Minimum Standards.** Regional, Local Group, and SIG Internet Communication Services must adhere to the Minimum Standards.

**Ownership and Administration.** Regions, Local Groups, and SIGs retain ownership and administrative control of their Internet Communication Services. It is strongly recommended that Regions, Local Groups, and SIGs develop policies regarding responsibilities, rights, restrictions, and removal of administrators as well as guidelines regarding purpose, membership and posting limitations, parental consent requirements and procedures for minors, standards for appropriate and inappropriate content, disciplinary and appeal procedures, etc. for Services before requesting activation of those Services. When crafting their own policies, Regions, Local Groups, and SIGs are welcome to borrow freely from the Guidelines for Administrators of Internet Communication Services Supporting Official Functions of the National Organization.

**Subscriber Complaints.** If subscribers to a Region, Local Group or SIG-sponsored Internet Communication Service contact the National Office or the AMC with complaints about content and practices on that Service, the pertinent RVC, Local Secretary, or SIG Coordinator will be apprised of the situation and reminded of his/her authority to terminate the Internet

Communication Service if he/she deems it to be in the best interest of the Local Group or SIG members.

**Administrative Intervention.** Where a Region, Local Group or SIG's Internet Communication Service's content or administrator's guidance violates the Minimum Standards or has the potential to cause harm to AML's Web presence or visitors to these services, as in the case of viruses, the National Office staff will, with the Communications Officer and the pertinent RVC, Local Secretary or National SIGs Officer, investigate and may act to terminate the Service.