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**Guidance on social media for students**

Updated November 2024

Social media is a huge part of everyday life and affects how we interact, live and work.

Used effectively, the way you conduct yourself online can enhance your learning experience and make you more employable when you graduate, as well as helping you connect with others in the school community. Used poorly, you risk damaging your reputation and potentially harming others, as well as leaving yourself open to formal disciplinary and even legal proceedings and the possibility of a criminal record.

This guide is intended to support and protect students, making you aware of the benefits and potential pitfalls of social networking, and the consequences in place for misusing social media – both as a NAPA student and in your personal life.

This set of guidelines applies to NAPA students’ use of social media.

**What is social media?**

Social media is any interactive online media that allows instant communication and the sharing of information in a public forum.

This may include, but is not limited to; Facebook, X, Bluesky, LinkedIn, Instagram, Flickr, WhatsApp, Reddit, TikTok, Snapchat, Weibo, WeChat and YouTube.

**Your social media presence**

NAPA encourages freedom of speech, however, as a student, you have agreed to act in accordance with our policies, which include treating staff, students and our wider community with mutual dignity and respect.

The behaviour we expect from you applies both online and offline and we view violations on social media as equal to anything published in print or said in person.

When you are using your social media account, please consider the following:

* Posting anything online, even in private spaces, has the potential to become public without your knowledge or consent. You are personally responsible for what you share, and once online it's very difficult to delete or control how widely material is shared. Make sure you’re comfortable with whatever you share being public before you send it.
* Respect people’s privacy and don't share personal information about yourself or others, including email addresses, phone numbers or addresses in public posts. If you post anything about somebody else, including images and videos, do it with their knowledge and consent, and be aware of our Data Protection Policy. Posts or comments that include this kind of information may be removed.
* Think about who you want to be able to see your information and set privacy settings accordingly. Remember that even with the strictest privacy settings, others can share your posts, so you may have no control over who sees them.
* Think before you send - the internet is not the place to let off steam. If you have a concern or a complaint, don't post it. Instead, go through the usual processes at NAPA.
* Be very cautious about arranging to meet someone you only know online. They may not be who they say they are. Arrange to meet during the day in a public place and take a friend or tell friends where you are going.

When you are using your social media accounts, please ensure you do not:

* Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual e.g. making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age; using social media to bully another individual or; posting images that are discriminatory/offensive or links to such content.
* Breach copyright e.g. using someone else’s work, such as images or content without permission; failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something;
* Breach confidentiality e.g. revealing confidential information owned by NAPA or a third-party; giving away confidential information about an individual or organisation.
* Use The NAPA logo or branding across social media platforms (including YouTube) without our prior written consent.

**Misuse of social media**

NAPA does not condone any form of harassment or discrimination, online or offline. Inappropriate social media use may result in action being taken against you either by NAPA or a third party, including the police.

Disciplinary action brought against you NAPA could, in serious cases, lead to suspension or expulsion. Where conduct may be an illegal criminal offence, NAPA may report the matter to the police. Beyond that, any member of staff, student or third party may pursue legal action against you, if they choose to do so.

**Cyber bullying**

NAPA is strongly committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and has zero tolerance to any forms of harassment and discrimination by students, members of staff, or other members of the NAPA community.

The following examples illustrate the types of behaviour, displayed through social media communications, which NAPA considers to be forms of cyber bullying:

* Maliciously spreading rumours, lies or gossip.
* Intimidating or aggressive behaviour.
* Offensive or threatening comments or content.
* Posting private images of an individual without consent (including, but not limited to, private sexual images of an individual).
* Sharing unwanted images (including sexual images).
* Posting comments, photos, etc; deliberately mocking an individual with the intent to harass or humiliate them.
* Sending messages or posting comments with the intent to trick, force or pressure the receiver into doing something that they would not otherwise be comfortable doing (grooming).

Cyber bullying may also take place via other means of electronic communication such as email, text or instant messaging.

If you see something on a social media site that concerns you, you can report it to the social media platform directly who will likely pass the complaint to the person who set up the space or group. If it concerns NAPA, or a fellow student, please make a formal complaint to our Chief Executive. Anyone who is experiencing cyber bullying by NAPA student or member of staff, will have the full support of NAPA.