

VOLUME TWO - BUSINESS
PART FIVE - PUBLIC AFFAIRS
CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL MEDIA

INTRODUCTION

1. The Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) appreciates that interest and participation in social media is expanding rapidly as people and businesses recognise the benefits of participating in online communities to share interests, connect with people and increase awareness.
2. **Social Networking Sites (SNS)** encompasses a broad range of online activities, including, but not limited to:
 - a. discussion boards such as Whirlpool and GeekZone;
 - b. blogging, such as on media websites and micro blogging websites such as Twitter;
 - c. social networking websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Hi5 and LinkedIn; and
 - d. video and photo sharing websites such as YouTube, Vimeo, Pinterest and Flickr.

POLICY STATEMENT

3. The AAFC recognises the importance of social media as a powerful communications tool and recognises that participation in online communities is a basic individual right. However, the AAFC has a responsibility to manage its reputation and that of Air Force and Defence, its **parent organisations**. The official online presence of the AAFC must be carefully managed by authorising only selected persons with appropriate skill, knowledge and training to properly and effectively participate in social media online for the purpose of managing the online presence of the AAFC. Only persons authorised by the Director-General Cadets - Air Force are permitted to cause **official information** to be published on the internet, including through social media sites.
4. The AAFC also recognises that **AAFC members** may participate in social media in their personal time and respects that what its members do in their personal time is their own affair. However, if during their participation in social media activity, a **AAFC member** reference their association with the AAFC, or its **parent organisations** or make comments or include content about the AAFC, or its **parent organisations**, an **affiliated person** or any of their affairs, they are required to adhere to the relevant AAFC Code of Conduct.

SCOPE

5. This Policy applies to all **AAFC members**.

DEFINITIONS

6. Policy Definitions are contained in **Annex B to AAFC POLMAN VOL1 – Organisation, PT1 – Foundation, CH01 – AAFC Foundation**.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

7. The principles of this policy are:
 - a. **Principle One:** AAFC policy, including the Codes of Conduct, applies to all AAFC members when identifying themselves on SNS as having an association with the AAFC or its parent organisations, or that association is apparent.

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<https://members.cadetnet.gov.au/aafc/Policy/ePOLMAN/CH03%20-%20Social%20Media.aspx>

- b. **Principle Two:** A AFC staff will not have or establish direct one-to-one relationships with any currently enrolled ADF Cadet through SNS. Staff can still communicate with cadets through group sites and forums etc. Similarly, the use of 'private messaging' services within SNS is to be avoided.
- c. **Principle Three:** A AFC cadets over the age of 18 are to be informed of their accountability under law for their actions with cadets under age 18 on SNS.
- d. **Principle Four:** When using Social Media and SNS, all A AFC members are to exercise sound judgement and commonsense and must give careful consideration to what they are saying, particularly when the information is relevant to their involvement in the A AFC. Where the information is relevant to their involvement with the A AFC, all members must adhere to the A AFC Code of Conduct.
- e. **Principle Five:** Any current A AFC member who administers or creates a social networking site or online group which is intended for use by members of the A AFC are to ensure:
 - i. the site is registered with HQA AFC; and
 - ii. there are, at a minimum, 2 current serving A AFC Staff members as administrators of the site/group.

RISK TO THE A AFC

8. This policy forms part of the A AFC's risk management framework as it has been recognised that there may be potential consequences to the A AFC and/or its **parent organisations'** where inappropriate content is posted on a SNS. The most relevant risks include the following:
- a. **Reputation management.** Damage to the reputation of the A AFC or its **parent organisations** may occur where a person breaches confidentiality or intellectual property rights, or where content posted is contrary to the A AFC's, or its **parent organisation's** policies practices or code of conduct.
 - b. **Defamation.** Defamatory comments may expose the A AFC or its **parent organisations** where it is apparent that the person posting the comment is associated with the A AFC and there is no disclaimer indicating that the view expressed by that person was that person's view and not the view of the A AFC or its **parent organisations**.
 - c. **Breach of confidentiality, security, privacy or release of personal information.** Where unauthorised release of restricted, confidential, sensitive, **official** or personal information occurs, the A AFC or its **parent organisations** may be exposed to a breach of its Privacy Policy and/or the Privacy Act.
 - d. **Unacceptable behaviour.** Where a person's conduct in a social media website has the potential to bully, harass or unlawfully discriminate against another A AFC member, that person's conduct may breach the A AFC policies or be unlawful.

CONDUCT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

9. The A AFC expectation is that A AFC members will consider and apply the standards of the relevant staff or cadet code of conduct when you participate in social media activities in your personal time, in circumstances where you reference your association with the A AFC or its **parent organisations** or where that association is apparent or make comments or include content about the A AFC or its **parent organisations** or an affiliated person or any of their affairs.
10. Where you do not apply this policy, you may be held responsible for your online conduct where your conduct harms or has the potential to harm the reputation or interests of the A AFC or its **parent organisations**, another **A AFC member** or an **affiliated person**.

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POLICY COMPLIANCE

11. The AAFC appreciates that when you participate in online communities you may witness a suspected breach of this policy or negative, disparaging or inaccurate content about an AAFC member, the AAFC or its [parent organisations](#) online. These matters are to be brought to the attention of your [AAFC supervisor](#) or [AAFC commander](#) in the first instance.
12. The AAFC or its [parent organisations](#) may audit its networks and systems and review social media websites periodically to monitor compliance with this policy.

DECLARATION OF PAST OR CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS

13. All current staff must remove all current cadets from their friend links. A declaration by all members is to be completed and stored on the member's personnel file. Suggested minimum wording of the declaration is:

"I certify that to the best of my knowledge I have removed all current cadets from my friend links."

14. When joining as [AAFC staff](#), the applicant is to remove all current [Cadets](#) from their [friend](#) links prior to appointment.
15. Exemption from this declaration is approved where [AAFC staff](#) are also in a direct family relationship with a cadet such as parent/guardian or sibling. Other relatives, who are [AAFC staff](#) members and who wish to have a cadet as a "[friend](#)", are to seek approval from their [AAFC commander](#). The [AAFC commander](#) responsible is to maintain a written record of that approval on the members' file

CONSEQUENCE OF BREACH

16. Any breach of this policy may result in administrative action. Administrative actions may involve a verbal or written warning, or, in serious cases, for example for breach of confidentiality or privacy, termination of your engagement with the AAFC. [AAFC members](#) may also be personally liable for offences under Commonwealth and/or State and Territory legislation.
17. Staff establishing one-to-one relationships via SNS will be held to account and required to demonstrate that their actions do not constitute a code of conduct violation.
18. [AAFC members](#) may also be personally liable where they defame or damage the reputation of the AAFC or its [parent organisations](#) or an [affiliated person](#).

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