

**Policy Title: Office of Information Technology Social Media Platform Policy**

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**Responsible Office:** Office of Information Technology

**Responsible Official:** Associate Vice President & CIO of Information Technology

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# Scope

This policy applies to all students and staff of the University of New Haven (“community members”). For purposes of this policy, “staff” includes faculty, employees, contractors, consultants, temporary and other workers of the University of New Haven. This policy applies without restriction regarding where or how social media is accessed by a community member.

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# Policy Statement

The University of New Haven recognizes the importance and utility of social media for its community members. Social media is frequently used by members of the University community to communicate with each other and external constituencies about University events and programs. The University also uses social media outlets to make news announcements, advertise events, build community and brand awareness, and highlight accomplishments of students, employees, and alumni.

The University of New Haven values its community members and recognizes that each person contributes to the overall success of the institution. The culture of the University is one of respect, civility, trust, cooperation, and collaboration among all members. The University values and promotes an environment that ensures collegiality and mutual respect for all.

While this policy cannot anticipate or address every instance of inappropriate social media use, it establishes standards for the business use of social media and guidelines and expectations for personal use of social media by community members.

The laws regarding social media continue to evolve and change. Nothing in this policy is intended to limit or restrict an individual’s ability to engage in all forms of lawfully protected speech on social media or personal online accounts. The University will resolve any conflict between this policy and applicable law in favor of the law.

# Definitions

## Social media

The rapid speed at which technology continuously evolves makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify all types of social media. The term “social media” includes any application, website, or other online presence that allows users to publish content and/or interact with their audience or other social media users. By way of example, social media includes, but is not limited to:

* social-networking websites and applications (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.);
* blogs and micro-blogs (e.g., X (formerly Twitter);
* content sharing (e.g., DropBox)
* image sharing, video sharing, or livestreaming (e.g., Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube);
* other sharing websites or applications (e.g., Reddit, YikYak, WhatsApp, Tik Tok).

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**University-Sponsored Social Media Account**

University-Sponsored Social Media Accounts include social media accounts that are sponsored, approved, and/or maintained by the University or one of its departments, offices, programs, or units**.** Such accountsmay use the “University of New Haven” name, abbreviation, logo or other insignia in the handle, description, or bio.

**University-Affiliated Social Media Account**

University-Affiliated Social Media Accounts are the official university voices in social media and are managed by the university’s marketing, athletics, or other departments determined by the university officers.

**Personal Online Account**

Personal online accounts include any online account that is used by staff exclusively for personal purposes and unrelated to any business purpose of the University, including, but not limited to electronic mail, social media and retail-based Internet websites. Personal online account does not include any account created, maintained, used or accessed by an employee for a business, educational or instructional purposes of the University.

# Policy Sections

## 7080.1 Business Use

Only University staff authorized by the University may post to University-Sponsored Social Media Accounts to share information about the University. Prior to using social media to publish information online on behalf of the University, the proposed post must be approved for publication by marketing or appropriately designated area**.** If authorized and in keeping with University policy, an authorized staff member may post the following on a University-Sponsored Social Media Account: the University’s name, abbreviation, logo or other insignia; a University email address or University telephone number for contact purposes; and/or official University information, resources, calendars, and events.

## 7080.2 Personal Use

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Community members may not use social media, including a personal online account, in a manner that misrepresents a community member’s personal views as those of the University or any of its departments, offices, programs or units, or in a manner that could be construed as such.If a community member posts material that may reasonably be construed as attributable to the University, the material shall be accompanied by a disclaimer - an explicit statement that the individual is speaking for themselves and not as a representative of the University or any of its departments, offices, programs or units.

University staff shall not post or use the University’s name, abbreviation, logo or other insignia, University telephone numbers, University email addresses, and University images and logos on personal social media profiles for personal purposes. However, a University staff member or member of a University-recognized student organization may use their University title for identification purposes. If the use of such title may reasonably be construed as University endorsement of the community member’s personal statements, including opinions or views on any issue, an explicit disclaimer explaining that the views presented are those of the individual, not the University, must appear with the material.

An example of the disclaimers referenced in this section is: “The opinions and views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the position or opinion of the University of New Haven or any of its departments or programs.”

##  Prohibited Conduct

Community member use of social media must be consistent with this policy and must not violate any other University policies or procedures.

As such, staff must refrain from social media use that:

* Interferes with, disrupts, or undermines the effective operation of the University;
* Is used to engage in harassing, discriminatory, defamatory, obscene, abusive, threatening or similar conduct;
* Creates a hostile work environment;
* Breaches confidentiality obligations;
* Violates the law; and/or
* Violates the Employee Handbook or any other University contracts, policies, rules, or regulations applicable to staff.

All University policies, rules, and regulations apply to use of social media accounts in the same way that they apply to conduct that occurs in person.

If a community member becomes aware of social media use that violates this policy, the community member should report such conduct to the Office of Human Resources and/or file a complaint through the University’s Report It tool ([www.newhaven.edu/reportit](http://www.newhaven.edu/reportit)). If a community member becomes aware of Social Media use that may endanger individuals and/or constitute a crime, the community member is encouraged to contact the University Police Department.

Similarly, students must refrain from social media use that:

* Interferes with, disrupts, or undermines the effective operation of the University;
* Is used to engage in harassing, discriminatory, defamatory, obscene, abusive, threatening or similar conduct;
* Creates a hostile environment;
* Violates the law; and/or
* Violates the Student Code of Conduct or any other University policies, rules, or regulations applicable to students; and/or

All University policies, rules, and regulations apply to use of social media accounts in the same way that they apply to conduct that occurs in person.

If a community member becomes aware of social media use that violates this policy, the community member should report such conduct to the Dean of Students Office and/or file a complaint through the University’s Report It tool ([www.newhaven.edu/reportit](http://www.newhaven.edu/reportit)). If a community member becomes aware of Social Media use that may endanger individuals and/or constitute a crime, the community member is encouraged to contact the University Police Department.

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## 7080.5 Monitoring

In accordance with the University’s Acceptable Use Policy and applicable law, the University reserves the right to monitor all use of its information technology resources, including any social media activity conducted via University owned, licensed, or managed hardware, software, and networks. A community member should have no expectation of personal privacy in any communication made through social media while using the University’s information technology resources, including but not limited to when such resources are used for social media purposes.

University officials and University systems administrators may perform activities necessary to ensure the integrity, functionality, and security of the University’s information technology resources, including but not limited to University-Sponsored Social Media Accounts and University-Affiliated Social Media Accounts.

On their own initiative and/or in response to concerns, complaints, or information provided by individuals, University administrators may review publicly available profiles on social media sites and may use the information in informal or formal proceedings.

As to personal online accounts, except as provided below, the University shall not:

1. Request or require that an employee provide his/her username, password, or other means of authentication of a personal online account.
2. Request or require that an employee authenticate or access a personal online account in the presence of his/her supervisor.
3. Request or require that an employee invite or accept an invitation from his/her supervisor or to join a group with the employee’s personal online account.

Notwithstanding the above, the University may request or require that an employee provide his/her username, password or other means of authentication for accessing an account or service provided by the University or used by the employee for University business purposes or any electronic communications device supplied by or paid for, in whole or in part, by the University.

Nothing in this policy shall prevent the University from conducting an investigation for the purpose of ensuring compliance with applicable state or federal laws, regulatory requirements or prohibitions against work-related employee misconduct based on the receipt of specific information about an activity on an employee’s personal online account or based on specific information about the transfer of confidential information to or from an employee’s personal online account. During the course of such investigation, the University may require an employee to allow the University to access his or her personal online account for the purpose of conducting such investigation. However, the employee will not be required to provide his/her username and/or password or other authentication means in order for the University to access the personal online account.

**7080.6 Enforcement and Disciplinary Consequences**

This policy is intended to help inform University community members of their obligation to use social media in a responsible manner. Failure to conform to the guidelines established by this policy could result in disciplinary action, personal liability, or other penalties.

For staff, violation of this policy may lead to discipline up to and including the termination of employment and/or cancellation of contract, consistent with applicable agreements and state and federal law.

For students, violation of this policy may lead to discipline, up to and including dismissal from the University, consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and Student Conduct Procedures.

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##  Social Networking Considerations

The University of New Haven advises the use of discretion when posting information online. Community members should consider and be aware of the following:

* Information posted online may continue to remain available well after erased or deleted from an individual’s account.
* Posted content online can be retrieved or accessed by many, including future employers, campus organizations, graduate schools, and others.
* Community members are individually responsible for their personal communications through social media and personal online accounts. Employees may be sued by other employees, parents or others, and any individual that views an employee’s communication through social media and personal online accounts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. In addition, employees should refrain from posting anything that belongs to another person or entity, such as copyrighted publications or trademarked images.
* By agreeing to the terms of use, social media sites may have a user’s permission to republish content or to share information with advertisers, third parties, and law enforcement, among others. Use caution when accessing sites, as services may be “free” to use, but may be subject to contractual terms binding the user or University. Individual users are prohibited from knowingly binding the University to contractual obligations without approval either when creating or using a social media account.
* Official news and announcements from the University come directly from University-Sponsored Social Media Accounts and should not originate from personal online accounts. Community members may share official posts by the University by reposting/posting links to official communications from the University in their original context. University staff who are unsure whether information has been publicly released should consult with the Office of Marketing & Communications before posting.
* The University’s website and internal communications channels are the official source of information during emergencies and other major campus events. Unless directed otherwise, University staff may share or repost messages from the University website to ensure information is communicated accurately and consistently. During a public safety emergency, the University’s Police Department or Office of Marketing & Communications may request that community members not post to University and/or personal social media accounts to avoid risks to the safety of others.