**SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE FOR LEARNERS**

Social media is a great tool for connection but comes with risks.

In real life you choose your friends, choose who you meet and spend time with. You choose who you share your secrets with and who sees your photos. In the online world there is less control, boundaries can blur, and information can be shared very widely at the push of a button.

At ACL we recognise the benefits of internet use for learning and sharing safely. ACL do not condone the use of class WhatsApp groups as this gives everyone access to your personal contact details. ACL do encourage collaboration and your tutor will use tools such as the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment), Teams and Padlet for you to communicate with class peers without sharing personal contact details.

**Tips for Safe Use:**

* **Privacy Settings**: Use setting to control who sees your posts and personal information.
* **Limit Personal Information**: Be cautious about sharing personal information and images. It’s generally a good rule to avoid posting anything you wouldn’t want a stranger to know or see. In this way you can reduce the risk of [doxing](https://www.cybersmile.org/advice-help/doxing) and fraud. The Online Safety Act 2023 has now made the following a crime:
  + to take, make, share or keep an indecent photo or video of a child under 18.
  + to share an intimate image without consent
  + Includes images that are fake or altered
* **Connect with Trusted Networks**: Try to connect with people you know and trust, like friends, family, or classmates. Be very cautious accepting friend requests from people you do not know or from celebrities. Scammers often pretend to be someone else.
  + Please don’t add others to a group chat (WhatsApp/Messenger etc) without their express permission.
  + Don’t feel obliged to join an online group.
* **Ask for Help When Needed**: Don’t hesitate to ask for help if you’re unsure about how to use a feature or if you encounter something that makes you uncomfortable.
* **Take Regular Breaks**: Spending too much time on social media can be overwhelming. Make sure to take regular breaks to rest and refresh.
* **Research Effectively. Remember not all information online is true.** Compare the information with other reputable sources. If multiple reliable sources agree, it's more likely to be accurate, however if a source contradicts well-established facts or consensus, be sceptical.
* **Artificial Intelligence (AI) – is hugely useful in all walks of life. We use AI daily, whether it is talking to Alexa/Google, predictive text, or the** [algorithms](https://sphero.com/blogs/news/real-world-algorithm-examples) **found on social media sites, Netflix and selling sites such as Amazon. Algorithms review what we spend time looking at or click on to provide us with recommendations for similar content. The downside to this is it narrows what appears on your feed so you may find you only get stories about dogs for instance and miss out on other content. (It is important to consider when you want an unbiased view you need to search widely and not rely on the algorithms in one source to provide the content for you).** 
  + **AI is becoming more sophisticated every day and whilst this technology could be potentially lifesaving when used by NHS for example it also provides fraudsters with an additional tool to convince people they are ‘legitimate’. Try this site to see if you can identify an AI generated image of a person compared to an image of a real person:** [Which face is real?](https://www.whichfaceisreal.com/index.php) **Can you tell the difference?**
* **Prevent: One of the darker sides of social media is the ease at which some people can be radicalised towards hate or terror activities** [Prevent](https://aclessex.com/learner-induction-and-information/)
* **Report and Block Unwanted Users**: If you encounter any harassment or unwanted attention, use the report and block features provided by the platform.
* **Be Respectful**: Treat others with kindness and respect. Remember, there’s a real person behind every profile.
* **Enjoy and Learn**: social media can be a great tool for learning and connecting with others. Enjoy the experience and use it as an opportunity to learn new things.

**Useful Links:**

[**Report/Remove**](https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/)Helps young people under 18 in the UK to confidentially report sexual images and videos of themselves and remove them from the internet

[**Reporting Bullying/Abuse on Social Media platforms**](https://bulliesout.com/need-support/young-people/cyber-bullying/report-bullying-abuse-social-media/)This site explains how to report abuse direct to platforms such as Twitter, Face Book, Instagram and Snapchat etc.

[**Reporting Harmful Content**](https://reportharmfulcontent.com/) This site provides guidance about reporting harmful content and when to refer to the police.

[**Need help? - UK Safer Internet Centre**](https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/need-help)This site provides a wealth of information, advice and links to help you use the internet safely and how to report concerns

[**Are you at risk of online fraud?**](https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/are-you-at-risk/why-you-might-be-more-at-risk-than-you-think/) This.gov.uk site describes the things to look out for to minimise your risk of fraud or being scammed.

**Policies:**

* [ACL Online Safety Policy](https://aclessex.com/policies/)
* [AI Policy](https://aclessex.com/policies/)
* [ACL Computer Use Policy](https://aclessex.com/policies/)
* [ACL Positive Behaviours Policy](https://aclessex.com/policies/)
* [ACL Safeguarding and Prevent Policy](https://aclessex.com/policies/)
* [ACL Exams Assessment and Examination Malpractice](https://aclessex.com/policies/)