

CHAPTER 5

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ADF CADETS

INTRODUCTION

4.5.1 Social media is an integral part of society and an important form of communication, education and social interaction, particularly among youth. ADF Cadets has a responsibility to ensure ADF Cadets Youth are protected from abuse and sexual exploitation by the safe use of social media within ADF Cadets. Inappropriate use of social media presents a reputational risk for ADF Cadets Adults and Youth participants, the Services and their cadet programs and/or Defence.

4.5.2 Social media and online environments refer to technological devices and platforms including social network services.

POLICY INTENT

4.5.3 The intent of this policy is to outline the youth protection risks associated with the use of social media within the ADF Cadets environment to ensure ADF Cadets Youth are protected from abuse and sexual exploitation and ADF Cadets Adults/Youth are equipped and informed with the knowledge and skills to use social media appropriately and in a youth safe manner.

4.5.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with [Part 1 Section 6 Chapter 3](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA RISKS

4.5.5 Social media may be a vehicle for child exploitation through grooming or taking, sharing or posting sexualised photographs or videos of oneself or other people under the age of consent. Grooming is an offence regardless whether it is conducted in the physical or online environment. Taking, sharing or posting sexualised photographs or videos of oneself or other people under the age of consent is a crime under child pornography laws.

4.5.6 Cyber bullying refers to bullying through media such as mobile telephone text messages, emails, telephone calls, internet chat rooms, instant messaging and social media networks to support deliberate, repeated and hostile online behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

POLICY PRACTICES AND MEASURES

4.5.7 Grooming or taking, sharing or posting sexualised photographs or videos of cadets in the ADF Cadets organisation who are over the age of 18, but subject to special care provisions due to their participation in the ADF Cadets program, is an offence subject to disciplinary and/or administrative action.

4.5.8 The use of ADF Cadets imagery must present cadets in a positive way that does not contain references to, or could be misinterpreted as tactical training or any of the other prohibited military like activities outlined in Section 3, Chapter 2, Annex A. Any imagery involving cadet handling of firearms/weapons should be vetted to ensure it complies with this requirement.

4.5.9 Cyber bullying is unacceptable behaviour which breaches the ADF Cadets Codes of Conduct and is not tolerated. Any participant who suffers from, or becomes aware of cyber bullying must report it immediately to their chain of command.

4.5.10 Director General Australian Navy Cadets (DGANC), the Commander Australian Army Cadets (COMD AAC) and the Director General Cadets - Air Force (DGCADETS-AF) must ensure ADF Cadets Youth are protected from abuse and sexual exploitation through the safe use of social media in accordance with [Part 1, Section 6, Chapter 3](#) and relevant Service Social Media policies.

ADULT TO CADET RELATIONS

4.5.11 Relationships between ADF Cadets Adults and Youth must remain professional at all times, including online relationships. DGANC, COMD AAC and DGCADETS-AF must ensure ADF Cadet Adults are aware of their responsibility to declare any personal relationship with a cadet on social media in accordance with Section 2, Chapter 2 and [Part 1, Section 6, Chapter 3](#).

REPORTING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

4.5.12 Any instance of misconduct or misuse of social media must be reported immediately and investigated by the relevant Cadet organisation. ADF Cadets are to ensure any participant who has reasonable grounds to believe that there has been, or may have been, an incident of grooming, child pornography, child abuse or exploitation involving an ADF Cadets participant, must report the matter to State or Territory civil police, the relevant child protection authorities and their relevant cadet organisation chain of command in accordance with [Part 1, Section 3, Chapter 3](#).

Accountable Officer: Chief of Personnel

Policy Owner: Head Reserve and Cadet Support Division