

Social Media Policy

National Association of Extension 4-H Agents

Adopted January 2010



NAE4-HA recognizes the impact that online social media services and related collaboration technologies are having and will continue to have on the business of the association. These tools give us a means to improve communication with both the general public and our membership about what NAE4-HA does to meet its mission, vision and goals. The benefits gained by using these tools safely and efficiently, however, must be weighed against the real risks to personal and network security that their irresponsible use entails.

NAE4-HA's mission is to provide its members an inclusive and supportive network for professional development. Blogging and other social media applications have become increasingly important arenas for the type of engagement and communication we encourage. There are a variety of online social media tools that allow individuals to communicate their insights, express their opinions and share information within the context of a globally distributed conversation. Each of these tools has proper and improper uses. While NAE4-HA encourages all of its members to communicate, it is important for everyone to understand what is recommended, expected and required when they discuss NAE4-HA-related topics, whether at work or on their own time.

NAE4-HA members should follow their University policies and guidelines for employees' activities, in respect to recommendations, political activity, computer use/time, and photography/video use.

The following are policies for NAE4-HA members when creating or participating in an online social media site affiliated with NAE4-HA. By posting on any NAE4-HA social media sites, the member agrees to these terms. NAE4-HA has openly public facing pages (public pages example: fan page on Facebook or the first page of a blog) on social media sites for viewing content and/or videos and posting comments about NAE4-HA. Those social media sites include but are not limited to various blogs, bulletin boards, networks, multi-media and news media sites or other user generated content sites ("social media sites"). By accessing, viewing, and/or posting any content related directly or indirectly to NAE4-HA on any site on the Internet, the member accepts, without limitation or qualification, the following terms of use. If members do not agree to the terms of this Policy, they may not view or post any content to any NAE4-HA approved social media site on the Internet. Member use of social media sites is acceptance of this Policy and has the same effect as if the member physically signed an agreement.

NAE4-HA Social Media Policy

1. All NAE4-HA presence on a public social network (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, etc.) must be approved by the NAE4-HA VP Council.
2. The NAE4-HA President's Council will grant permission to those who have authority to officially speak on NAE4-HA's behalf.

3. When a member communicates through social media, unless authorized to speak on behalf of NAE4-HA, they are representing themselves.
4. NAE4-HA reserves the right to monitor, prohibit, restrict, block, suspend, terminate, delete or discontinue a member's access to any social media site approved by NAE4-HA, at any time, without notice and for any reason and at its sole discretion. NAE4-HA may remove, delete, block, filter, or restrict by any other means any materials at NAE4-HA's sole discretion. NAE4-HA may disclose any communications and/or activities with NAE4-HA in response to lawful requests by governmental authorities, including Freedom of Information Act requests, judicial orders, warrants and subpoenas, and for the protection of NAE4-HA rights. The member agrees that in the event that NAE4-HA exercises any of its rights hereunder for any reason, NAE4-HA will have no liability to the member.
5. By posting any content on a NAE4-HA-approved social media site, NAE4-HA is granted the irrevocable rights to reproduce, distribute, publish, and display such content, and the right to create derivative works from the content, edit or modify such content and use such content for any NAE4-HA purposes.
6. Those participating in any NAE4-HA social media sites shall defend, indemnify and hold NAE4-HA and its respective officers, directors, employees, contractors, agents, successors and assigns harmless from and against, and shall promptly reimbursement NAE4-HA for, any or all losses, claims, damages, settlements, costs and liabilities of any nature whatsoever (including reasonable attorneys' fees) to which any of them may become subject arising out of, based upon, as a result of, or in any way connected with, a member's posting of any content to a social media site, any third party claims of infringement or any breach of this Policy.
7. The member expressly acknowledge that he/she assumes all responsibility related to the security, privacy, and confidentiality risks inherent in sending any content over the Internet. By its very nature, a website and the Internet cannot be absolutely protected against intentional or malicious intrusion attempts. NAE4-HA does not control the third party sites and the Internet over which the member may choose to send confidential personal or health information or other content and therefore NAE4-HA does not warrant any safeguard against any such interceptions or compromises to personal information when posting any content on an internet site, the member must carefully consider his or her own privacy in disclosing detailed or private information about themselves or their family. Furthermore, NAE4-HA does not endorse any product, service, view or content displayed on the social media site.
8. The member may not provide any content to a social media site that contains any product or service endorsements or any content that may be construed as political lobbying, solicitations, or contributions or use the social media site to link to any sites or political candidates or parties or use the social media site to discuss political campaigns or issues or for taking a position on any legislation or law.
9. Write in first person. Where the member's connection with NAE4-HA is apparent, the member needs to make it clear that he/she is speaking for themselves and not on behalf of NAE4-HA. In those circumstances, the member may want to include a disclaimer "The views expressed on this (blog, website, etc) are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer or NAE4-HA." The NAE4-HA member should consider adding this language in an "About Me" section of his/her blog or social networking profile.

10. If members communicate in the public Internet about NAE4-HA or NAE4-HA-related matters, they must disclose their connection with NAE4-HA and their role within 4-H Youth Development. Members are to use good judgment and strive for accuracy in their communications; errors or omissions reflect poorly on NAE4-HA and the 4-H Youth Development profession.
11. The member should follow the Code of Professionalism that NAE4-HA adopted and promotes; the code can be found on the NAE4-HA website at www.nae4ha.com.
12. This policy may be updated at any time without notice, and each time a user accesses a social networking site, the new policy will govern usage, effective upon posting. To remain in compliance, NAE4-HA suggests that members review the policy, as well as other website policies, at regular intervals. By continuing to post any content after such new terms are posted, the member accepts and agree to any and all such modifications to this Policy.

NAE4-HA Social Media Guidelines:

- A. NAE4-HA regards blogs and other forms of online social networking as primarily a form of communication and relationship between individuals. When NAE4-HA wishes to communicate publicly, whether to its members, the media, or to the general public, it has a well-established means of doing so. Only those officially designated by NAE4-HA have the authorization to speak on behalf of NAE4-HA.
- B. Respect the audience. As an association that values diversity, NAE4-HA would expect that members would not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, or obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be accepted by NAE4-HA. Also don't talk down to the readers and communicate clearly.
- C. Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and exercise caution when disclosing personal information.
- D. Use a disclaimer. If you write anything related to your work within NAE4-HA on a blog or some other online social network, make it clear that what you say there is representative of your views and opinions and you are not presenting yourself as a spokesperson for NAE4-HA. Use a disclaimer such as: "I am a member of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents; however, this is my personal opinion," or something to that effect. Of course, this would only apply to writings that mention NAE4-HA business-related topics.
- E. NAE4-HA respects members' right to free speech. Members are free to express themselves and their opinions in whatever way they see fit as long as they are clearly representing themselves as individuals and not members of NAE4-HA. Again, members only need to disclose their affiliation with NAE4-HA if they are writing specifically about NAE4-HA.
- F. Board members or those in task force leadership positions have a unique responsibility. A standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt NAE4-HA board members or task force leaders from a special responsibility when blogging or otherwise communicating in online public spaces. By virtue of their position, NAE4-HA board members and/or task force leaders must consider whether their personal thoughts may be misunderstood as an official NAE4-HA position.
- G. Be accurate and factual. It is important to stick to the facts and to identify your actual NAE4-HA affiliation. Here, and in other areas of public discussion, make sure that what you are saying is factually correct, and do not make inflammatory statements or attempt to engage in an

aggressive or defensive way. When you are replying to a question regarding a policy for 4-H Youth Development programs, be sure to preface your response with the fact that this is how it is done in your state/county programs. Remember that not all states have the same guidelines and you don't want to give someone the impression that your policy is the only way something is done. An example of that could be related to volunteer screening. If someone asks a question about if a volunteer's background check can be accepted from another institution, you might answer: "In Idaho, it is not acceptable to accept a background check from another agency--all 4-H volunteers must be sent through the approved company for their 4-H background check--but check with your State 4-H Office for the official guidelines for your particular state." When you see a misrepresentation or inaccurate information made about NAE4-HA or 4-H Youth Development on a NAE4-HA-approved social media site, you should inform an authorized NAE4-HA spokesperson, and they will decide if or how to respond. While you may certainly use your blog/social media site-or join someone else's-to point out discrepancies, do so respectfully, factually and with the disclaimer that the views you are expressing are your own and you are not speaking on behalf of NAE4-HA.

- H. Use your best judgment. Remember that there can be consequences to what you publish in any format. Assume that what you post on social media sites or blogs will be part of a permanent public record, accessible to members, colleagues, friends and members of the media. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review the suggestions above and think twice about posting it. If you are still unsure, and it is related to NAE4-HA business, refrain from commenting and discuss it with a member of the NAE4-HA Vice President's Council. Ultimately, you have sole responsibility for what you post on your blog or publish in any form of online social media.
- I. Remember your day job. Engagement in social media will vary, depending on its relevance to a person's job in NAE4-HA. Discuss with your supervisor what the computer and communications usage policy is for your university, especially as it related to time spent online while at work.
- J. Be respectful and professional to fellow NAE4-HA members and youth development professionals. Avoid using unprofessional online personas.
- K. It is a good rule of thumb to think of *all* social media as the same as writing a signed letter to the editor of a newspaper. Don't speak for NAE4-HA, clearly state who you are and your relationship to the topic, make it clear you are representing your own ideas, and finally, don't write anything that you would be embarrassed to see on the front page of a print publication.
- L. If you are not sure about pursuing a form of social media outreach, or have a question about it, discuss it with a member of the NAE4-HA Vice President's Council. You should use the same good judgment about discussing NAE4-HA information online as you would in an elevator or any location where non-member/4-H Youth Development professional may overhear.

Adapted from Cleveland Clinic Social Media Policy, Department of Defense Media User Agreement, ASHA Social Media Guidelines for ASHA Employees, and Mayo Clinic Social Media Policy.