



Unauthorized Social Media Posting or Account Misuse

Responding to Unauthorized Social Media Posting or Account Misuse

Unauthorized Social Media Posting or Account Misuse occurs when someone accesses your social media account without permission and posts content pretending to be you. The content may be intended as a “joke,” but often causes emotional distress, reputational damage, harassment, or disciplinary consequences.

Unauthorized Social Media Posting or Account Misuse may involve:

- Embarrassing or offensive posts
- Sexual, political, or inflammatory content
- Messages sent to friends or coworkers
- Changes to your profile or settings
- Posts that violate school, workplace, or platform rules

Regardless of intent, unauthorized social media posting/account misuse is unauthorized account access and can lead to account, school, work, or legal consequences.

Unauthorized Social Media Posting or Account Misuse – Do This First

Secure Your Account Immediately

If you still have access:

- Change your social media password right away
- Log out of all active sessions
- Review and remove:
 - Unknown devices
 - Third-party app connections
- Update recovery email and phone number if needed
- If you cannot access the account:
 - Use the platform’s account recovery process immediately

Preserve Evidence

Before deleting posts or messages:

- Screenshot:
 - Unauthorized posts
 - Messages sent without your consent
 - Profile changes
 - Login alerts or device notifications





- Record:
 - Dates and times
 - Platforms involved
 - Any impact (school, work, harassment)

This documentation is important if the situation escalates.

Remove the Content (Once Evidence Is Saved)

If the content includes threats, intimate images, or illegal material, preserve evidence and report before deleting.

- Delete unauthorized posts or messages
- Undo profile changes
- Review privacy settings to limit further exposure

Contain the Damage

Address the Impact Calmly

If appropriate:

- Post a brief clarification (optional and factual)
- Avoid emotional explanations or blame online
- Do not engage in arguments about the content

Silence plus correction is often more effective than public confrontation.

Notify Affected Parties

If unauthorized social media posting/account misuse impacted:

- School or university
- Employer or coworkers
- Clubs or organizations

Notify them promptly and factually that your account was compromised.

If the Person Who Accessed Your Accounts Is Known

Unauthorized Social Media Posting or Account Misuse is often done by:

- Friends
- Classmates
- Coworkers
- Family members

Even if intended as a joke:





- Do not dismiss the harm
- Do not retaliate
- Address the behavior offline if safe to do so
- Preserve evidence in case the behavior repeats or escalates

If there is a history of harassment or coercion, seek guidance before confronting.

When to Escalate

Report the incident if:

- The content caused significant reputational damage
- Harassment or threats followed
- The account was used for impersonation or scams
- The behavior is repeated or targeted

Report the Incident

- National Reporting
 - FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3)
<https://www.ic3.gov>
 - Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - report consumer fraud and scams at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.
- Ohio Resources
 - Ohio Attorney General – Identity Theft & Cybercrime Help
<https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov>
Hotline: 800-282-0515
- Geauga County
 - Geauga County Sheriff's Office
<https://www.geaugasheriff.org>
 - Local police non-emergency line if harassment, impersonation, or threats occur
 - Use 911 for active or escalating threats

Recovery – After Your Account Is Secured

- Monitor your account closely for several weeks
- Watch for fake profiles or impersonation
- Review friends/followers and remove unfamiliar accounts
- Reassess privacy and login settings

How to Reduce the Risk of Unauthorized Social Media Posting or Account Misuse

- Log out of accounts on shared or public devices
- Be cautious about staying logged in on friends' devices
- Treat social media access as personal, not communal





- Speak up early if someone jokes about accessing your account
- Ask for help quickly, delay increases harm

