ANNEX – Singapore's Online Safety Code of Practice – Enhancing User Safety, Empowering Users, Ensuring Accountability

What does this Online Safety Code mean for me as a user of social media services?

Providers of designated SMSs are now legally required to minimise users'exposure to harmful content and provide additional protection for children (see potential scenarios and how these apply to users in Singapore).

The categories of harmful content include:

a. Sexual content

b. Violent content

c. Suicide and self-harm content

d. Cyberbullying content

e. Content endangering public health

f. Content facilitating vice and organised crime

SCENARIO 01

Quinn wishes to stop receiving messages from strangers on his public profile on one of the designated SMSs. What can he do?

Designated SMSs are required to provide tools for users to mitigate the impact of unwanted interactions. For example, Quinn may be able to adjust the visibility of his profile on the designated SMS to restrict who can view his profile and reach out to him.

Designated SMSs must also ensure that they provide easy-to-access and easy-to-understand information on such tools.

SCENARIO 02

14 year-old Melissa has been receiving content recommendations promoting eating disorders via her account's feed on one of the designated SMSs. What can she do?

As part of additional measures in place to protect children, designated SMSs must ensure that children are not targeted to receive content that the designated SMSs are reasonably aware to be detrimental to their physical/ mental well-being.

Melissa can report harmful content* to the designated SMS for removal. Designated SMSs are required to have easy reporting mechanisms for users, and to inform users of their decisions and actions taken for each report without undue delay.

*Harmful content include sexual content, violent content, suicide and self-harm content, cyberbullying content, content endangering public health as well as content facilitating vice and organised crime.

Does the Online Safety Code require safety measures to be put in place for at-risk or vulnerable users, such as those who actively search for self-harm or suicide content?

Users who use high-risk search terms such as those relating to self-harm or suicide must be actively offered relevant local safety information that is easy for users to understand. This must include Singapore-based safety resources or information on support centres. For example, a user who searches for suicide methods should be pushed information on local resources he/she can approach for assistance/support.

What does the Online Safety Code do to protect children? How does this help me keep my children safe online?

We recognise that children will need more protection to ensure a safer online space for them. The Online Safety Code thus requires that designated SMSs have additional safeguards in place for children. This must include:

- Differentiated accounts for children. Most designated SMSs already require users to be at least 13 years old to register for an account, users have to declare their date of birth at the point of registration. Designated SMSs will be able to apply age-appropriate policies to accounts belonging to children, including content moderation.

- These accounts should not become targets to receive advertisements, promoted content and content recommendations that designated SMSs are reasonably aware to be detrimental to children's physical or mental well-being.

- A set of community guidelines appropriate for children that are put in place and effected by designated SMSs. The community guidelines should minimally cover sexual content, violence, suicide and self-harm and cyberbullying content.

- Online safety information, that children can easily understand, made available to children.

- Designated SMSs may also put in place tools for parents/guardians to manage the content that their children view, the public visibility of their accounts, parties who can contact and interact with them and location sharing.

Why is it important to me that designated SMSs have community standards?

Community standards are a set of guidelines and rules that designated SMSs must have in place to clearly define what is and is not allowed on their services. Each designated SMS can have their own set of community standards relevant to their unique user profiles and context. However, these community standards must cover the categories of harmful content outlined in the Online Safety Code.

Designated SMSs must enforce their community standards through effective content moderation, including removing content that they deem to be in violation of their community standards, or blocking or banning users for violations.