



## 2022 FBLA-MIDDLE LEVEL BUSINESS ETHICS

### TOPIC/CASE STUDY

Middle school student Esmerelda posts a picture of her recent beach trip with friends on Instagram. In the picture, she is wearing a swimsuit and standing by the ocean. However, she learns later that the post has been removed from the platform because of “inappropriate content.” Esmerelda is confused. Her post wasn’t inappropriate! She also notices that her friends each posted a similar picture of themselves from the trip, and their posts weren’t removed.

She starts to wonder how social media companies identify inappropriate content on their platforms. After researching online, Esmerelda realizes why her post might have been the only one removed: she has a bigger body than her friends do, so her image technically shows more skin than the other photos. As a result, the platform flagged the post as “inappropriate content.”

Esmerelda knows that social media platforms like Instagram have rules about what people can and cannot post. These guidelines are typically created to protect users from inappropriate content. But in this case, Esmerelda doesn’t think Instagram is enforcing the rules consistently. What happens when some people are treated differently by a social media platform than others? Are these platforms given too much power when it comes to deciding which content is OK to post? Who should ultimately decide?

#### **Suggested Questions to Consider:**

- What ethical issue exists in this scenario?
- Are social media platforms responsible for protecting their users from content that could be inappropriate?
- Are content guidelines ethical? Should they exist at all?
- How could social media platforms like Instagram make sure to treat all users fairly?
- Should Esmerelda just accept Instagram’s decision to remove her post? Why or why not?

#### **Make Sure the Presentation Addresses the Following:**

- Why the ethical issue happened?
- How the ethical issue should be resolved.
- What could have prevented the ethical issue.