



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Cork ETB in any role in any Office/Centre/School/College/Institute.

Purpose

This policy has been developed to provide all employees with clear guidelines and directions when utilising any types of social media channels. These services include but are not limited to Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Blogging, Twitter, YouTube, Vimeo, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Periscope and includes the use of such services via mobile phones. It is recognised that new social media applications, channels or services can emerge rapidly, and this policy will apply to use of any such applications, channels or services, current and future. This policy defines the employee's responsibilities whilst participating in social media networking either personally or on behalf of Cork ETB. This policy covers all types of interactions on social media including but not limited to posts/tweets, upload or linking to photos and videos, comments, likes/favourites/retweets/shares, friend/contact requests etc.

Cork ETB recognises that the use of Social Media provides many educational and organisational benefits. However there are also dangers through inappropriate use that may compromise a member of Cork ETB staff or may bring Cork ETB into disrepute.

This policy should be read in conjunction with either Cork ETB or individual School/College Centre policies on:-

- Acceptable Usage of Information & Communication Technology
- Code of Practice for Staff Interaction with Learners
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Child Protection Policies
- Harassment and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Code of Practice for Protection of Personal Data in ETBs
- Data Protection Policy
- Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
- Student Code of Conduct/Behaviour

Guidelines for Professional Use of Social Media

Social Media Account Set-Up

- Any new accounts in the name of Cork ETB or in the name of an individual school/institute/centre cannot be opened without written prior approval/sign off from senior management (Principal, Coordinator, AEO, APO or similar).
- Each school/centre should maintain a record of usernames and passwords for their social media accounts, whether at Head Office or School/Centre level. Passwords should be changed regularly, and the record updated accordingly. The log should also include a list of approved administrators for the page. At least 2 members of staff should have administrator rights to each official Cork ETB page/identity to allow for situations where an employee may be absent on leave etc.*
- In setting up new accounts, no personal identifiers should be used; school/centre/organisational email addresses (or other equivalent identifiers) only should be used.*
- Employees who are responsible for maintaining these accounts, monitoring, answering queries, etc must use the approved administrator identities and should be clearly identifiable as acting on behalf of the organisation.
- New social media accounts/channels should be notified to the Corporate Services department on set-up.
- Facebook pages for schools/institutes/centre should only be set up as organisation/business pages rather than personal pages i.e. pages that a Facebook user 'likes' rather than 'adds as a friend'.*
- Under no circumstances should a fake profile that impersonates another member of a Cork ETB school/centre/institute be created.

* It may not be possible to set up some social media pages, e.g. Facebook pages, without linking to a personal account login. In such situations, more than one person should be set up with full access and administrative rights to the page. Where a business page is only accessible via a personal login, there is no requirement for the passwords to be shared for personal privacy reasons.

The following conditions must be adhered to at all times when utilising social media

- 'Groups' should be used when collaborating on Facebook as membership can be strictly controlled and users do not have to be friends of other users or the group's creator.
- Staff should only comment on matters for which they have appropriate expertise. If there is any doubt about content/comments to be contributed, the

employee's line managers should be consulted before any changes/comments are made.

- Staff should be polite and respectful at all times to every category of recipient.
- Staff should never post or send defamatory, foul, sarcastic or offensive comments or photographs, videos or other digital material which could be considered in breach of the Cork ETB Policy and Procedure and/or which may compromise a member of staff or impact negatively on Cork ETB.
- Staff should never forward, share or 'like' content that is likely to cause offence or hurt to a third party.
- Staff should never disclose or publish confidential or personal information of Cork ETB staff, students etc. online unless it is in line with the policies of the school/centre/institute and Cork ETB.
- Staff should be aware of the digital footprint and remember that comments, posts and/or images may remain permanently online and available for others to see.
- Cork ETB policies and practices should not be discussed or shared.
- Branding on social media channels or sites should incorporate Cork ETB branding, e.g. use of the Cork ETB logo alongside the school/centre logo.
- Users should not use social media so as to contravene Irish, European or international law, Staff should pay strict attention to licensing agreements, intellectual property rights and copyright laws and abide by same at all times.
- Any reference to private social media details should not be added to a Cork ETB email signature and vice versa.
- Staff should never post a comment about Cork ETB that implies to represent the views of Cork ETB or an individual school/centre/institute unless approved by the relevant Principal/Manager/Director or the CEO.
- Staff are expected to exercise sound judgement and maintain the highest professional standards while using Social Media within Cork ETB.
- Misuse, abuse or inappropriate use or any form of Harassment/Sexual Harassment or Bullying via social media will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action including suspension and dismissal as provided for in the Cork ETB Disciplinary policy and/or relevant Circular Letters.

Personal Use of Social Media

The personal use of social media sites regarding personal matters which do not identify the user as an employee of Cork ETB will generally not fall under the remit of this policy. However, this policy will apply in the following circumstances:

- Where an employee identifies him/herself on a personal account as an employee of Cork ETB
- Where an employee comments on or discusses any business or services of Cork ETB
- Where an employee enters a discussion with a fellow colleague through social media in respect of colleagues, Cork ETB staff or stakeholders which may be considered to be offensive or inappropriate

If you choose to identify yourself as a Cork ETB employee on social media profiles, or in your commentary/participation in social media sites in a personal capacity, it is important to be aware of the nature of your comments/participation and the potential consequences. Data protection, privacy requirements, defamation law etc all still apply when you are online. It is likely that your personal and professional profiles may overlap at times, and colleagues and learners may have access to content you post. Be aware that information that you may intend only for viewing by friends and family may be forwarded on/shared very easily. Once published online, information is, to all intents and purposes “permanent”, despite efforts to remove it/anonymise it at a later point. Therefore, it is important to remember that how you conduct yourself online in your personal capacity may reflect on your professionalism and your employment.

Individuals should consider if it is appropriate, especially if they are easily or reasonably identifiable as an ETB employee, to identify in their profile that their private use of social media is personal and unrelated to their employment by use of statements such as “The views here are my personal opinions” “Views strictly personal” “Personal account” or similar.

Staff using social media sites in their personal capacity should decline/refuse “friend”, “link”, “follower” or other “connection” requests from learners and trainees. Personal email addresses should not be provided to learners and trainees, and emails should not be sent to/replied to learners and trainees from a personal email address. Where staff do not have an official Cork ETB email address and have an alternative email address they use for work purposes, e.g. to accept work assignment submissions, such email addresses should be maintained separately to their own personal email addresses.

Teachers’ personal use is also governed by the Teaching Council ‘Code of Professional Conduct’ paragraphs: 3.3.6 -3.3.9 (**See Appendix 1**).

Cork ETB reserves the right to restrict access to social media sites during working hours and any access to social media websites should fall within the parameters of the Cork ETB and/or individual school/centre/institute ICT Acceptable Use Policy. Cork ETB also reserves the right to monitor employee's internet usage and/or examine the logs of web browsing to ensure that employees are not excessively viewing websites that are not work-related and/or not acting in a manner that would result in violation of this policy or other policies.

Public Access to Cork ETB websites and social media

Cork ETB websites and social media accounts will not allow the following forms of content:-

- Profane language or content
- Comments not specifically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon
- Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot processes
- Comments relating to the conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- Sexual Content or links to sexual content
- Content that promotes, fosters or disseminates discrimination in violation of the Equal Status Act 2000-2011 and the Employment Equality Act 1998-2011 in the areas of:-
 - Gender
 - Marital Status
 - Family Status
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Religion
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race
 - Membership of Traveller Community

Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in personal liability of users and/or vicarious liability on behalf of Cork ETB under many enactments and policies including, but not limited to the following:-

- Employment Equality Act 1998
- Equal Status Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 1988 & 2003
- Freedom of Information Act 1997
- The Companies Acts 1963-2001

- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1990
- Cork ETB Bullying Prevention Policy
- Cork ETB Harassment/Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy
- Cork ETB Grievance Procedure

If any employee is notified of or concerned about misuse of social media, e.g. an abusive or offensive post, profile, page or comment relating to a Cork ETB employee or service, he/she should report it to their line manager immediately. All employees are encouraged to be proactive in this regard. The line manager should have the post reviewed and a record taken of the comment, e.g. a screenshot, and where possible or appropriate, the post should be reported as abuse with the relevant site's existing reporting process. The line manager should also report the post to Cork ETB's IT Manager and/or HR Manager as appropriate, depending on the nature of the issue.

Cork ETB reserves the right to remove or require to be removed any content which is deemed by Cork ETB to be in breach of this policy and/or disable user access. Cork ETB also reserves the right to initiate disciplinary procedures where appropriate in relation to the misuse of social media.

Cork ETB will make every reasonable effort to have inappropriate content removed, however for 3rd party sites, it has no control over the functionality of or data stored on these sites and therefore may be unable to ensure removal.

Any misuse of this social media may lead to either suspension or withdrawal of access to the web and, if appropriate, action may be taken under the disciplinary procedure.

Employee Use of Personal Equipment for Business Use.

It is recognised that employees may use their personal devices for business use from time to time, e.g. smartphones, tablets, storage devices, laptops etc. In situations where employees are accessing Cork ETB social media accounts through personal devices, they must ensure that their privacy settings are appropriate to such business use, and that such devices are password protected with appropriate lock settings.

Recruitment and Social Media

In line with Cork ETB Equal Opportunities Policy HR will not, at any stage of the recruitment process, conduct searches on prospective employees or candidates on social networking websites, other than on professional networking sites.

Data Protection

Cork ETB has responsibilities in relation to data protection. The collection, use and retention of personal data of subscribers to social media pages or the automatic collection of 'cookie data' fall under the data protection rules. Cork ETB is conscious of the need to take particular care in relation to the collection use and retention of sensitive data and data of students.

Staff should familiarise themselves with Cork ETB's Data Protection Policy and Data Breach Management Policy and Procedure.

Review and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will depend on the monitoring of it by the relevant line Managers and staff in the Centre/School/Institute.

The policy will be reviewed annually and in consideration of changes in legislation, technology developments or as needs dictate throughout the year.

Signed: 

Date: 6/5/16

Timothy Owens

Chief Executive