



TITLE: COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Effective Date	20 March 2019	Version	01
Approved By	Management Board	Date Approved	20 March 2019
		Review Date	20 March 2022 <i>or as required</i>
Superseded or Obsolete Policy / Procedure(s)	Owner		
	Marking Office		

1. Purpose of Policy

Carlow College, St. Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College) is committed to appropriate and effective communication with all stakeholders both internally and externally. The definition of communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

Carlow College has developed a *Communications Policy* and associated procedures to ensure that all stakeholder communication is appropriate, timely and relevant for the professional benefit of the College, its staff and learners. The *Communications Policy* and its associated procedures are concerned with managing the transfer of information owned by or relating to the College and by staff of the College in their official capacity.

All staff of the College must be aware of the relevant laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with staff, learners, alumni, the media and other College stakeholders.

The objectives of the *Communications Policy* are:

- to define the responsibilities of staff and representatives when communicating for College purposes;
- to ensure that all opportunities to promote the College through appropriate communication channels are explored;
- to ensure that tone and message communicated from the College is consistent with our brand guideline; and
- to minimise the potential negative impact to the College, its learners and third parties as a result of incidents and violations.

1.1 Principles and Practices for this Policy

This Policy outlines the responsibilities of all staff in maintaining good communication practices. All communication should be:

- audience specific and appropriately segmented;
- appropriate in its tone and content;
- personalised, as the communication channel allows;
- clear, concise, and limited in length, if written;
- timely, based on content;
- cognisant of other communications which may be issued by the College; and
- sent via the most appropriate communication channel acknowledging the principles above

1.2. Legislation that Support this Policy

- *Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989;*
- *Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018;*
- *Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000, 2004 and 2007;*
- *Defamation Act 2009;*
- *General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679.*

2. Scope of Policy

The scope of this Policy applies to Carlow College staff and representatives, in their capacity as members of the Carlow College community. This Policy also applies to any other third party who is authorised to communicate on behalf of the College.

3. Policy Statement

Carlow College recognises the important role that Communications plays in the overall perception of the organisation both internally and externally. The *Communications Policy* and its associated procedures are concerned with managing the transfer of information owned by or relating to the College by staff of the College in their official capacity. The tools used to transfer this information are defined as communication channels.

The College recognises that poor communication has the potential to significantly damage the reputation of the College. It is the policy of Carlow College, that communication must be managed carefully while being consistent with College policies, commercial needs and brand guidelines.

Employees found to be abusing this Policy and its subsequent and related practices and procedures will be subject to the organisations disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Staff Responsibilities

- To take personal responsibility for familiarising themselves with this Policy and communicate in accordance with this Policy.
- The integrity of information being communicated must be maintained. All information must be accurate, complete, timely and consistent with other related information and events.
- To notify the Marketing Manager of any events associated with the College which can be managed and promoted through the College communication channels
- To notify the Marketing Manager where there may be a broader communications or marketing opportunity for the College. This may include but is not limited to inclusion in any partnerships, initiatives or events.
- Staff members are encouraged to respond to media enquiries related to their areas of expertise. Staff are requested to inform the Marketing Manager when they have had contact with the media, to allow for the resulting media coverage to be maximised. Some enquiries may also relate more broadly to the College. In such cases, or where there is an opportunity for broader promotion of the College it is the reasonability of the staff member to refer the matter to the Marketing Manager.
- To ensure that any electronic communications should be sent in line with the Email and Internet Usage Policy and the email usage guidelines.
- To ensure information is communicated securely and only to its intended recipient in line with the College security policy.

4.2 Line Managers Responsibilities

- To communicate with the Marketing Manager regarding any official College announcement relating to their area of responsibility.
- To ensure all staff familiarise themselves with the *Communications Policy*.
- To instil a positive culture amongst staff to openly communicate all activities and events associated with the College to the Marketing Manager. This will ensure promotion through the official College communication channels.

4.3 Marketing Office Responsibilities

- To provide support, advice and training to all staff on Communication practices and procedures.
- To actively utilise all official Carlow College communication channels to engage with the general public, prospective students and stakeholders to promote all College programmes, services and events.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the *Communication Policy* and to ensure that it is being implemented effectively throughout the College.

5. Associated Documentation

- Appendix 1: Communications Guidelines

- Appendix 2: Brand Guidelines
- Appendix 3: News & Events Document

6. Referenced Policies

- *IT Policy*
- *Social Networking & Social Media Policy*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Dignity & Respect Policy*
- *Freedom of Information Policy*
- *Records Management Policy*
- *Information Security Policy*
- *Email and Internet Usage Policy*
- *Disciplinary Policy (Staff)*
- *Equality Policy*
- *Grievance Policy (Staff)*

A number of other policies are currently in development which will be released through the quality assurance process to support (and in conjunction with) this Policy. All employees should ensure to keep abreast of policy developments within the College and speak with their Line Managers, Quality Assurance, or Human Resources should they have any questions. The College reserves the right to amend these policies subject to organisational changes.

7. Monitoring and Review

The *Communications Policy* will be formally reviewed on an annual basis by the Marketing Office to reflect any legislative changes. Staff will be informed through regular email communication