



TITLE: SOCIAL NETWORKING & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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Approved By	Management Board	Date Approved	05 September 2018
		Review Date	05 September 2018 <i>or as required</i>
Superseded or Obsolete Policy / Procedure(s)		Owner	
		Marketing Office	

1. Purpose of Policy

Carlow College, St. Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College) recognises that Social Media has become an increasingly important and influential communication tool that involves the expression of both personal and professional opinions, the sharing of links, images and other information, often with accompanying endorsements.

Carlow College has developed a *Social Networking & Social Media Policy* and associated procedures to clarify how best to use these evolving tools to the professional benefit of the College, its staff and learners. The *Social Networking & Social Media Policy* and its associated procedures are concerned with managing the information assets owned by the College and used by staff of the College in their official capacity.

All staff of the College using social media tools, including via personal accounts, must be aware that the same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with staff, learners, alumni, the media and other College stakeholders apply online as in the real world.

The *Social Networking & Social Media Policy* is operated in accordance with the *Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989*, *Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003*, the *Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004*, the *Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000, 2004 and 2007*, and the *Defamation Act 2009*.

The objectives of the *Social Networking & Social Media Policy* are:

- to provide a definition of Social Media and to articulate the potential risks inappropriate use poses to the College and its staff and learners;
- to define the responsibilities of staff, learner and representatives for the use of Social Media for College purposes;
- to highlight the potential risks of using Social Media for professional use;

- to co-ordinate and oversee the response to violations in accordance with the requirements of Irish legislation, regulation and College policies;
- to minimise the potential negative impact to the College, its learners and third parties as a result of incidents and violations.

1.1 Principles of the Policy

Procedures will be put in place to ensure that Social Media is used effectively and securely.

The following principles apply:

- staff of the College must be aware of best practice guidelines before using Social Media;
- staff of the College must be aware of guidelines on security and privacy settings for the use of Social Media;
- staff of Carlow College who use Social Media for College purposes must ensure that ownership of the site is explicit and a record of the ownership is held by the Marketing Office;
- defamation of character of Carlow College staff and/or learners will not be tolerated (either through an official account or personal use);
- potential negative impacts to the reputation of the College as a result of incidents/violations through Social Media must be minimise and/or ameliorated.

1.2. Legislation and Policies that support this Policy

Information posted to Social Networking sites must adhere to current Irish legislation. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- *Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989;*
- *Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003;*
- *The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004;*
- *Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000, 2004 and 2007;*
- *Defamation Act 2009.*

Information posted to Social Networking sites must adhere to the Carlow College standards and policies. These include but are not limited to the following:

- *Equality Policy;*
- *Dignity and Respect Policy;*
- *IT Policy;*
- *Data Protection Policy;*
- *Disciplinary Policy (Staff); and*
- *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 Manager, Quality Assurance, or Human Resources should they have any questions.

Senior Line Managers and Line Managers are to ensure that all staff are made aware of this Policy and all other policies either currently available or that are at the developmental stages.

Information posted to Social Networking sites must also adhere to the Terms of Service when utilising Social Networking channels. Terms of Service are a set of regulations a provider attaches to a software service or web-delivered product which must agree to abide in order to use a service. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/help/325807937506242>;
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/en/tos>;
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/about/legal/terms/before-january-19-2013/>;
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/static?gl=IE&template=terms>;
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/legal/user-agreement>.

Content posted by Carlow College staff, learners, or representatives should not:

- be libellous;
- be indecent;
- be plagiarised;
- use imagery under copyright;
- incite others to hatred.

2. Definitions

2.1 Social Networking

For the purpose of this Policy, Social Networking is defined as an online service or site through which people create and maintain interpersonal relationships. The main purpose of Social Networking is to connect with other people and create mutual communication for both professional or personal purposes.

2.2 Social Media

For the purposes of this Policy, Social Media is defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques using the internet. Content which is present on social media channels can be created, consumed, promoted, distributed, discovered or shared for purposes that are primarily related to communities and social activities, rather than functional, task-oriented objectives.

There are many different types of Social Media channels, which attract specific audiences for different purposes. These include, but are not limited to:

- Facebook
- Twitter

- Instagram
- Snapchat
- VSCO
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Tumblr
- LinkedIn
- Flickr
- WordPress
- Google Plus
- Yahoo/MSN messenger
- Wiki/Blog's
- Yammer

Official Social Media currently in use at Carlow College include:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Carlow-College-StPats-611013289042006/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/carlowcollege?lang=en>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/carlowcollegestpatricks/>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/carlow-college/?originalSubdomain=ie>
- YouTube: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/carlow-college/?originalSubdomain=ie>

These official channels are maintained and managed by the Carlow College Marketing Office. All official College announcements, once approved by Senior Line Managers, can only be posted by the Marketing Office to official Carlow College Social Media accounts.

There are also numerous other Social Media accounts which represent Carlow College programmes, activities and services which are maintained by staff of Carlow College. It is mandatory, that all Social Media sites either set up previously or new by staff members, must be notified to the Marketing Office.

3. 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, using Social Media or on any other Social Networking site.

4. Policy Statement

The *Social Networking & Social Media Policy* has been developed to manage the use of Carlow College's Social Media and to provide governance and structure around how the College, staff and learners are portrayed through and interact with Social Media. The *Social Networking & Social Media Policy* enables staff of the College to use Social Media sites without

compromising their personal security or the security and reputation of Carlow College. The success of Carlow College depends upon maintaining a positive reputation in the general community and amongst College stakeholders. Increasingly, Carlow College use Social Media to engage with these groups. While Social Media is a powerful communications tool, it can significantly damage the reputation of the College if improperly used. Carlow College communications via Social Media must be managed carefully and must be consistent with College policies, commercial needs and brand.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Staff Responsibilities

- To have a duty to act in accordance with this policy when engaging with Social Networking sites, and therefore to treat colleagues with respect at all times as they would in the real world.
- To notify the Marketing Office of any events associated with the College so they can be managed and promoted through the College Social Media platforms.
- To notify the Marketing Office of any Social Networking sites currently in operation on behalf of Carlow College.
- To take personal responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times.
- To be aware that any official Carlow College announcement is to be posted by the Marketing Office on the official Carlow College Social Media accounts, once approved by Senior Management.
- All staff of Carlow College, who operate a Social Media account on behalf of the College have a responsibility to manage the Social Media site appropriately and be mindful of information (and its classification) that is posted.
- The integrity of information to Social Media sites must be maintained; information must also be accurate, complete, timely and consistent with other related information and events.

5.2 Senior Line Managers Responsibilities

- To communicate to the Marketing Office with regards to any official College announcement which are to be posted on Social Media.
- To ensure that only the Marketing Office are authorised to post official College announcements on Carlow College Social Media accounts.
- To instil a positive culture amongst staff to openly communicate all activities and events associated with the College to the Marketing Office to ensure promotion through the College Social Media platforms.

5.3 Line Managers Responsibilities

- To communicate College policies related to the *Social Networking & Social Media Policy* and to deal with issues that may arise with regards to Social Media.
- To ensure all staff familiarise themselves with the *Social Networking and Social Media Policy*.

- To encourage staff to communicate all activities and events associated with the College to the Marketing Office to ensure the utmost promotion/PR via Social Media platforms is optimised.

5.4 Marketing Office Responsibilities

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

6. Associated Documentation

- Appendix 1: General Data Protection Regulation
- Appendix 1.1: Social Media Usage (Including Personal Use)
- Appendix 1.2: Social Media Best Practise Guidelines
- Appendix 1.3: Social Media Threats and Risks
- Appendix 1.4: Social Media Account Registration Form

7. Referenced Policies

- *Equality Policy*
- *Dignity and Respect Policy*
- *IT Policy*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Disciplinary Policy (Staff)*
- *Grievance Policy (Staff)*

8. Monitoring and Review

The *Social Networking & Social Media 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 and through the staff portal regarding any amendments to the Policy.

The College regards any breach of this Policy by any employee(s) as a serious matter to be dealt with through the *Disciplinary Policy* and which may result in disciplinary action and summary dismissal. This Policy is supported by Carlow College policies and procedures.