

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board Social Media Policy

March 2018

Background and purpose

Scope of policy

- *Access*
- *Account management*
- *Corporate use of social media*
- *Employee conduct – professional use*
- *Employee conduct – personal use*
- *Student use*
- *Content management*
- *Security*
- *Data protection*
- *Legal issues*
- *Public conduct*
- *Monitoring of sites*

Relevant policies/procedures

Implementation and review of policy

Adopted by WWETB Board 08/05/2018

Background and purpose

Social media refers to computer based technologies which enable users to interact with each other. Social media sites include, among others, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, WhatsApp, ASKfm, Bebo and various blog creation sites.¹ Users of social media generate their own content and share opinions with others.

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) respects the rights of all its staff and learners to free expression and privacy as provided in the Irish Constitution and statutory law. These rights carry responsibilities which include legally compliant behavior. WWETB also recognize that staff and students have a personal life which is separate from their professional/learner life. The ubiquitous nature of social media blurs the boundaries between the two. WWETB reserves the right to bring a concern viewed on social media to the relevant authority in accordance with the legislation.

WWETB welcomes the use of social media as a means of communicating with their stakeholders, both internal and external. WWETB also recognises the value of social media as a teaching tool. This document sets out WWETBs' policy regarding social media.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to:

- All learning practitioners² employed on permanent, temporary, casual or fixed term contract in WWETB
- All administrative and ancillary staff employed on a permanent, temporary, casual or fixed term contract in WWETB
- All learners³ attending any course run under WWETB's suite of education programmes

¹ This list of social media sites is not exhaustive. It gives examples of the sites most commonly used at the time of writing this policy document. However the social media policy includes all social media sites.

² 'Learning practitioners' refers to teachers, tutors, trainers, apprentices and instructors.

³ 'Learners' refers to full-time students attending the ETB's second level schools and full-time and part-time students, learners and participants in further education and training programmes.

This policy is concerned with the following aspects of social media usage:

<p>Access</p>	<p>A record of all social media platforms operating in each centre⁴ shall be established and maintained</p> <p>A record of all users across all platforms shall be established and maintained in each Centre</p>
<p>Account Management</p>	<p>A record of the following shall be established and maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An authorisation process for the creation of new social media accounts • A record of all Staff Administrators • A register of all domain names in use <p>No new accounts to be opened without authorised sign off</p> <p>Accounts should only be opened when there are sufficient resources to keep them up-to-date, well populated and engaging</p>
<p>Corporate use of social media</p>	<p>WWETB will use social media as a means of communicating with stakeholders and the wider public. In as far as possible WWETB will ensure that postings which appear on its social media are legally compliant. Postings which are deemed to be of harm to an individual or the organisation will be removed immediately a transgression is found.</p> <p>A list of the social media platforms used at a corporate level shall be published with a note that it may decide to utilise additional/other forms of social media in the future, at which point this policy will be updated.</p> <p>The listing above shall state that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWETB is not the host for any social media site and is not responsible for the uploading of any material or the publishing of any inaccurate or defamatory statements on its account(s) by any third party. • WWETB is not obliged to follow any of its friends/followers. If WWETB friends/follows a social media account, it is because the WWETB feels the content of the account is of interest to WWETB. It does not imply endorsement of any kind. • Re-tweets and shared content from external sources do not denote WWETB endorsement.

⁴ 'Centre' refers to a centre of programme delivery i.e. schools, permanent education or Training Centres, temporary education or Training Centres.

<p>Employee Conduct – Professional Use</p>	<p>Staff are expected to exercise sound judgement, behave responsibly and maintain the highest professional standards while using Social Media in the Centre.</p> <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>“think before you type”</u> • Keep your private life private • Set up Facebook pages for schools/centres as ‘like’ pages rather than ‘friend’ pages • ‘Groups’ should be used when collaborating on social media • Pay strict attention to intellectual property and copyright laws <p>Do not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post or send abusive, defamatory or distasteful messages or post photographs, videos or other media • publish personal identifiable information of staff, students or learners • use personal email address when corresponding with students • record student names in website photographs without authorization and parental/guardian consent • post comment purporting to represent the views of WWETB or a Centre unless approved by the Centre Manager or the Chief Executive • accept any ‘friend’ or link requests from students • use your personal profiles to conduct school business or communicate with Students/Learners or their Parents/Guardians • engage in anti-social behaviour towards others • friend/follow learners’ private social media accounts
<p>Employee Conduct – Personal Use</p>	<p>WWETB recognizes that staff have personal social media profiles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material on personal social media sites which identify the user as an employee of WWETB and when activities of WWETB are discussed fall within the scope of this policy • All employees of WWETB are required to clarify that opinions expressed on education or related matters are their own and not the opinion of WWETB.
<p>Learner Use</p>	<p>Each Centre will provide guidelines to its learners in managing their social media use safely and to the best effect.</p> <p>While all cases involving the inappropriate use of social media will be dealt with on an individual basis, the Centre and its Board of Management considers the following to be serious and unacceptable behavior. Disciplinary consequences up to and including expulsion may be exercised in certain cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images that may cause harm to any member of WWETB’s education community or the wider community. • Forwarding or ‘Liking’ material that is likely to cause offence or hurt to a third party. • Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the Centre’s image or reputation. • Creating a fake profile that impersonates another member of WWETB’s community or

	<p>WWETB itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending or posting material that is confidential to the Centre. • Uses that violate copyright law, fail to observe licensing agreements or infringe on others' intellectual property rights. • Participating in the viewing or exchange of inappropriate images or obscene material. • Posting inappropriate images or obscene material
Content Management	<p>Each Centre/Programme Manager will be responsible for establishing, publishing, and updating his/her pages on social media sites and reserves the right to modify social media content based on best educational practice and standard.</p> <p>Followers of WWETB social media profiles can expect posts on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education issues • WWETB Events • Links to other education sites
Security	<p>WWETB may impose limits/controls on the use of social media including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preventing unnecessary functionality within Social Media web sites, such as instant messaging (IM) or file exchange • minimising and/or eliminating the addition of web links to other web sites • filtering and monitoring of all Social Media web site content posted and/or viewed. • Scanning any and all files exchanged with the Social Media web sites
Data Protection	<p>WWETB will be compliant with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003, and the Data Protection Bill 2018</p>
Legal Issues	<p>WWETB is responsible for overseeing the use of its social media facilities e.g. with regard to compliance with legislation, relevant regulations and circular letters. All people posting on social media are legally responsible for their postings.</p> <p>Failure to comply may result in any or all of the following legal consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal prosecution • Being personally sued for damages in a civil court • WWETB/Centre being sued for damages in a civil court

<p>Public Conduct</p>	<p>Public Conduct</p> <p>Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between WWETB and/or Centre and members of the public.</p> <p>Articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon • Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures • Profane language or content (people who repeatedly post offensive or inappropriate comments will be blocked) • Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination in violation of the Equal Status Act 2000-2011 and the Employment Equality Act 1998-2011 • Conduct that breaches the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997 • Comments which breach the Defamation Act 2009 • Sexual content or links to sexual content • Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
<p>Monitoring of sites</p>	<p>Our social media sites are monitored during normal working hours (Monday to Friday) and we strive to respond to all queries/comments/concerns (by email or by telephone) within 24 hours.</p> <p>However, it may not always be possible to reply individually to posts we receive. The best means of raising a query with us is to contact us online at info@wwetb.ie.</p>

Relevant policies/procedures

Staff are expected to be familiar with WWETB's relevant policies/procedures which should be read in conjunction with this policy. Locally developed policies shall be reviewed to ensure alignment with the social media usage policy. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ICT Usage Policy
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools
- Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
- Grievance Procedures for Staff employed by Education and Training Boards
- Bullying Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure for ETB Staff
- Harassment/Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure For ETB Staff
- School/ Centre Health and Safety Statements
- Student Code of Conduct/Behaviour
- Code of Practice for dealing with Complaints made by Parent/s, Guardian/s of a Student or by a Student (who has reached the age of eighteen) currently enrolled in a school/centre,
- Code of Practice for the Protection of Personal Data in ETBs
- Circular 71/2014 – Revised Procedures for the Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers and Principals
- Disciplinary Procedures for Non-Teaching Staff

Implementation and review of policy

- This policy was adopted by WWETB on 08/05/2018
- This policy will be implemented by Principals and Centre/Programme Managers.
- Staff members will also be responsible for implementation in their own area of work.
- This policy may be reviewed on a yearly basis. More frequent reviews may take place if deemed warranted on the enactment of new relevant legislation or the issue of any Departmental Circulars or Agreements.
- This policy will be reviewed in line with current legislation and standards of good practice.
- For further information please contact Fintan O'Reilly at fintanoreilly@wwetb.ie