



Social Media Policy

POLICY STATEMENT & RATIONALE

There is scope for irresponsible and inappropriate use of Social Media sites and this can lead to bullying, harassment and illegal activity whilst online. Monaghan Institute therefore needs a policy to ensure the safe & responsible use of Social Media by all members of the college community. This is necessary in order to protect learners, staff and the good name of Monaghan Institute.

Relation to Mission

The Mission Statement of Monaghan Institute and embedded pastoral approach place a committed emphasis on care for the learner. The focus is on care for the individual, respect for others and the promotion of positive behaviours that will enable learners to participate safely in a digital world, and aligns to the objectives of this Social Media Policy.

Aims

This Policy aims to:

- Produce a set of strategies for learners that will allow them to use Social Media safely and responsibly.
- Protect the integrity and good name of all members of Monaghan Institute community from online abuse.
- Outline behaviours which are unacceptable and the consequences for these.
- Provide guidance for staff on the appropriate use of Social Media.

Policy Content

1. Strategies recommended to learners to enable safe & responsible use of Social Media

a. Use strict privacy settings.

Review all of the options on your privacy settings page. Many sites default settings tend to keep information public until a user makes it private (although Facebook is a little stricter with minors' accounts). "Friends Only" is a good choice for most items, but you can be even more selective.

b. Be selective and control what you post.

Be selective about what you share by customising the recipients of your posts. Activities on Facebook, including applications used and games played, can be viewed by others. Remember: Everything online happens in front of a vast, invisible, and often anonymous audience. Once something is out there, it doesn't go away as it can be copied and forwarded easily and quickly. Everything leaves a digital footprint.

As a rule of thumb if you wouldn't be comfortable posting something (pictures comments etc.) on a notice board in the college corridor then don't post it online.

You should never post personal details such as your phone number, email address or home address. Remember that irresponsible online behaviour can damage your real life reputation.

c. Be selective with friends.

Be careful who you make friends with online. In general it is better to restrict friends to people you know and trust in the real world.

d. Pre-approve tags.

Choose the settings that allow you to see everything you've been tagged in (including photos) before the tag links to your page.

e. Use notification settings.

You can tell Facebook (or other social media site) that you want to be notified of any activity performed on your name, including photo tags.

f. Never post your location.

Facebook lets users post their location on every post. You should not do this for safety and privacy reasons. It also allows you to "tag" friends' location. You can prevent anyone from tagging your location in the 'How Tags Work' section of the website.

g. Responsible Account Use

Ensure that you keep your log in details private and do not share them with anybody. Do not allow other users to access the network under your username. Always log off when finished.

h. Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can involve unwanted text messages, phone video recordings or web posts being used to threaten, abuse or harm someone. It is like physical or verbal bullying, but it uses technology instead. Cyber bullying, like all bullying, is difficult on the victim. It can be hard to prove and difficult to get the courage to report it. If you are experiencing this form of bullying, it is vital you don't suffer in silence. Also, if you have witnessed cyber bullying, it is important that you take action and address the problem.

Further information for Parents/Guardians and Students/Learners is available from the following publication produced by Barnardos and the NCTE: [Get With IT - A Guide to Cyberbullying](#) from the [Internet Safety Website www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie).

Read the [Office for Internet Safety's Guide](#) to cyberbullying, which includes information on when and how to contact service providers if you are being cyber bullied.

i. Beat Cyber bullying

- Don't reply to the messages or get into any online arguments.
- Block unwanted senders from contact list
- Save the evidence (photo/email/video/web post, etc.) as proof. Take a screenshot of any comments that are threatening.
- Make a note of the time and date that messages or images were sent, along with any details you have about the sender.
- Tell a trusted adult, such as a close relative, a friend, a Tutor/Guidance Counsellor in the Institute, health professional, someone who will be able to help you and give you support.
- Contact a free confidential support service such as Samaritans - telephone 1850 609090.
- Report the bullying to the police or Gardaí.
- Report the bullying to the technology providers such as the mobile phone company, web host or website owner.

Text Bullying

Texting can also be used to harass, bully and frighten people. Text bullying or harassment can be texts that frighten, insult, threaten you or make you feel uncomfortable. Email, social networks like Facebook/Twitter/BBM (Blackberry Messaging) and phone calls can be used to harass in the same way.

It is illegal to bully or harass someone by text, phone, Internet or email and if the harassment is getting out of hand you should report it to the police or Gardaí.

If you're being bullied by texts:

- Don't stay quiet about the bullying. Tell a trusted adult, such as a close relative, a friend, a Tutor/Guidance Counsellor in the Institute, health professional, someone who will be able to help you and give you support.
- Don't reply to the messages or get into any text arguments. If there's no answer, hopefully they will get bored and stop harassing you.
- Don't delete the messages; you can use them as evidence for reporting the crime. Make a note of the time and date that messages or images were sent, along with any details you have about the sender.
- Report the bullying to the police or Gardaí and your phone company. If they are aware of the problem and can give you a new phone number or caution the person harassing you.

The Office of Internet Safety booklet "Get with IT!" is a Guide to Cyber bullying. This booklet is intended to increase awareness of all aspects of cyber bullying in the new media world and to help parents and young adults understand the often confusing issues of new media technologies and tools which young people are using for this behaviour.

This publication was produced as a joint initiative between the Office for Internet Safety, the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE), O2 and Barnardos

<http://www.internetsafety.ie/website/ois/oisweb.nsf/page/DPCY-7LYJ4V1343473-en>.

j. Using Social Media on your Mobile Phone.

If your profile is linked to your mobile phone, you should use the website's privacy settings to ensure that your phone number is not visible.

k. Chat & VoIP services. (These allow for communication that may be typed or spoken with or without webcam access)

When using the above services e.g. Skype, Google Talk, Facebook Chat; you should only communicate with people you trust and remember that other people may be able to view all aspects of the communication.

Appendix A contains links to some online resources that may be useful to learners in educating themselves on the responsible use of the Internet and Social Media.

Appendix B contains information on reporting inappropriate use on the Facebook site.

2. Unacceptable uses of Social Media sites and their consequences.

Unacceptable use of Social Media sites will include:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images that may cause harm to any member of the college 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 image or reputation of Monaghan Institute.
- Creating a fake profile that impersonates any another member of the college community.
- Sending or posting material that is confidential to Monaghan Institute.
- Uses that violates 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.

While all cases involving the inappropriate use of social media will be dealt with on an individual basis, Monaghan Institute and its Board of Governors considers the above to be serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour. Disciplinary consequences up to and including expulsion may be exercised in certain cases.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The **Board of Governors** will approve the policy and ensure its development and evaluation. The Policy will then go before the ETB for ratification. This approval, development and evaluation is conducted in parallel to the prescriptions of the CMETB Social Media Policy
2. The **Director** will be responsible for the dissemination of the Institute's Social Media Policy, ensuring it is adhered to and the application of consequences, which are conducted in parallel to the prescriptions of the CMETB Social Media Policy.
3. **Monaghan Institute Student Handbook** will contain a copy of the Social Media Policy which will outline unacceptable uses of Social Media to learners. The college will keep records of breaches of Section 2 of the Policy which are reported to them.
4. **All Staff** will be alert to the signs and possibilities of Bullying within the college.
5. **All Staff** will report any known incidents of online bullying and be mindful of their obligations under the Child Protection Guidelines.
6. The **Guidance Counsellor** will provide support for learners who have been victims of on online bullying.
7. **All Staff** must highlight that use of Social Media in cyber, text or other bullying formats maybe the concern of the Institute if it impacts on Institute itself, its staff or learners.
8. **All staff** must adhere to this policy and the prescriptions of the CMETB Social Media Policy.

Appendix A

Follow the links below for resources to assist learners in educating themselves on the responsible use of the Internet and Social Media.

<http://www.makeitsecure.org/en/young-users.html>
<http://www.make-it-safe.net/>
<http://www.webwise.ie/>
<http://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/teens/>
<http://www.internetsafety.ie/website/ois/oisweb.nsf/page/safety-en>
www.watchyourspace.ie
www.thinkb4uclick.ie
www.safekids.com
<http://www.spunout.ie>

Appendix B

Procedure for Alerting Facebook in the case of Bullying or the posting of inappropriate images.

The link below can be used to report the above to Facebook who generally take such reports seriously and quickly remove the offensive material.

www.facebook.com/help/?page=178608028874393&ref=bc

Procedure for Reporting a Fake Profile on Facebook.

The first piece of action to be taken by a person, in respect of whom a fake profile on Facebook has been set up, is to contact the Facebook Help Centre immediately and require Facebook to remove the

fake profile. This can be done using the link to the Help Centre below. Facebook state that the profile will be removed within 24 hours from notification.

www.facebook.com/help/?faq=167722253287296

Procedure for having inappropriate or offensive clips removed from YouTube

YouTube may be alerted to inappropriate uses by selecting the 'Flag' option beside the clip. YouTube will then ask you to select one of six reasons why the video is inappropriate: Sexual Content; Violent or Repulsive Content; Hateful or Abusive Content; Harmful Dangerous Acts; Infringement of Personal Rights; Spam. Once you have indicated the reason YouTube will review the clip within 48 hours and delete it if necessary