



**CARLOW
COLLEGE
ST. PATRICK'S**

TITLE: *SOCIAL NETWORKING AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR LEARNERS*

Effective Date	06 March 2019	Version	01
Approved By	Management Board	Date Approved	06 March 2019
		Review Date	06 March 2022 <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Superseded or Obsolete Policy / Procedure(s)		Owner	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 and Social Media Policy for Learners* and associated documents to clarify how best to use these evolving tools to the professional benefit of the College, its staff and learners. The *Social Networking and Social Media Policy for Learners* and its associated documents are concerned with helping learners to develop an online presence that is ethical and legal.

Learners of the College using social media tools, including personal accounts, must be aware that the same laws, expectations and guidelines for interacting with staff, learners, alumni, the media and other College stakeholders apply online as in the real world.¹

The objectives of the *Social Networking and Social Media Policy for Learners* are:

¹ General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) does not apply to the processing of personal data by a natural person in the course of a purely personal or household activity and with no connection to a professional or commercial activity. Personal or household activities could include correspondence and the holding of addresses, or social networking and online activity undertaken with the context of such activities. Carlow College should not and does not monitor the social media accounts of learners. However, that does not preclude such accounts being brought to the attention of the College under this Policy.

- to provide a definition of Social Networking and Social Media and to articulate the potential risks inappropriate use poses to the College, its staff and learners;
- to define the responsibilities of learners when using Social Media as a private individual; as part of their studies; as a member of a college club or society; as a learner representative; or as an Officer of the Students' Union;
- to minimise the potential negative impact to the College, its staff and learners, and third parties as a result of incidents and violations.

1.1. Legislation and Policies which support this Policy

Information posted to Social Networking/Social Media sites must adhere to current Irish and European Union legislation. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- *Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989;*
- *Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018;*
- *General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679;*
- *The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004;*
- *Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000, 2004 and 2007;*
- *Defamation Act 2009.*

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 learners should ensure to keep abreast of policy developments within the College. These are communicated to learners via their official college email. College policies are accessible via the Learner Gateway.

2. Definitions

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.

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/Blogs
- 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. There are also other social media accounts which represent Carlow College activities which are maintained by Officers of Carlow College Students' Union.

Official Social Media currently in use by Carlow College Students' Union (CCSU) include:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/carlowcollege.studentsunion/>
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/carlow_st
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ccsu_offical/
- Snapchat: <https://accounts.snapchat.com/accounts/snapcodes>

All CCSU affiliated social media sites, must be notified to the Students' Union President and the Marketing Manager.

3. Scope of Policy

The scope of this policy extends to all Carlow College learners who are registered on academic programmes, whether full-time or part-time, in their capacity as members of the Carlow College community, who engage in online conversations or share content using Social Media or any other Social Networking site.

4. Policy Statement

The *Social Networking and Social Media Policy for Learners* has been developed to manage the use of Carlow College's Social Media and to provide governance and structure around how the College, its staff and learners are portrayed through and interact with Social Media. Further, it enables learners 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 uses Social Media to engage with these groups. While Social Media is a powerful communications tool, if improperly used it can significantly damage the reputation of the College and staff and the personal reputation and future prospects of learners.

The College regards any breach of this Policy by any learner(s) as a serious matter to be dealt with through the *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy* and which may result in disciplinary sanction and/or expulsion. This Policy is supported by Carlow College policies and procedures.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Officer of the Students' Union and Learner Representative Responsibilities

- To notify the Students' Union President of any CCSU affiliated social networking/media sites currently in operation which represent Carlow College activities.
- To submit a Social Media Account Registration Form to the Students' Union President prior to creating a CCSU affiliated social networking/media site on behalf of a group, club or society (see Appendix 1.1: *Social Media Account Registration Form for CCSU Officers and Learner Representatives*);
- To obtain the written consent of any person whose personal data they propose to publish on CCSU social media accounts (see Appendix 1.2: *Social Media Consent Form for CCSU Officers and Learner Representatives*). Completed consent forms are to be given to the Students' Union President for storage as soon as possible after completion. SU Officers and learner representatives are to take particular care where the personal data they propose to publish may constitute special category personal data. Examples of special category data are those which may reveal racial / ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health and sex life / sexual orientation, and ensure that the consent form is completed adequately. In general, social media posts, which may include special category personal data, should not name individuals;
- 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.
- Officers of Carlow College Students' Union or Learner Representatives who operate a CCSU affiliated social media site have a responsibility to manage it appropriately and be mindful of information that is posted.
- Officers of Carlow College Students' Union or Learner representatives who share confidential or sensitive information, obtained as part of their representative role, on social media sites do so at the risk of disciplinary action.
- To maintain the integrity of information posted to social media sites and to ensure that such information is accurate, complete, timely and consistent with other related information and events.

In addition to the above, the CCSU President will;

- Have administrative access to all CCSU Social Media accounts and periodically monitor the page/site(s);

- Liaise with Officers of Carlow College Students' Union or Learner Representatives with regard to the management of the account(s) and the content posted;
- Inform the Marketing Office and Head of Student Services of instances or concerns where best practice has not been followed with regard to posted content. Data protection concerns or complaints are to be notified to the College's Data Protection Officer;
- Store completed consent forms permitting publication of personal data on social media accounts;
- Where consent forms are not appropriately completed, to discuss with the presenting SU Officer or learner representative and request them to rectify the situation or to delete the relevant personal data;
- Operate a 'take down' procedure whereby a request by any person who wishes to have their personal data removed from the CCSU's social media accounts is acceded to without delay.

5.2 *Learner Responsibilities*

- To take personal responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy and best practice guidelines.
- To act in accordance with this policy when engaging with social networking / media sites, and to treat all members of the Carlow College community with respect, at all times, as they would in the real world.

5.3 *Marketing Office Responsibilities*

- To provide support, advice and training to Officers of the Students' Union on Social Media practices and procedures.
- To monitor, in conjunction with the Head of Student Services and Learner Resources, the effectiveness of the *Social Networking and Social Media Policy for Learners* and to ensure that it is being implemented effectively throughout the College.

6. Associated Documentation

- Appendix 1: Social Media Best Practice Guidelines
- Appendix 1.1: Social Media Account Registration Form for CCSU Officers and Learner Representatives.
- Appendix 1.2: Social Media Consent Form for CCSU Officers and Learner Representatives.

7. Referenced Policies

- *Equality Policy*;
- *Dignity and Respect Policy*;
- *IT Policy*;
- *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*;
- *Learner Grievance and Complaints Policy* (forthcoming);
- *Internet and Email Usage Policy* (forthcoming);

8. Monitoring and Review

The *Social Networking & Social Media Policy for Learners* will be formally reviewed on an annual basis by the Marketing Office to reflect any legislative changes. Learners will be informed through regular email communication and through the Learner Gateway regarding any amendments to the Policy.