Ó Fiaich Institute Policy Documentation

Social Media Policy

2019/20

Ó FIAICH INSTITUTE

Ó Fiaich Institute
Dublin Road,
Dundalk,
Co. Louth

O42 9331398
www.ofi.ie

Rationale

It is recognised that social networking can provide a legitimate service and is a powerful tool of communication when used in an appropriate manner. There is however scope for irresponsible and inappropriate use of Social Media sites and this can lead to bullying, harassment and illegal activity whilst online. The purpose of the Social Media Policy is to clarify and inform learners of the rules when engaging in social media usage while studying at Ó Fiaich Institute (OFI). This is necessary in order to protect learners, staff and the good name of OFI.

This Policy applies to all Learners of the College participating in course(s) of further education.

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 OFI 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.

College Social Media Policy

Learners must at all times use social media sites in a responsible manner, having due regard to the rights and reputation of the College and of others.

In particular, Learners are required to comply with the following:
1. Do not use social media sites for any purpose which is prohibited under the terms of the College ICT Policy.
2. Do not use social media sites to engage in any form of bullying or behaviour which is illegal or likely to cause harassment (e.g. stalking, grooming, etc.), or to intentionally offend and/or degrade others, in particular fellow learners and staff
3. Do not post or upload data, including text, video, image etc. of any person without their express permission.
4. Do not post material for the purpose of embarrassing people or which will bring that person or the College into disrepute.
5. Do not use the name of the College, including any emblems or logos, to promote their own commercial objectives or activities without seeking permission from management.
6. Do not use the name of the College, including any emblems or logos to imply that the College endorses an activity without its prior written consent.
7. Ensure that information posted is accurate and not misleading.
8. Under no circumstance should any social media site be accessed during timetabled classes unless instructed to do so e.g. accessing LinkedIn etc.
9. When posting as individuals, Learners are asked to consider that it may be appropriate for them to identify any personal views expressed by them, on third party websites, as their own and not representing the College.

10. *Learners should* not post material which is confidential and proprietary to the College or which could have the effect of damaging the reputation of the College or the privacy or reputation of any third party.

11. While recognising the importance of academic freedom, Learners must ensure that they adhere to this Policy for any official College accounts.

12. Do not impersonate any other person nor engage in trolling (i.e. intentionally insulting and harassing people via the Internet).

13. Do not post material which would identify a third party (e.g. comments, photographs, video clips etc.) without the express permission of the third party concerned.

14. Do not excessively duplicate previously posted communications (other Users may consider this as spam).

15. Do not use social media so as to contravene or breach the laws of Ireland, specifically in relation to: privacy rights, defamation law and data protection law.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying can involve unwanted messages, photos, video recordings or web posts being used to threaten, shame, abuse or harm someone. It is like physical or verbal bullying, but it uses technology instead. Cyber bullying, like all bullying, is not permitted and will not be tolerated while completing your studies in OFI.

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 the Samaritans, Niteline, Aware, Jigsaw, Shine etc.
- 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.

It is illegal to bully or harass someone by text, phone, through the internet or email and if you are exposed to such you should report it to the Gardaí.

Think Before You Post

Even where social media accounts have been deactivated, copies of user information may still remain online. Before posting content on a social media site, Learners should consider the permanent online footprint they are creating in doing so. The nature of the Internet provides unique opportunities for copying and dissemination of information, regardless of the originator's intentions. Learners should think carefully about whether they are happy for their information to be made available in this manner, not just now, but into the future (such as in the context of exams, future job applications, etc.). The potential for copying information on the Internet makes it difficult to permanently delete user information.

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

1. **Use Strict Privacy Settings**.
Review all of the options on your privacy settings page to ensure your account is private.

2. **Be Selective and Control what you Post.**
Be selective about what you share by customising the recipients of your posts. Everything posted leaves a digital footprint. Do not comment/post on social media anything you wouldn't say to someone publically.

3. **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.

4. **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.

5. **Never Post your Location.**
Social media platforms allows users post their location on every post. You should not do this for safety and privacy reasons.

6. **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.

We recommend that learners do not set up or join group messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Snapchat etc. and interactions of such cannot and will not be monitored by the college.

Third Party Social Media Sites

Third party social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn are used at the Learner's own risk and since the College has no control over these sites, the College cannot take any responsibility for data stored on these sites. Learners should familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions governing all social media sites and adhere to these conditions, in addition to the regulations set out in this Policy. Learners should ensure that they protect themselves, read and familiarise themselves with any privacy policy governing the site to ensure that they are happy with the uses and disclosures that may be made of their data. It is recommended that Learners maintain the highest possible privacy settings (i.e. "private" profile on Facebook). Learners should be aware that this security may not be possible on some services (such as Twitter or LinkedIn).

Compliance with Policy

The College reserves the right to monitor and review, without notice, the postings and activities of learners where there is reason to suspect that this Policy is being breached, and/or the reputation of Ó Fiaich Institute has been compromised or where deemed necessary by the College for other legitimate reasons.

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 Ó Fiaich Institute.
- Creating a fake profile that impersonates another member of the college community.
- Sending or posting material that is confidential to Ó Fiaich 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.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Learner Disciplinary Procedures and may be considered as gross misconduct. While all cases involving the inappropriate use of social media will be dealt with on an individual basis, Ó Fiaich Institute and its Board of Management 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.