



Social Media Policy

1 Purpose

Mayo County Council recognises that the Internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and to share information on topics of interest *via* a wide variety of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube etc.

However, as the content of such media is largely user-generated, this poses a unique set of legal and reputational risks.

The purpose of this document is to inform staff of Mayo County Council what the Council deems to be acceptable use of these platforms; and to offer staff a level of protection from any misuse of this medium.

This policy is without prejudice to the right to personal privacy as protected by the Irish Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights.

2 Scope

This policy applies to staff and/or external parties (each of which is defined below and are, hereinafter, collectively referred to as "Users") and governs the use of social media sites by Users communicating with and/or on behalf of Mayo County Council through social media sites.

The following groups are within the scope of this social media policy:

Users of Council social media sites such as:

- Official social media sites created by the Council and
- Other profile pages created on third party sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.
- Users of personal accounts on third party social media sites using Council systems and/or equipment.

3 Supporting Policies, Standards & Procedures

Please note that the Computer Use Policy supplements this policy and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

4 Social Media Usage Policy

Users must at all times use social media sites in a responsible manner, having due regard to the rights and reputation of Mayo County Council and of others. In particular, users are required to comply with the following rules:

- Users should not use social media sites for any purpose which is prohibited under the terms of the Computer Use Policy
- Users should 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.
- Users should not use social media sites to engage in any form of bullying. Behaviour which is illegal or likely to cause harassment to others is strictly prohibited.
- Users should not excessively duplicate previously posted communications (other users may consider this as spam).
- Users should not impersonate any other person nor should users engage in trolling (i.e. intentionally insulting and harassing people via the Internet).
- Users should not post any material which breaches the intellectual property rights of third parties (e.g. logos, written works, diagrams, pictures, music, video/film clips, etc.); where necessary the express permission of the rights holder should be obtained.
- When posting as individuals, users 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 Council (for example the following disclaimer is often stated on twitter accounts: *"all views expressed here are my own and don't reflect the views of my employer"*).
- Users posting on behalf of Mayo County Council should ensure that they adhere to the Social Media policy and procedures

- Users should not post material which is confidential and proprietary to the Council or which could have the effect of damaging the reputation of the Council or the privacy or reputation of any third party.
- Users should 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.
- Users should ensure that information posted is accurate and not misleading.
- Users should not post material for the purpose of embarrassing people or which will bring that person or Mayo County Council into disrepute.
- Users should not use the Council name, including any emblems or logos, to promote their own commercial objectives or activities.
- Users should not use the Mayo County Council name, including any emblems or logos to imply that the Council endorses an activity without its prior written consent.
- Users should respect Council time and property: Council systems and equipment are reserved for the use of staff and Council related business.
- Users should comply with the procedures on the establishment and use of social media accounts, namely:
- Procedure for official Council accounts

4.1 Third party social media sites

Third party social media sites, such as Facebook, twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn are used at the user's own risk and since Mayo County Council has no control over these sites, the Council cannot take any responsibility for data stored on these sites.

Users should familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions governing of all social media sites and adhere to these conditions, in addition to the regulations set out in this policy document.

Users 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 users maintain the highest possible privacy settings (i.e. "private" profile on Facebook).

Users should be aware that this security may not be possible on some services (such as Twitter or LinkedIn).

4.2 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, users 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. Users 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.

4.3 Compliance with Policy

Mayo County Council reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without notice, the postings and activities of staff where there is reason to suspect that this policy is being breached, or where deemed necessary by the Council for other legitimate reasons

4.4 Breach of Policy

Mayo County Council takes a very serious view on malicious use of social media by staff particularly if such use puts at risk the staff or brings the Councils reputation into disrepute. The Council operates a strict “notice and takedown” procedure, in these circumstances.

Users are encouraged to be vigilant and to report any suspected violations of this Policy immediately to the HIS, IT Section who will decide on the most appropriate course of action.

On receipt of notice (or where the Council otherwise becomes aware) of any suspected breach of this Policy, the Council reserves the following rights:

- To remove, or require the removal of, any content which is deemed by the Council to be in breach of this policy; and/or
- To disable any User and block access by that User to the Council network, systems, communications devices or equipment.

In addition to the above, if any breach of this policy is detected, disciplinary action up to and including dismissal (in the case of staff), contract termination (in the case of third parties) may be taken in accordance with the Councils disciplinary procedures for staff as appropriate

4.5 Revisions to Policy

Mayo County Council reserves the right at any time to revise the terms of this policy. Any such revisions will be notified to staff, and by continuing to use the relevant social media sites following such notification users will be deemed to have accepted the revised terms of this policy.

If you have any queries in relation to this policy, please contact the IT Section.