

Title	LWETB Social Media Policy
Date	17 th August, 2020
Approved By	Chief Executive, LWETB
Noted By	LWETB Board

LWETB Social Media Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safe and responsible use of Social Media by all LWETB staff and LWETB Learners / Students. The policy is intended to provide guidance and direction on issues relating to the use of social media (a.k.a. Social Networking), including, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Viber, School/Centre or Office websites (including blogs), and also includes the use of such services via mobile devices and smartphones.

2. Description

Social Media is a term commonly given to websites and applications that enable users to interact with one another online through the creation and sharing of content. Creating and sharing content allows users to build social and business networks through increased participation and engagement.

LWETB recognises that the widespread availability and use of Social Media brings opportunities to engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we utilise these technologies and services effectively and flexibly, for educational purposes. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this use with an awareness of our reputation and of the safety needs of our staff and students/learners. This policy aims to create a balanced approach to supporting innovation in learning whilst providing a framework of good practice.

3. Definitions

“Must”, or the terms **"required"** or **"shall"**, refer to an absolute requirement of the policy.

“Must not”, or the phrase **"shall not"**, refer to statements which are an absolute prohibition of the policy.

“Should”, or the adjective **"recommended"** refers to a statement that should be applied. In certain circumstances, there may exist a valid reason to ignore a particular item. In this case the full implications must be understood and carefully weighed before choosing a different course.

“Should not”, or the phrase **"not recommended"** mean the specified behaviour should not be performed. There may exist valid reasons in particular circumstances when the particular behaviour is acceptable, but the full implications should be understood and the case carefully weighed before implementing any behaviour described with this label.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all staff in any role in any LWETB School, Centre or Office and refers to the following elements of Social Media usage:

- Account Access
- Account Management
- Acceptable Usage
- Employee Conduct - Professional Use
- Employee Conduct - Personal Use
- Cyberbullying
- Security
- Data Protection
- Legal
- Public Conduct

5. Other Related Policies and Procedures

All LWETB Social Media services are subject to LWETB's Policies and Procedures and relevant Department of Education & Skills Circular Letters. Staff should read this Social Media Policy in conjunction with the following:

- LWETB ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools
- The Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
- Grievance Procedures for Staff employed by LWETB
- Bullying Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure for LWETB Staff
- Harassment/Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure for LWETB Staff
- School/Centre Health and Safety Statements
- School/Centre Code of Conduct/Behaviour
- LWETB Data Protection Policy
- 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, against a Staff Member employed by LWETB.

6. Account Access

Collaborative Networking Services will be provided to all LWETB staff and students via emailing and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) facilities.

Staff will be issued with an email account on commencement of employment for the duration of their contract. Students, where relevant, will be issued with an email account for the duration of their studies with LWETB.

In order to create new Social Media accounts that pertain to LWETB or an individual School/Centre/Office of LWETB, written consent must be secured in advance from Senior Management. LWETB ICT Support must be notified of all new accounts.

7. Account Management

Each LWETB School Principal and Centre/Senior Manager is ultimately responsible for the Social Media activity related to their School/Centre and therefore reserves the right to manage Social Media activity based on best practice and standards.

This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Providing guidelines (e.g. Social Media guidelines for students, parents, and staff) and making reasonable efforts to train staff and students in acceptable use and policies governing online communications.
- Monitoring online activities. This may include real-time monitoring of network activity and/or maintaining a log of Internet activity for later review.
- Removing any inappropriate user accounts.
- Amending local procedures and rules as required.

An LWETB staff member within the school/centre/office may be appointed to coordinate and monitor such activity. Those who coordinate and monitor Social Media channels associated with LWETB must ensure that they are in a position, and to respond to comments and posts made on the site in a timely manner. They should also be tasked with the moderation of comments from third parties to ensure that posters do not violate any of the standards set out in this policy, particularly in respect of the standards for acceptable usage set out below. In order to ensure a consistent brand and standard it is best practice that each centre/school maintains one public facing Social Media profile and ensures the School and LWETB logo are visible in a prominent place on the profile.

Each School Principal /Centre Manager is responsible for establishing and maintaining a register of all social networking application domain names in use, the names of all Administrators of these accounts, as well as the associated user identifications and passwords currently active within their School/Centre.

8. Acceptable Usage

In availing of Social Media Services approved by LWETB, with the large potential audience that comes with it, staff agree to adhere to the following standards:

- Staff should never post or send abusive, defamatory or distasteful messages or post photographs, videos or other media which could be considered in breach of LWETB policies and procedures.
- The posting use of indecent, obscene, harassing or other inappropriate, offensive or lewd comment or any other such content likely to cause offence, whether in written form, cartoon form or otherwise will not be tolerated and will be subject to the appropriate sanction as set out in the relevant policy and procedure.
- Posts must not contain matters which may discriminate on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or membership of the Traveller community.

- Staff should not publish personal identifiable information of LWETB staff unless it relates to the performance of their duties or is otherwise in keeping with the policies of the school/centre/service and LWETB.
- Staff should not publish personal identifiable information of LWETB students unless this is in line with the policies of the school/centre/service and LWETB.
- Staff should not post to students from their personal Social Media accounts or reply to posts sent by students from their personal Social Media accounts.
- Staff should note that student names will not be recorded in website photographs unless it is an officially sanctioned photograph by the School Principal or Centre/Service Manager and consent for such publication – both for the photograph and the name – has been secured from the student. In the event that the student is a minor, Parental/Guardian consent is required.
- Staff should never post a comment about LWETB that purports to represent the views of LWETB or an individual School/Centre/Service unless approved by the School Principal/ Centre or Service Manager or the Chief Executive.

9. Teaching Staff must follow the Guidelines prescribed by the following extract from the Teaching Council Code of Conduct

Teachers shall...

3.3.6 Communicate effectively with students, colleagues, parents, school management and others in a manner that is professional, collaborative and supportive, and based on trust and respect.

3.3.7 Ensure that any communication with students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as e-mail, texting and social networking sites.

3.3.8 Ensure that they do not access, download or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in school activities, inappropriate materials/images in electronic or other format.

3.3.9 Ensure that they do not access, download or otherwise have in their possession, at any time or in any place, illegal materials/images in electronic or other format.

The Teaching/Tutoring Staff of a School/Centre have an important role to play in educating students in the safe and responsible use of Social Media.

The School/Centre Social Media Policy should be developed/amended to reflect local operational needs while adhering to the principles of this policy.

10. Employee Conduct – Personal Use of Social Media

The use of Social Media platforms which are purely about personal matters and do not identify the user as an employee of LWETB or discuss the activities of LWETB will

normally fall outside the remit of this policy. However, where members of staff place material on such personal Social Media webpages which would identify the user as an employee of LWETB and discuss the activities of LWETB, this activity will fall within the scope of this policy.

The use of such personal Social Media within the Workplace should fall within the parameters of the LWETB ICT Acceptable Usage Policy. It is important for staff to be aware that the use of Social Media when outside work can become the concern of the School/Centre/Office and LWETB if the content relates to School/Centre/Office activity. In this instance disciplinary procedures may be invoked.

Staff using Social Media sites for personal use should be conscious of 'keeping private life private'. Any 'friend' or link requests from students must be declined/refused, and the staff member's privacy settings altered to minimise the risk of such approaches.

11. Cyberbullying

It is important each LWETB School, Centre and Office takes measures to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying. This includes bullying of students and staff, whether by students, parents or colleagues. Management, staff, parents and students all have rights and responsibilities in relation to cyberbullying and should work together to create an environment in which students can learn and develop and staff can have fulfilling careers free from harassment and bullying. Staff members who have any concern in this regard should refer to LWETB's Bullying Prevention Policy.

All LWETB Schools, Centres and Offices should ensure that their anti-bullying policies incorporate and include cyberbullying and that they work with the whole school community to prevent cyberbullying.

LWETB will react in a timely manner to reported incidents and support any member of staff who reports such incidents. Staff who are harassed in this way will receive support and information enabling them to access appropriate personal support. The School/Centre/Office will endeavour to approach Internet Service Providers on their behalf in order to request that the inappropriate material is removed.

The Internet Service Provider may only accept a request from the individual concerned. However, the School/Centre/Office may want to take action if the inappropriate material is on a School/Centre/Office Social Media Page. In the case where it is necessary for the person being bullied to contact the service providers directly, the School /Centre /Office /LWETB may provide the necessary support. This may apply, for example, in cases of identity theft, impersonation or abuse via Social Media.

12. Security

LWETB's ICT Support shall enable technical risk mitigation controls to the greatest extent possible.

Such controls may include:

- Filtering and monitoring of all Social Media page content posted and/or viewed.
- Scanning any and all files exchanged with Social Media web sites.
- Blocking sites that are inappropriate for access by staff or students.

13. Data Protection

As a Data Controller LWETB has responsibilities in relation to Data Protection. The collection, use and retention of personal data in the form of subscribers to Social Media pages or the automatic collection of 'cookie data' fall under the data protection legislation.

Staff should familiarise themselves with guidance issued by LWETB's Data Protection Office and LWETB's Data Protection Policy.

It should be noted that a higher threshold of care must be exercised in relation to the collection, use, and retention of sensitive data and the data of students.

A data breach is a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed; all data breaches, actual or suspected, must be reported to LWETB's Data Protection Office immediately.

15. Legal

LWETB staff are responsible for ensuring that the use of Social Media facilities is lawful and must exercise due caution and diligence to ensure the use of all Social Media services adheres to all applicable laws and regulations.

Failure to do so may result in any or all of the following legal consequences:

- Disciplinary action up to and including dismissal
- Members of staff being personally liable to criminal prosecution.
- Members of staff being personally sued for damages in a civil court.
- LWETB or a School/Centre being sued for damages in a civil court.

16. Public Conduct

Users and visitors to LWETB Social Media pages shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between the School/Centre and members of the public.

LWETB Social Media site articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:

- Comments not topically-related to the particular social medium article being commented upon

- Comments in support of, or in opposition to, political campaigns or ballot measures
- Profane language or content
- Sexual content or links to sexual content
- Conduct of or encouragement of illegal activity
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination in violation of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2011 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011 in the following domains:
 - Gender
 - Marital status
 - Family status
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race
 - Membership of the Traveller Community

These guidelines must be displayed to users. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster when available.

17. Responsibilities

Owner	Responsibilities
Director of Organisational Support & Development	Revisions and updates to the policy
LWETB Senior Leadership Team	Review of the Policy
LWETB Chief Executive	Approval of the Policy
LWETB Board	Noting of the Policy
All LWETB Staff and Students/Learners	Responsible for implementation of the policy