

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

*Updated & Adopted by Management Team
on 23rd October, 2018*

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to outline Kilkenny County Council's policy for the usage of Social Media. This details personal and professional responsibilities for the participation in or use of social media as part of an employee's job or in a professional capacity as a Council employee.

2. **Authority & Scope**

This policy applies to all employees (permanent and temporary), independent contractors, consultants and other persons or entities that use Kilkenny County Council's digital resources, during and outside of working hours.

The policy also applies to the personal use of social media by employees of Kilkenny County Council, where in the course of such personal use employees identify themselves or are identified as employees of Kilkenny County Council and/or engage in discussion on matters relevant to the business of the Council.

3. **Definition of Social Media**

Social media is defined as any online forum, internal or external to the organisation, which is used to publish information that can be accessed by people or organisations internal or external to the Council. This information can be in a variety of formats such as documents, photographs, videos, personal observations, live commentaries, blogs or any other type of digital content.

4. **General Acceptable Usage**

4.1 *Access to Social Media Accounts*

All employees availing of, administering or utilising approved social media channels on behalf of Kilkenny County Council are obliged to be familiar with and comply in full with the Kilkenny County Council Social Media Policy including the Social Media Guidelines for Usage together with all relevant Kilkenny County Council workplace policies and statutory obligations.

Only authorised accounts will be utilised. "Independent" accounts will not be tolerated. All accounts must be set up in consultation with Kilkenny County Council's IT and Corporate Services Departments.

Only designated staff members will be authorised to post on or manage social media accounts. Access to passwords shall be limited to these personnel.

As per [Kilkenny County Council's Electronic Communications Policy](#):

"Users must not utilise any other person's access rights or attempt to gain access to resources or data for which authorisation has not specifically been granted. Users must not attempt to bypass or probe any security mechanisms governing access to the computer systems."

"No staff member may misrepresent himself/herself as another individual."

All employees using social media accounts shall abide by the Terms and Conditions of each individual social media platform.

Employees posting from their personal accounts can still affect the reputation of the organisation. Employees shall ensure that any mention of Kilkenny County Council, employees, customers or matters relevant to the business of the Council in personal contributions to online sites does not bring the organisation into disrepute or give the impression that the views expressed are those of the Council. Activity relating to social media occurring outside of working hours is subject to the same consideration regardless of when the activity takes place.

Employees shall not assume that posts or comments made online will remain private given the nature of the internet. The freedom of expression enjoyed by an employee shall be balanced against the right of Kilkenny County Council to protect its reputation and to observe its duty of care to its employees.

4.2 Personal Usage of Social Media.

Employees shall read and comply with [Kilkenny County Council's Electronic Communications Policy](#). Employees shall utilise a personal email address when setting up personal social media accounts and shall not associate Kilkenny County Council email addresses with any personal social media accounts.

Care must be taken on all devices to ensure that you do not mistakenly post from a Kilkenny County Council account rather than a personal account.

5. Content Guidelines

All Kilkenny County Council social media content shall meet the acceptable standard for Council's communication and conduct.

The following are examples of '*Unacceptable Content*':

- Inappropriate language or content.
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, age, race, religious belief or membership of the Traveller Community.
- Sexual content or links to sexual content.
- Illegal activity or encouragement of same.
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- Content that violates the Council's Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children.
- Content that expresses political bias.
- Content in breach of the principles of the Council's Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure.

This list is not exhaustive.

6. Proprietary or Confidential Information

Proprietary information shall not be exchanged, discussed or referred to on social media sites even in private messages between site members who have authorised access to the information.

Examples of such information include:

- Personal data as defined under the Data Protection Legislation
- Financial information (e.g. salaries, fees paid, contract details)
- Discussion on any aspect of Council's business or activity, particularly issues subject to administrative, legal, financial or regulatory processes
- Sensitive commercial information submitted as part of tender processes
- Intellectual property such as drawings, designs, maps of infrastructure
- Information about citizens or identifiable groups
- Information about employees (e.g. sick leave, performance etc)

7. Ownership & Management of Social Media Accounts

Kilkenny County Council is responsible for the ownership and management of the Council's social media accounts. The I.T Department is also responsible for the maintenance and review of this policy.

Only those employees officially designated as spokespersons shall use social media sites to speak on behalf of Kilkenny County Council. Social media activity is integrated with the Council's corporate communications activities.

8. Monitoring & Reporting Procedure for Social Media

It is the policy of Kilkenny County Council to monitor social media content on behalf of the Council to ensure that content is appropriate.

8.1 Reporting Suspected Misuse of Social Media on behalf of the Council

All employees, third parties and other persons that use the Council's digital resources, during and outside of working hours have a responsibility to report suspected misuse/inappropriate use of Social Media by staff on behalf of the Council. Any suspected misuse/inappropriate shall be reported to the Director of Corporate Services.

8.2 Reporting Perceived Misuse of Social Media by an Employee

Any perceived misuse of social media by a member of staff, shall be reported to the appropriate Line Manager, in accordance with the [Council's Disciplinary Policy](#) and [Kilkenny County Council Electronic Communications Policy](#).

8.3 Reporting Personal Concerns relating to Social Media

Any personal concerns, relating to Social Media regarding any online social media content/comments about the Council, its employees or its agents, shall be reported to the Human Resources Department. (H.R Officer)

8.4 Reporting Feedback on Council services communicated via Social Media

Kilkenny County Council welcomes relevant feedback in relation to the services of the Council communicated via social media. Feedback shall be given to the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services/Communications Officer.

8.5 Dealing with mistakes

If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. Delete the post and apologise for the mistake, explaining that the material was posted by mistake and is not an official view. Post the correct information. If the mistake was factual, make clear what you've corrected. Inform your Line Manager and Corporate Services for advice on further handling.

9. Kilkenny County Council Policy Links

This Social Media Policy also links to *[and shall be read in conjunction with]* the following policies:

- Code of Conduct for Employees.
- Grievance & Disciplinary Policy & Procedures.
- Dignity at Work Policy & Procedures.
- Communications Policy [Computer and IT Resources Acceptable Use Policy].
- Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children.
- Any other relevant policies relating to online/electronic communications and the use of IT in the workplace.

10. **Freedom of Information & Data Protection**

Records created, maintained and stored by Kilkenny County Council are subject to a range of legislation including Freedom of Information and Data Protection. Records management of social media content shall comply with the National Records Retention Policy (2001) and any other relevant records retention policies.

11. **Training & Awareness of Employees**

All employees of Kilkenny County Council shall read and understand the Council's Social Media Policy. Training and information on the policy shall be provided as part of induction and where necessary shall be included in general employee awareness activities.

12. **Vicarious Liability**

12.1 Kilkenny County Council is aware that it may be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment or discrimination carried out by employees on social media sites, even if the acts were carried out without the Council's consent or knowledge. Actions can include defamation of customers, third parties or employees.

12.2 Social network users who identify themselves online as employees of Kilkenny County Council shall ensure that any personal social media accounts or other personal posts contain disclaimers that make it clear that the opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent the views of Kilkenny County Council.

13. **Use of Personal Devices**

Employee participation in Social Media, should only be undertaken using Kilkenny County Council equipment, e.g. PCs, laptops, tablets, phones, unless specifically authorised to do otherwise.

14. **Intellectual Property**

All Kilkenny County Council's social media accounts, associated content and contacts remain the sole property of the Council and remain so even after termination of employment.

15. **Monitoring & Review**

Kilkenny County Council shall monitor the implementation of and compliance with the policy and will review it on a regular basis.

As per Kilkenny County Council's [Electronic Communications Policy](#):

"It is the policy of Kilkenny County Council to monitor PC content, e-mail content, internet usage and information stored on PCs, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, shared data drives and mobile data storage and all network usage by and on behalf of all employees in order to protect Kilkenny County Council and their employees from liability under equality, data protection, pornography and copyright legislation. This does not constitute infringement of any individual rights to personal privacy under the General Data Protection Regulations/Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018. Monitoring developments may change over time. In addition Kilkenny County Council will monitor directly each individual's PC for inappropriate image content.

This policy may be amended from time to time as is deemed necessary. Employees will be notified of any changes.

16. **Infringements of Policy**

Any breach of this policy can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment in the case of more serious breaches in line with the [Council's Disciplinary Policy](#).

