



etb

Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Dhún na nGall
*Donegal Education and
Training Board*

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

#WeAreDonegalETB / #IsMuidETBDhúnnanGall

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1. Introduction

Social media platforms¹ are key communication channels for the dissemination of information for and about Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB), which includes its various schools, colleges, centres, programmes and services (all known as Donegal ETB/the ETB hereafter) under its remit. For many of our students/learners, staff, parents and partnership organisations, they are the only way in which they engage with the ETB and its constituent parts and the services we provide. Donegal ETB recognises that the use of social media provides many educational and organisational benefits. However, there are also dangers through inappropriate use that may compromise a member of Donegal ETB staff or students/learners or may bring Donegal ETB into disrepute.

A proactive and coherent social media strategy can have very positive outcomes and effects for the ETB and for our audiences in terms of promoting the services the ETB provides and the work it does as well as providing citizens with the opportunity to contact or engage with the ETB online. Conversely, the abuse or misuse of social media platforms can cause harm to the ETB's reputation and undermine its credibility.

The following policy and guidelines are aimed at ensuring consistency and coherence across our social media platforms with a view to increasing and enhancing our brand through our online presence and our interaction with social media users in Donegal and beyond.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff² of Donegal ETB in any role in any office / school / centre / programme / service and to official Donegal ETB accounts set up directly by Donegal ETB or any of its schools (including various subject/programme departments), centres, programmes and services. It also applies to the personal accounts of staff in certain circumstances.³

3. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline Donegal ETB's policy for the usage of social media and provide all staff with clear guidelines and directions. This policy covers all types of interactions on social media including but not limited to posts/tweets, uploading or linking to photos and videos, comments, likes/favourites/retweets/shares, friend/contact requests, followers etc. The policy and guidelines aim to:

- Represent an official and consistent position that governs the use of social media by staff, representatives and third parties acting on behalf of the ETB.
- Assist the ETB to adopt a responsible approach to managing the usage of social media platforms for the purpose of conducting ETB business.⁴
- Ensure that Donegal ETB information remains secure and is not compromised through the use of social media.
- Provide staff with standards of acceptable use as they engage in conversations or interactions using digital media for official use and personally on behalf of or in relation to Donegal ETB.

¹ Social media platforms include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Blogging, Vimeo, Periscope and MySpace and includes the use of such platforms via mobile devices (phones and tablets). It is recognised that new social media applications, platforms or services can emerge rapidly, and this policy will apply to use of any such applications, platforms or services, current and future.

² Staff includes paid employees, volunteers and work experience participants.

³ See section 7.

⁴ This includes business conducted on all social media accounts run by its schools, centres, programmes and services that represent Donegal ETB directly or indirectly.

Provide staff with guidelines on what constitutes inappropriate use of social media. This policy should be read in conjunction with the most recent version of Donegal ETB and individual school/centre/programme/service policies⁵ on:

1. Internet and Network Usage Policy
2. Code of Ethics for ETB Staff
3. Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (Teaching Council)
4. Grievance Procedure for Staff Employed by Education and Training Boards (ETBs)
5. Disciplinary Procedure for Staff Employed by Education and Training Boards (ETBs)
6. Children First - National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (*Child Protection Policies*)
7. Harassment / Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure for ETB Staff
8. Bullying Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure for ETB Staff
9. Code of Practice for Protection of Personal Data in ETBs⁶
10. Data Protection Statement
11. Student/Learner Code of Conduct/Behaviour⁷
12. Donegal ETB Strategy Statement 2017-2021
13. Donegal ETB Communications Strategy⁸
14. Youthreach Social Media Strategy 2015
15. FET Services Complaints of Bullying or Harassment Including Sexual Harassment Policy
16. FET Services Confidentiality of Information Relating to Adult Learners Participating in Adult Education Programmes
17. FET Services Equality Statement & Policy
18. FET Services Expected Behaviour of Adult Learners
19. FET Services One to One Meetings between FET Staff/Volunteers & Adult Learners

4. Definition

Social media can be defined as:

Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content online or to participate in social networking including 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 organisation.

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.

5. Objectives and Aims of Social Media Usage

Social media enables Donegal ETB to:

- Build the public profile of Donegal ETB and its schools, centres, programmes and services;
- Recognise and celebrate the experiences, learning, achievements and successes of its students, learners and staff;
- Disseminate relevant information in an efficient manner;
- Disseminate information about Donegal ETB's services, plans, policies;

⁵ In addition to any other policies developed in the future by Donegal ETB, its schools/centres/programmes/services, the Department of Education and Skills and other related bodies.

⁶ Currently under review.

⁷ As per individual schools/centres/programmes.

⁸ Currently under development.

- Listen to, understand and interact with our audiences more effectively;
- Gauge influence.

The broad objective of the social media output is to promote the work and services of Donegal ETB.

It aims to:

- portray Donegal ETB in a positive light;
- highlight the positive initiatives being taken;
- respond to or to rectify incorrect or misleading information on social media if it refers to Donegal ETB, where possible and appropriate.

The primary content/focus of social media posts therefore should be:

- The work of the ETB and the services it provides;
- Notifications such as school/centre closures, grant/funding applications, public consultations, awards etc.;
- Events like press launches, open days, meetings, seminars and other similar events in which the ETB is involved;
- Recruitment of students/learners;
- Circulating a link to a press release or item on our website/s;
- Tweeting/posting photographs of events, launches etc.;
- Staff achievements (including personal);
- Retweets/sharing or likes for posts from other bodies for example, SOLAS, Teaching Council, government departments, etc. insofar as the ETB is involved and/or supportive or a particular initiative.

6. Guidelines for Professional Use of Social Media

6.1 Social Media Account Set-Up

- Any new social media accounts in the name of Donegal ETB or in the name of an individual school/centre/programme/service cannot be opened without written prior approval/sign off from senior management⁹ via the ETB's Communications Advisory Group.
- Each school/centre/programme/service should maintain a secure record of usernames and passwords for their social media accounts, whether at the ETB's Administrative Office or school/centre level. The log should also include a list of approved administrators for the page. At least two members of staff should have administrator rights to each official Donegal ETB page/identity to allow for situations where an employee may be absent on leave etc.¹⁰
- In setting up new accounts Donegal ETB email addresses only should be used.¹¹

⁹ Director of Schools re schools, Gartan OETC, music and youth services and Director of FET re FET programmes/service/centres.

¹⁰ It may not be possible to set up some social media pages, e.g. Facebook pages, without linking to a personal account login. In such situations, more than one person should be set up with full access and administrative rights to the page. Where a business page is only accessible via a personal login, there is no requirement for the passwords to be shared for personal privacy reasons. Alternatively, if staff are not comfortable using their personal login details to manage a Facebook page, they can set up a 'fake' account to be used to manage the Facebook page but be aware that Facebook do not favour this and may close such accounts down.

¹¹ Ibid.

- Staff who are responsible for maintaining these accounts, monitoring, answering queries, etc. must use the approved administrator identities and should be clearly identifiable as acting on behalf of the organisation.
- Facebook pages for schools/centres/programmes/services should only be set up as organisation/business page not a personal page i.e. pages that a Facebook user 'likes' rather than 'adds as a friend'.¹²
- Under no circumstances should a fake profile that impersonates another member of a Donegal ETB school/centre/programme/service be created.

The following conditions must be adhered to at all times when utilising social media:

- Branding on social media platforms or sites should incorporate Donegal ETB branding, i.e. correct use of the Donegal ETB logo alongside the school/centre logo and/or stating in Twitter, Facebook and other profiles that the school/centre/programme/service is part of Donegal ETB/@DonegalETB in the case of Twitter.
 - Staff are expected to exercise sound judgement and maintain the highest professional standards while using social media within Donegal ETB:
- Staff must:
- only comment on matters for which they have appropriate expertise. If there is any doubt about content/comments to be contributed, the employee's line managers should be consulted before any changes/comments are made;
 - be polite and respectful at all times to every category of recipient;
 - be aware of the digital footprint and remember that comments, posts and/or images may remain permanently online and available for others to see, even if 'deleted'.
- Staff must never:
- post or send defamatory, foul, sarcastic or offensive comments or photographs, videos or other digital material which could be considered in breach of this Policy and Guidelines and/or which may compromise a member of staff or impact negatively on Donegal ETB;
 - forward, share or like content that is likely to cause offence or hurt to a third party;
 - disclose or publish confidential or personal information of Donegal ETB staff, students/learners etc. online unless it is in line with the policies of the school/centre/programme/service and Donegal ETB;
 - discuss or share Donegal ETB policies and practices;
 - use social media so as to contravene Irish, European or international law. Staff should pay strict attention to licensing agreements, intellectual property rights and copyright laws and abide by same at all times.
 - add references to private social media details to a/their Donegal ETB email signature and vice versa.

6.2 Acceptable Use of Social Media & Ways of Enhancing Social Media Presence/Interaction¹³

There are a number of simple and effective ways in which Donegal ETB can use its social media platforms to promote our work and engage in a meaningful way with its audiences. Examples include:

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See also Appendix 2 – Writing Guidelines for Social Media.

- Closed Groups shall be used when collaborating on Facebook as membership can be strictly controlled and users do not have to be friends of other users or the group's creator.
- For various schools/centres/programmes/services, an effort should be made to tag @DonegalETB on a tweet, for example, so that it can be retweeted by the main ETB account or use the hashtag #WeAreDonegalETB / #IsMuidETBDhúnnanGall or #TeamDonegalETB or #TeamETB
- When possible, generate a hashtag or even simply using #Donegal in tweets which can create further interaction and engagement.
- Use of appropriate emojis¹⁴ may enhance posts.
- The Communications Coordinator¹⁵ can also be asked to issue a message on behalf of a section or account holder or to retweet same.
- For schools/centres/programmes/services which do not have their own social media account(s), if there is any item, link or photograph that they wish to have posted, this can be done by sending same to the Communications Coordinator.
- For programmes which have their own (county-based) accounts e.g. Youthreach, all posts relating to such programmes must be posted to the central accounts (Facebook and Twitter) in the first instance and then shared onto other accounts afterwards e.g. multi-programme centre accounts.
- Multi-programme centres must ensure a balanced representation of all programmes in the centre i.e. a mix of posts from each programmes, not two, three or more posts in a row from the one programme. This will require the account administrator(s) to seek out posts/news items to ensure balance in maintained in order to showcase the range of activities taking place in these centres through these central accounts.
- The use of photographs and video can greatly enhance the number of hits/retweets/likes and is encouraged as much as possible. For example, if hosting a launch or event, an effort should be made to take photos and short videos and tweet/post them as the event is underway. All students/learners must have provided signed permission to say:
 - (a) they have agreed to participate in ETB promotion of the course/programme/school/centre/event they are attending, including photos/videos of themselves on ETB (including related) social media accounts and
 - (b) that they have agreed to be included in any promotion carried out by external contractors/trainers on their social media accounts.

If the photograph or video is of people attending the event, permission, where applicable/possible, should be sought from those in the photograph before posting images on social media.

- Guidelines will be provided for all external/contracted trainers to adhere to re their social media accounts e.g. they need to check that students/learners have agreed to be in a photo that they will post from their own accounts, correct language is used (e.g. learner not trainee re FET; student re schools/music/Gartan), the ETB is mentioned/tagged in posts etc.
- Creation of promotional videos require permission from the ETB's Communications Advisory Group in advance. All videos made in relation to Donegal ETB, its work and the work of its schools/centres/programmes/services may only be uploaded to Donegal ETB's YouTube account and not to any other account unless it has been set up specifically for a

¹⁴ A small digital image or icon used to express an idea or emotion in electronic communication and the Oxford English Dictionary's 2015 word of the year.

¹⁵ The ETB's main social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn) are currently managed by Sandra Buchanan (sandrabuchanan@donegaletb.ie).

particular school/centre/programme or service. All videos must acknowledge Donegal ETB, including its logo in the credits.

- An effort should be made to live tweet or live message events such as a policy launch, public occasion or other ETB events e.g. the launch of plans or policies, open days, awards etc. Use of images along with text can be effective. Assistance in this regard can be provided by the Communications Coordinator.
- Re-tweet/like/share, as appropriate, messages/posts from events/awards/projects/initiatives which are supported financially or otherwise by the ETB.
- Tweets should not be linked to Facebook accounts as this assumes users of Twitter are also Facebook users which is not always the case, neither should a tweet consist of a photo only with no text; tweets should be able to stand out on their own as a coherent message.
- Regular updates e.g. in relation to a major event, for example should be posted as often as possible and not just when such a process begins e.g. 'Just a week to go to our open day ...'
- Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if removed/deleted later. The aim should be to *think before posting/tweeting/retweeting/quoting tweets and if in doubt, leave it out*. Seek advice from the Communications Coordinator if there any concerns.
- Content should be creative, consistent and most importantly, relevant.

6.3 Inappropriate/Unacceptable Use of Social Media

It is inappropriate for the school/centre/programme/service/staff to like, share, post, tweet, retweet, quote posts/tweets:

- News stories/items which have no particular relevance to the work of the ETB or the particular school/centre/programme/service account being used;
- Sharing posts from objectionable websites/Facebook pages e.g. Sarcastic Bitches Facebook page;
- Comments not specifically related to the particular social media article being commented upon;
- Content that violates the ETB's (and those of school/centres/programme/services) Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children;
- Inappropriate language or content that promotes, fosters, disseminates or perpetuates discrimination in violation of the Equal Status Act 2000-2015 and the Employment Equality Act 1998-2015 in the areas of gender, Marital/civil Status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community;
- Misuse, abuse or inappropriate use or any form of harassment/sexual harassment or bullying via social media will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action including suspension and dismissal as provided for in the Donegal ETB Disciplinary policy and/or relevant Circular Letters;
- Negative language or name calling e.g. losers or anything which refers in a negative or derogatory way to the ETB, ETB management, ETB staff and to public representatives and Board members;
- Profane language or content/language which seeks to promote a particular religious viewpoint;
- Sexual content or links to sexual content¹⁶;

¹⁶ The exception to this is the Youthreach programme and schools which may, from time to time, post/tweet directly or share/retweet posts related to sexual health.

- Content/comments that expresses political bias or support/oppose political campaigns or ballot processes;
- Personal data as defined under the Data Protection Acts;
- Information about staff (e.g. sick leave, performance etc), citizens or identifiable groups;
- Financial information (e.g. salaries, fees paid, contract details);
- Sensitive commercial information submitted as part of tender processes;
- Intellectual property such as drawings, designs, maps of infrastructure, music or images without proper consent;
- Discussion on any aspect of ETB business or activity particularly issues subject to administrative, legal, financial or regulatory processes;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
- Posts of a commercial/business nature or those that are simply advertising a private business or commercial endeavour;
- Content relating to the conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.

6.4 Policy on Responses to Tweets/Posts on Facebook

Donegal ETB and its constituent parts frequently receives tweets or messages on Facebook, which, for the most part are perfectly relevant to what we do e.g. somebody asking about the availability of a particular course or students/learners messaging about their absence.

- Our policy is to respond to same, where relevant, not only as a matter of courtesy but also to engage with the public and deal with any issues which may arise. Sometimes a simple acknowledgement of a message can be very useful and reflects positively on the ETB.
- Any requests via social media from the press or members of the public for official comment from the ETB on any topic should be referred to the Communications Coordinator and/or Chief Executive's office.
- When a very specific question or request is posted to any of our main accounts/pages, they should be referred to the relevant section by the Communications Coordinator for a response as soon as possible unless that section is in a position to respond to the particular query.
- In the event of abusive, concerning or vexatious messaging, the matter should be referred to the Communications Coordinator. Similarly, if material posted on social media is identified to be inaccurate or misleading, it should be referred to the Communications Coordinator. As far as possible, full and accurate information should be promoted.

6.5 Policy on Retweets and 'Likes'

- A retweet/share on Twitter/Facebook or a like on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram could be construed as an endorsement by Donegal ETB or a particular message, tweet or post.
- No retweet/share on Twitter/Facebook or a like on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram shall be made which will impact negatively on Donegal ETB.
- Social media account administrators are not expected to retweet/like/share personal tweets from staff.
- Again, where relevant, think and consult if necessary before responding.

6.6 Policy on Following/Followers

Users/account administrators must be conscious of which accounts are followed, for example, on Twitter, as this is publicly visible online; following a questionable account can cause reputational/brand damage to Donegal ETB. It is perfectly reasonable to follow the accounts of ETB

constituent parts, government departments, other organisations we work with, leaders in the field etc. Before you follow or like another account, check who follows them already, who they follow, the type of tweets/posts they put out and if in doubt, do not follow or like.

6.7 Promotion of Social Media Platforms

Where possible, the social media accounts (and website) of Donegal ETB and its constituent parts should be promoted e.g. printed posters, leaflets, banners etc. and should be included in staff email signatures. Social media icons should always be displayed on the front page of website home pages and blogs and the ability to share website pages and blogs through social media should be included in the websites and blogs of Donegal ETB and its constituent parts.

7. Personal Profiles/Use of Social Media

The personal use of social media sites regarding personal matters which do not identify the user as an employee of Donegal ETB will not fall under the remit of this policy. However, this policy will apply in the following circumstances:

- Where an employee identifies him/herself on a personal account as an employee of Donegal ETB;
- Where an employee comments on or discusses any business, programme, services or activities of Donegal ETB and its constituent parts;
- Where an employee enters a discussion with a fellow colleague through social media in respect of colleagues, Donegal ETB staff, students/learners or other stakeholders which may be considered to be offensive or inappropriate.

Employees who choose to identify themselves as a Donegal ETB employee on social media profiles, or in their commentary/participation in social media platforms in a personal capacity, must be aware of the nature of their comments/participation and potential consequences and that material tweeted or posted is capable of being construed as representing the views of the ETB. Such personal accounts remain subject to the policies and standards applying to ETB staff generally.¹⁷ Data protection, privacy requirements, defamation law etc. all still apply when staff are online. It is likely that staff personal and professional profiles may overlap at times, and colleagues and students/learners may have access to content posted by staff. Be aware that information intended only for viewing by friends and family may be forwarded on/shared very easily. Once published online, information is, to all intents and purposes 'permanent', despite efforts to remove it/anonymise it at a later point. Therefore, it is important to remember that how staff conduct themselves online in their personal capacity may reflect on their professionalism and employment with Donegal ETB. Therefore:

- *It is best practice for staff to not post or tweet about work activities from their own personal account.*
- *However, if staff do post or tweet about work activities from their own personal account they must state in their profile 'Personal account; all tweets/opinions my own, not that of my employer Donegal ETB'.*
- *Staff must not post or tweet photographs or videos of students/learners (under or over 18 years) from their personal accounts under any circumstances, including if they have stated that it is a personal account.*
- *Staff must not openly discuss students/learners on their personal accounts.*

¹⁷ Including that outlined by the Teaching Council 'Code of Professional Conduct' paragraphs 3.3.6 -3.3.9.

- *Staff must not comment, post, tweet to ETB accounts as if they were their own personal accounts.*
- *Staff must not use Donegal ETB logos or logos associated with its schools/centres/programmes/services in their personal social media profiles (e.g. profile/header/cover/picture photos).*

Staff using social media platforms in their personal capacity should decline/refuse 'friend', 'link', 'follower' or other 'connection' requests from students/learners. Personal email addresses should not be provided to students/learners and emails should not be sent to/replied to students/learners from a personal email address. Staff should only use an official Donegal ETB email address for work purposes.

Such personal use of social media is subject to the Code of Conduct for Staff (available in the HR Section on the Intranet) and the general expectations around the conduct and behaviour expected of an ETB employee. Teachers' personal use is also governed by the Teaching Council 'Code of Professional Conduct' paragraphs 3.3.6 -3.3.9.

Donegal ETB reserves the right to restrict access to social media sites during working hours and any access to social media websites should fall within the parameters of the Donegal ETB and/or individual school/centre/programme/service ICT Acceptable Use Policy. Donegal ETB also reserves the right to monitor employee's internet usage and/or examine the logs of web browsing to ensure that staff are not excessively viewing websites that are not work-related and/or not acting in a manner that would result in violation of this policy or other policies.

In addition staff with access to and use of ICT Equipment provided by the ETB (PC, laptop, phone, tablet etc) have additional responsibilities that such equipment is used appropriately and complies with ICT usage policies.

8. Staff Use of Personal Equipment for Business Use

It is recognised that staff may use their personal devices for business use from time to time, e.g. smartphones, tablets, storage devices, laptops etc. In situations where staff are accessing Donegal ETB social media accounts through personal devices, they should ensure that their privacy settings are appropriate to such business use, and that such devices are password protected with appropriate lock settings.¹⁸

- *Staff must not take photographs or videos of students or learners (under or over 18 years) on their personal devices.¹⁹ However, when this is simply not possible (e.g. multiple activities taking place for a particular school/centre/programme/service at the same time) staff must ensure they download and remove all photos from their personal devices within one week of taking them.*

9. Monitoring and Reporting

Each section/account administrator will take responsibility for frequently monitoring their own accounts on Facebook and Twitter and other social media platforms. Every effort should be made to keep accounts updated as accounts which are not kept up to date look stale and reflect poorly on the ETB. Even for relatively inactive or infrequently used accounts, an effort should be made to

¹⁸ See also <http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie>.

¹⁹ See also your school/centre/programme/service Child Protection Policy and <http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie/en/Data-Protection-Guidelines/Taking-Using-Images-Photos/>

check regularly for messages/queries received or consideration should be given to shutting down such accounts as they serve no purpose if they are not active. Any issues of concern should be reported to the Communications Coordinator as soon as possible.

Donegal ETB's Communications Advisory Group will meet at regular intervals to monitor, review and discuss our social media output and monitor the implementation of this policy.

10. Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in personal liability of users and/or vicarious liability on behalf of Donegal ETB under many enactments and policies including, but not limited to the following:

- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1999, updated 2011
- Children First Act 2015
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Companies Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 1988 & 2003
- Donegal ETB Bullying Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure for ETB Staff
- Donegal ETB Harassment and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure for ETB Staff
- Donegal ETB Grievance Procedure for Staff Employed by Education and Training Boards (ETBs)
- Education Act 1998
- Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2015
- Freedom of Information Act 1997
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Acts 2005 and 2010

If any staff member is notified of or concerned about misuse of social media, e.g. an abusive or offensive post, profile, page or comment relating to a Donegal ETB staff member or service, he/she shall report it to their line manager immediately. All staff are encouraged to be proactive in this regard. The line manager should have the post reviewed and a record taken of the comment, e.g. a screenshot, and where possible or appropriate, the post should be reported as abuse with the relevant site's existing reporting process. The line manager should also report the post to Donegal ETB's Head of HR as appropriate, depending on the nature of the issue.

Donegal ETB reserves the right to remove or require to be removed any content which is deemed by Donegal ETB to be in breach of this policy and/or disable user access. Donegal ETB will make every reasonable effort to have inappropriate content removed. However, for third party sites, it has no control over the functionality of or data stored on these sites and therefore may be unable to ensure removal.

Inappropriate accounts which like, retweet, share or comment of tweets or posts should always be blocked immediately.

Donegal ETB also reserves the right to initiate disciplinary procedures where appropriate in relation to the misuse of social media. Any misuse of this social media may lead to, if appropriate, action under the disciplinary procedure.

11. Recruitment and Social Media

In line with Donegal ETB Equal Opportunities Policy, Donegal ETB will not, at any stage of the recruitment process, conduct searches on prospective staff or candidates on social networking websites, other than on professional networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn).

12. Data Protection

Donegal ETB has responsibilities in relation to data protection. The collection, use and retention of personal data of subscribers to social media pages or the automatic collection of 'cookie data' fall under the data protection rules. Donegal ETB is conscious of the need to take particular care in relation to the collection, use and retention of sensitive data and data of students and learners.

Staff should familiarise themselves with Donegal ETB's Data Protection Policy and Data Breach Management Policy and Procedure.²⁰

13. Review and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will depend on the monitoring of it by the relevant line Managers and staff in the school/centre/programme/service.

The policy will be reviewed annually (June) and in consideration of changes in legislation, technology developments or as needs dictate throughout the year by Donegal ETB's Communications Advisory Group.

²⁰ These policies currently remain to be finalised. See also <http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie>

Appendix 1 Writing Guidelines for Social Media

Donegal ETB is a public and professional education and training authority. Literacy and numeracy promotion is at the heart of what we do and we seek to be a leader in our field. It is therefore, absolutely vital that correct English, grammar and punctuation are used in our writing on social media at all times. The only exception to this is Twitter because of the character limitation (140 characters maximum allowed) which means that from time to time abbreviated words have to be used and punctuation dropped. Some examples of what is meant by this are laid out below.

Language

1. Use UK English, not US English e.g. programme not program, recognise not recognize.

Sentence Construction

1. Start each sentence with a capital letter.
2. Finish each sentence with a full stop.
3. Only use a semicolon (;) to separate elements of a sentence or between two closely related independent clauses.²¹

Writing in General

1. Do not use text-speak i.e. do not write as if you are writing a text message to your friends or posting to a personal account (the only exception to this is Twitter when its 140 character allowance becomes a challenge).
2. Write sentences and paragraphs in sentence case not in UPPERCASE i.e. capital letters, as this indicates shouting.
3. Avoid using capital letters in the middle of sentences unless required e.g. DVD, the White House etc.
4. Avoid excessive use of question marks and exclamation marks – one will suffice.
5. Check spellings, particularly of people's names e.g. Micheál Mac Lochlainn not Michael Mc Laughlin; if unsure, check before posting. Note that Youthreach should be spelled as Youthreach not YouthReach.
6. Ensure full words are used e.g. until not til, picture/photograph not pic, Road not Rd., at not @, years not yrs etc. (again, the only exception to this is Twitter when its 140 character allowance becomes a challenge).
7. Check punctuation re plurals e.g. TDs not TD's, 1990s not 1990's etc.
8. Use and not & or + in the middle of sentences.
9. Avoid using quotation marks within sentences unless actually quoting something someone said e.g. the picture shows John posting a letter, not the picture shows John 'posting' a letter.
10. When talking about Donegal ETB use the full term Donegal ETB not ETB on its own as this could be any one of the sixteen ETBs in the country.
11. Use job titles as it cannot be assumed that the general public know who people are who work in/with/for Donegal ETB e.g. Joe Bloggs, Chairperson, Donegal ETB not Joe Bloggs, ETB.
12. Use correct job titles; for example in Youthreach use Advocate not Youth Advocate or Learner Advocate.
13. Ensure there is a space in front of hashtags or it will not work e.g. #TBT #WeAreDonegalETB not #TBT#WeAreDonegalETB

²¹ Provided they are not already joined by a coordinating conjunction.

14. When using brackets, use round () not square [] brackets. In the writing and publishing world the use of square brackets around text depicts missing text in a quotation so it is incorrect to use them in posts (unless you are inserting missing text in a quotation).
15. Do not include misleading information – read over posts to ensure it does not come across as misleading before publishing.
16. On county platforms (e.g. Donegal Youthreach), remember that this is a county page, not a centre page and therefore centres must be identified or the public will not know which centre the activity relates to.
17. Do not include unnecessary information – less is more e.g. John was talking to the Mayor not John was talking to the Mayor also from Letterkenny - also from Letterkenny is unnecessary information.
18. On a county Facebook page, maintain consistency e.g. for FET use the term learner, not student; avoid saying ‘our centre’ (no one knows which centre is being referred to - state Buncrana centre, Ballyshannon learners etc.) or ‘our worthy cause’ – it’s not your worthy cause, it’s the particular charity’s worthy cause (i.e. this worthy cause).

Posts in General

1. Avoid sharing posts on the page immediately or closely after they have already been published – this only clogs up the timelines of FB users and dilutes the brand message. By all means quote them and add a comment to refresh it or repost it well after it was first posted.
2. Avoid commenting on your own posts (e.g. to the general public, Donegal ETB commenting on a Donegal ETB post or praising itself appears strange).
3. Avoid excessively long posts as longer posts perform poorly and readers do not have the attention span for them (and may lose interest in the page). Short posts are best; while 40 characters is ideal for a Facebook post, this is probably a bit too short for, so one-two short paragraphs at most will suffice. Twitter doesn’t allow you to go beyond 140 characters.