


Scouting Ireland Social Media Policy

	Gasóga na hÉireann / Scouting Ireland			
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	Scouting Ireland: Social Media Policy			
Related Documents:				
SID-CCD01 Grievance and Disputes Process SID-CCD02 Conflict Resolution Policy and Guidelines SID-CCD03 Scouting Ireland's Disputes Policy (Youth Members Under 18) SID-CCD04 Scouting Ireland's Disciplinary Process BOD-SG-001 Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures BOD-SG-002 Scouting Ireland Code of Behaviour: To assist adults engaging with children in Scouting				
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1. Introduction

Social media plays an ever increasing and important role in the organisation and promotion of our groups. It provides an engaging forum through which the scouting community can connect.

The Scouting Ireland Social Media Policy and Guidelines have been developed to inform our community about using social media so people feel enabled to participate, while being mindful of the standards expected by Scouting Ireland and other entities such as the Data Protection Commissioner. The contents provide practical guidance to allow all parties to benefit from the use of social media and to have fun online, while minimising potential risks and protecting everyone involved. It also gives practical guidelines and advice for groups on social media channels, illustrating many specific related risks and provides solutions.

It is important to recognise that each person is individually responsible for what they post online. The information that follows is designed to provide guidance to scout groups and members on how to communicate appropriately and lawfully online. Scouting Ireland does not accept responsibility or liability for the online activities of individual members or scout groups.

Digital Guidelines

These guidelines will evolve over time as new technology and platforms emerge. They currently deal with the digital and social media world as it is today and keep a few basic aims for Scouting Ireland in mind.

- To promote and develop positive online discussion of Scouting and Scouting Ireland
- To protect the reputation of official Scouting Ireland social media platforms online
- To keep Scouting Ireland open and transparent in the world of social media
- To show respect at all times for those who engage on social media

2. What is Social Media

Social media refers to a broad range of online tools or functions that allow people to communicate and/ or share content via the internet.

This social media policy applies to platforms including, but not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc)
- Video and photo sharing websites or apps (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr, Vine, etc)
- Blogs and micro-blogging platforms (e.g. Tumblr, Wordpress, etc)

- Image sharing platforms (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat etc)
- Live broadcasting apps (e.g. Periscope, Meerkat, Facebook Live, etc)
- Podcasting (e.g. iTunes, Stitcher, Sound cloud, etc)
- Instant messaging (e.g. SMS, Skype, WhatsApp, Viber, etc)

Any other online technologies that allow individual users to upload and share content.

3. Who This Policy Applies To:

This policy applies to:

1. Scout Groups- meaning groups, County and Provincial support or any other group or body which has a role in organising Scouting Activities.
2. Members – meaning individual members where they are using social media in such a way that it impacts on the reputation and values of Scouting Ireland.

4. The values and principles of Scouting Ireland

All members should keep in mind the overall values and principles of Scouting Ireland and the Scout Law and Promise when using social media. In addition to these, always act with the following in mind:

- WELFARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE
- RESPECT
- COMMUNITY
- TEAMWORK
- INCLUSIVENESS

We should be careful to ensure that our online actions reflect these values and are not contrary to what Scouting Ireland represents.

5. Policies applicable to members' use of social media

Scouting Ireland respects the freedom of its members' right to use social media platforms in their personal capacity as they please and to express their opinions online.

Lively and passionate discussions are an important part of enjoying our activities and engaging with our community. However, we would ask that you remember the implications of referring to Scouting Ireland when you post or share material online

All Scouting Ireland members are subject to the Scouting Ireland *Code of Behaviour; To assist adults engaging with children in scouting*; when online, even when they are not acting on behalf of Scouting Ireland. You are responsible for your actions but remember that those actions may have consequences for Scouting Ireland.

You have a responsibility when using social media platforms to not do anything online that might tarnish Scouting Ireland's image and reputation or bring Scouting Ireland into disrepute.

Scouting Ireland expects the following standards to be adhered to by its members when posting material online:

- Do not post or share material which is violent, sexually explicit, obscene, hateful, or defamatory.
- Do not post or share inappropriate behaviour relating to underage members.
- Do not suggest or encourage illegal activity.
- Do not engage in trolling, bullying, or abusive activity.
- Do not falsely claim Scouting Ireland endorses or is associated with any product or promotion.
- Do not disclose confidential information in respect of Scouting Ireland.
- Do not engage in the disparagement of any race, ethnicity or religion.
- Always respect Scouting Ireland's Law and Promise.
- Always use your common sense.

6. Children and young people

Sharing photographs of youth members, using web sites to publicise activities, contacting parents and guardians about meetings and activities for underage teams the use of social media networks in addition to the videoing of events, are normal. Please minimise these when dealing with youth members.

Scouting Ireland members should minimise the risk posed by sharing personal information, particularly for underage members. (The term "underage" in Scouting Ireland is used to describe children and young people who are under 18 years of age).

Communicating with underage members

Adult volunteers should never place themselves in a compromising position by texting or communicating via social media sites with underage members. All such communications regarding scouting activities should be sent via the parents or guardians of the underage member, unless otherwise agreed with the parents/guardians.

The following should apply when communicating with underage members:

- Do not communicate directly to any individual by text/email sites with underage members.
- Do not befriend any underage members on social network sites.
- Do not communicate with underage members via social network sites.

7. Guidelines for posting information relating to underage members.

The following represents the best practice when posting images or personal information relating to underage members:

- Scout groups should determine which, if any, social media accounts will be used to communicate personal information relating to underage members. The group may decide their websites will have a specific youth section and if so, they should also agree the extent and the limitations on its content etc.

- Ask for the member's parent's permission to use their image. This consent could be included in the registration form.

- All children/young people featured in recordings posted online must be dressed.
- The photograph or recording posted online should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person.
- In general, no personal details relating to the young person should be revealed as accompanying materials to the photograph or recorded image, with the exception being where they are being publicly acknowledged (e.g. an award or personal achievement), for which consent has been given.
- Group and patrol/six/lodge etc photographs may be taken but it is not necessary to match names in which they may be standing or seated in the photograph.
- Any instances of the use of inappropriate images should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer and/or appropriate person within the scout group and also to the relevant statutory authorities if deemed necessary.
- Where underage members are invited to engage with a scout group's social media accounts, parental knowledge and permission prior to the young person engaging in such communication must be sought.
- Ask parents not to post pictures of other Scouting children on their own social media accounts
- Such interaction with scout group websites or accounts should also be carefully monitored to ensure underage members are not abused or trolled online and that they themselves do not intentionally or otherwise post inappropriate comments or materials. Scouting Ireland has a Code of Conduct which should be adhered to at all times.
- Scouting Ireland has set out in detail its policies and standards for adult volunteers engaging with underage members in the *Code of Behaviour; To assist adults engaging with children in scouting*. Please refer to them for further detail on any of the above.

8. Improper usage of Social Media

A breach of this policy and any other Scouting Ireland policies, codes and procedures with regard to the use of social media by a member will be treated with the utmost gravity by Scouting Ireland and may result in disciplinary actions.

A breach of any part of this Social Media Policy shall be regarded not only as a breach of *Code of Behaviour; To assist adults engaging with children in scouting* but, if carried out against an underage person, may potentially be a reportable offense.

If a member is found to have breached this Social Media Policy in any way, disciplinary action may be taken in line with Scouting Ireland's Disciplinary Process and may be subject to Disputes and Grievance Polies and Procedures.

If content posted by you, another person's post shared by you, or posts by others on your site, that contains any of the following, it should be removed from the site immediately and the user should be blocked or reported where possible:

- Pornography or nudity
- Inappropriate language
- Graphic or gratuitous violence
- Sensitive or personal information

- Bullying, intimidation or harassment
- Hate speech, threats or attempts to incite violence.
- Unlawful, misleading, malicious or discriminatory content
- Spam or advertising for a product or service that is not directly related to Scouting
- And any other content that may be deemed offensive and inappropriate

9. The Channels

The number of social media channels is vast; do you need a presence on all of them? The answer to this is no. The channels explained in this section are established channels, deemed to be the most appropriate and effective for Scouting Ireland and Scout Groups. A presence on many channels stretches resources and increases the risk of improper use.

While Scouting Ireland does not enforce strict rules around what social media platforms to use, we would strongly advise our community to take the approach of replicating the presence Scouting Ireland has currently on the following social media platforms. Official Scouting Ireland accounts exist on:

- FACEBOOK
- TWITTER
- INSTAGRAM
- YOUTUBE

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website and service where users can post comments, share photographs and links to news or other interesting content on the Web, play games, chat live, and stream live video. Shared content can be made publicly accessible, or it can be shared only among a select group of friends or family, or with a single person.

Groups, counties and provinces can use Facebook to promote upcoming games and other events, post videos, share content from other accounts and create positive interaction with the community of followers. When setting up a Facebook page for a scout group it should be set up as a 'Like' page and not as a personal 'Friend' page. If your page is not currently set up as a 'Like' page there are simple steps you can take to migrate to this page format. More information on this can be found via Facebook.

Moderation on Facebook

Full pre-moderation is not available on Facebook, meaning that users' comments will appear on your posts without your approval. However, if you are an admin of a Page, you can block certain words from appearing on your Page and turn on the profanity filter.

Blocking Words

When people include a word you've blocked in a post or comment on your Page, it won't appear on your Page. To block words:

- Click Settings at the top of your Page.
- From General, click Page Moderation.

- Type the words you want to block, separated by commas. You'll need to add both the singular and plural forms of the word you want to block.
- Click Save Changes.

You can unhide comments that contain blocked words by going to the comment and clicking Unhide.

Profanity Filter

You can block different degrees of profanity from appearing on your Page. We determine what to block by using the most commonly reported words and phrases marked offensive by the community. To turn on the profanity filter:

- Click Settings at the top of your Page.
- From General, click Profanity Filter.
- Select Medium or Strong.
- Click Save Changes.

Users who persistently break the rules of the site can be blocked.

Twitter

Twitter is an online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets. Tweeting is sending short messages to anyone who follows you on Twitter, with the hope that your messages are useful and interesting to someone in your audience.

Twitter is the perfect channel for Counties and provinces to post updates and other timely news. Photos and video can be uploaded directly to Twitter. Links to external content such as news and weather reports from a website is also a useful feature.

Twitter is often the platform on which inappropriate comments are made due to the 'in-the-moment' nature of the platform and so admins should be highly aware when posting or moderating comments on this platform. As with all online channels, a group account should never enter a public argument with negative posters.

Instagram

Instagram is a social networking app made for sharing photos and videos from a smartphone. Similar to Facebook or Twitter, everyone who has an account has a profile and a news feed.

When you post a photo or video on Instagram, it will be displayed on your profile. Other users who follow you will see your posts in their own feed. Likewise, you'll see posts from other users whom you choose to follow.

Instagram is like a simplified version of Facebook, with an emphasis on mobile use and visual sharing. Just like other social networks, you can interact with other users on Instagram by following them, being followed by them, commenting, liking, tagging and private messaging.

For groups, Instagram is the perfect platform for sharing the great photos that come from our camps or activities. Instagram admins should be aware of legal restrictions around sharing photos and video taken OF and BY others on their account.

Instagram Stories offer users the ability to post more timely content that will appear for 24 hours. Stories also offers other features such as polls and the opportunity to link to external content. It is the perfect way to give a behind the scenes insight to camps and events.

10. Direct Messaging

Direct messaging functionality features across most social media channels and on stand-alone apps such as WhatsApp and Messenger.

Direct messaging and underage members

For adult members, the use of social media as a messaging platform creates compliance issues from a data protection perspective. There is a lack of auditing ability for the group over social media sites' messaging platforms which makes it difficult to comply with data subject requests.

The lack of knowledge as to where the messages are stored is also an issue due to the requirement on Data Controllers (National Office/Groups) to be aware as to where the information they process is stored.

Groups can use platforms such as WhatsApp but groups should have genuine conversations with the parents/guardians/ members about the above concerns before using them ensuring consent is collected before engaging in its use. There is no perfect system, so it is for your group to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of each before committing.

When dealing with underage members– using direct messages is a child protection issue as well as a data protection issue. Please remember:

- Do not communicate directly to any individual by text/email with underage members
- Do not befriend any underage members on social network sites
- Do not communicate with underage members via social network sites

Scouting Ireland's [Data Protection Guidance](#) for groups and [Code of Behaviour for Adult Engaging with Young People](#) can be found on scouts.ie

11. Minding yourself and others on Social Media

Social media is a great platform through which to connect, cooperate, and keep informed, but it can have a dark side. Cyber bullying and abuse can have a devastating effect on the emotional and mental wellbeing of the recipient.

Many of us love to discuss scouting on social media, but it's important to remember that all our members are volunteers. They give their time freely for the betterment of their groups and also lead busy lives outside the world of scouting. We all have a responsibility to moderate our contributions on social media, and to moderate the contributions of others. This includes thinking carefully before we 'Like' or share a comment or post.

If you are the victim of online abuse, cyberbullying, or 'trolling'

If you are the victim of online abuse, cyberbullying or 'trolling here's some steps to consider:

- Don't respond to the messages (no matter how much you may want to). You may feel the desire to right a wrong but research has shown that bullies enjoy further engagement and will act on evidence that they have worried or upset you, often by increasing the level of their abuse. (Don't feed the trolls)
- If you are being targeted, go offline and reach out to a trusted friend or loved one and discuss the situation. Online can be a lonely place at such times. Go for a walk and try to think about something else.
- If you are concerned about content that has been uploaded relating to yourself or another person, contact the platform provider (Facebook/Twitter etc.) and ask them to have it removed. You may need to take a screenshot of the content as evidence.
- You can report any cases of abuse to the platform provider. You should also block the offender to avoid further engagement.
- In serious or persistent cases report the situation to the Gardaí or the PSNI. Take screen shots and keep all evidence to present to them.
- If you are concerned about the impact online abuse/ bullying, or 'trolling' is having on you then reach out to a loved one – a problem shared is a problem halved. If you are reluctant or embarrassed to do so, Scouting Ireland has a dedicated counselling service and additional wellness supports provided by [Inspire Volunteer Support Hub](#) or you can contact the Samaritans. They take calls of this nature every day and provide a confidential, friendly, non-judgement ear, 24-hours a day. They can be reached on 116 123.
- When online be mindful to always treat others as you would like to be treated.
- You may also contact Scouting Ireland should you require support or help in dealing with issues such as this.
- You may also lodge a complaint or grievance with Scouting Ireland or bring behaviours to Scouting Ireland's attention that breach this policy. If it is deemed appropriate the behaviours may be lodged with our disciplinary process.

12. Getting Advice

If you have any queries or require guidance on any of the areas covered in this Scouting Ireland Social Media Policy & Guidelines, there are a number of routes you can take.

- If you have a concern about the health, safety and well-being of a youth member please contact the Safeguarding Department in Scouting Ireland at National Office on 01 4956300 or e-mail safeguarding@scouts.ie
- If you would like some guidance in managing social networks, contact the Scouting Ireland Information and Communications Department by mailing communications@scouts.ie
- If you have specific concerns over Data Protection, you can email dataprotection@scouts.ie
- If you would like to make a complaint or report inappropriate behaviour, please contact National Office a 01-4956300.

Please remember, we all have the ability to report behaviour that is unacceptable even if we are not the subject of it. We can report it to the social media platform, and we can make a complaint regarding unacceptable behaviour to Scouting Ireland. We all have a responsibility to support each other and stand up to bullying.