



Internet Use Policy

Date: Developed 2018

Reviewed: 03.08.2022

1. Introduction

This policy applies to the Directors/Trustees, staff and volunteers of Mohill Family Support Centre who are granted the use of the internet and e-mail facilities and who use social media as part of their communication process.

2. Email Use

E-mails fall under the scope of the Data Protection Act 2018. Under this legislation the e-mail originator, all e-mail recipients and any person named in the e-mail are entitled to view information about them and if it is incorrect they are entitled to have it corrected.

Home or personal use has a 'domestic exemption' from data protection law; however, Mohill Family Support Centre has no such exemption even for personal e-mails if they originate from the Centre's equipment.

3. Privacy

The Centre reserves the right to access and disclose the contents of a user's e-mail messages from a computer within the premises, in accordance with its legal and audit obligations, and for legitimate operational reasons.

Use of e-mail:

All Directors/Trustees, employees and volunteers must adhere to the following when using e-mail facilities;

- Staff and volunteers are expected to act ethically and responsibly in their use of e-mails and to comply with relevant national legislation;
- Discrimination, victimisation or harassment via e-mail on the nine grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community is prohibited;
- Staff and volunteers must not bully / harass / sexually harass or hassle individuals via e-mail;
- Messages which are likely to be considered abusive, offensive or inflammatory should not be sent. The sending of such e-mails is prohibited;

- The creation and/or forwarding of pornographic mail / images are prohibited and constitute gross misconduct;
- In the event that staff or volunteers are found to be using the e-mail to commit a criminal offence the relevant authorities will be notified as a matter of course.

All of the above are prohibited and will be dealt with in accordance with the Centre's disciplinary procedures.

Employees should also be aware of the following:

- E-mails can be easily forwarded to other parties. Individuals should be aware that anyone mentioned in an e-mail under data protection has the right to see it;
- The creation or forwarding of advertisements, chain letters or unsolicited e-mails is prohibited;
- Caution **must** be exercised when opening e-mails and attachments from unknown sources;
- All equipment must have up to date anti-virus software installed and be operational on the computer they access e-mails on;
- All e-mails or attachments which are encrypted or compressed should be decrypted or decompressed and scanned for viruses by the recipient.

3 Internet Use

The Directors/Trustees, employees and volunteers of the Centre must adhere to the following when using its facilities/equipment to connect to the internet:

- Access to the internet is provided by the Centre for the purposes of work related issues and must not be abused for personal use;
- Commercial use, which is not connected to or approved by the Directors/Trustees is strictly prohibited and will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures;
- Individuals are expected to act ethically and responsibly in their use of the internet and to comply with the relevant national legislation;

- The Directors/Trustees, staff and volunteers must not use the internet connection to scan or attack other individuals / devices / organisations;
- The accessing or downloading of pornographic material or any other offensive material is strictly prohibited and will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures;
- The downloading or distribution of adult/child pornography constitutes gross misconduct and will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures;
- In the event that employees or volunteers are found to be using the internet to commit a criminal offence the relevant authorities will be notified as a matter of course and disciplinary procedures will be executed.

4. Social Media

Social media refers to the creation, sharing and exchange of information between people in virtual communities and networks. Mohill Family Support Centre recognises it as the term used to describe the generation of digital, computerized or networked information and communication technologies. Social media technologies take on many different forms including internet forums, social networks, blogs, wikis, podcasts and picture, music and video sharing. Examples of well-known social media applications are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Wikipedia.

The Centre acknowledges the value of social media. However, it is also aware that it is different from traditional media in many aspects including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and permanence. The internet is largely unregulated and the following risks are acknowledged:

- The potential for employees or volunteers that use social media to inadvertently or deliberately leak sensitive / confidential information;
- Employee misuse of social applications while at work;
- Damage to the reputation of the Centre from negative, inaccurate or misleading posts;

- Loss of trust about the ethos and work of the Centre from any of the above.

This policy takes full account of the Centre's Confidentiality Policy and staff and volunteers with the Centre should be aware that, through their relationship with the Centre, they may have access to information that is confidential and should not be made public. The guidelines below are categorised into two key areas – the use of social media in the workplace and the use of social media outside of the workplace.

5. The use of social media in the workplace

(a) Guidelines on posting information to Social Media

Mohill Family Support Centre:

- Has a designated 'manager' that oversees the quality, credibility and trustworthiness of all information that is posted by the Centre;
- Double-checks all information for accuracy, transparency and accountability before it is posted;
- Welcomes feedback including comments and questions. However, the Centre expects users not to post content that is disrespectful or offensive and reserves the right to remove postings that are: defamatory or obscene; fraudulent, deceptive or misleading; in violation of the law; breach the policies of the Centre or are abusive in any way;
- Respects intellectual property rights;
- Promotes the ethos of the Centre in all postings and demonstrates respect for all individuals, ethnicities, cultures and religions;
- Strictly upholds the Centre's confidentiality policy and only provides factual, non-confidential information and perspective;
- Only shares / provides links to pages / sites that are fully reputable;
- Protects individual privacy rights and operates by the principle of 'informed consent' (see below).

(b) Personal Use

- Personal use of social media is prohibited during working hours.

The Use of Social Media outside of the Workplace

Guidelines in relation to posting information about the Centre to Social Media

Members of the Voluntary Board of Directors, employees and volunteers should:

- Maintain confidentiality at all times and do not post information about the business of the Centre, other employees, Directors/Trustees or other volunteers working with the Centre;
- Never post photos or videos of activities / programmes in the Centre without prior permission - both from the Centre and everyone in the picture / video. Privacy is protected as a personal right under the European Convention on Human Rights. The Centre operates by the principle of 'informed consent' whereby participants are informed of the purpose the image will be used for and asked for their permission or agreement prior to taking photographs or recording images;
- Never comment on the Centre's financial status or on legal matters relating to the Centre or the National Family Resource Centre Programme;
- Always ensure that any information that is posted is accurate and correct at the time by verifying references or sources of information;
- Use good judgement to ensure that communications are respectful and in good taste;
- Do not make comments or respond to postings about the Centre, especially those that are of a confidential or sensitive nature;
- All members of the Centre should know that they are personally responsible for the content that they publish on-line and that electronic information is a permanent, transferable record;
- Always report inappropriate content relating to the Centre, or the work that it does, to the Co-ordinator or Chairperson of the Centre.

Constructive feedback on this Policy is always welcome. It must be given to the Co-ordinator of Mohill Family Support Centre who will ensure that it is relayed to the Directors / Trustees of the Centre who will consider changes to be made.

This Policy was discussed and ratified at a meeting of the Directors / Trustees.

Proposed: _____

Position on the Board: _____

Second: _____

Position on the Board: _____

Date: