



# **Social Media Policy**

January 2021





# Introduction

The proliferation of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and others has resulted in them becoming an integral part of everyday communications for the majority of the Irish population, including members of the Irish Association of Social Workers. Social media is also defined as any of the messaging services available such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber, etc. When utilised correctly, social media can be a powerful communications tool and can be used in both a personal and professional communications capacity.

When utilising social media, the lines between public and private, personal, and professional are blurred. By simply being identifiable as a member of the Irish Association of Social Workers, perceptions can be created about your expertise and authority to speak on behalf of the Irish Association of Social Workers.



# Aim

The aim of the IASW Social Media Policy is:

1 To enable IASW members to make full use of online platforms while protecting their own safety and security, as well as that of their colleagues.

2 To harness social media, in line with the IASW communication and engagement guidelines (Rules and Bye Laws, Section 5), in order to:

Invigorate the internal audience

- Create advocates for the IASW both internally and externally
- Enhance public perception of Social Workers

3 To outline the procedures for establishing and maintaining social media sites and to establish a code of conduct for communicating across all platforms on social media.

4 To provide guidance on how to ensure our members maintain an accurate, appropriate and an apolitical presence on social media.

5 To describe expected behaviour on social media and specify conduct which would contravene the IASW Rules and Bye Laws, Section 5, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 and The Data Protection Act 2018.

# Personal Social Media Use by IASW Members

1 If a member of the IASW operates a social media account(s) or has any online presence, they are subject to compliance with this document when commenting, posting tweeting, blogging, messaging, sharing, etc. any material that directly mentions or relates to the IASW

2 When commenting, posting, tweeting, blogging, messaging, sharing, etc. personnel should ask themselves:

- What if this were to be published in a newspaper or magazine?
- Would I say this to a supervisor, to a journalist, on the radio etc?
- What could a malicious party do with this information?

3 Personnel who utilise social media are encouraged to:

- Follow the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected in any forum.
- Always maintain personal and client confidentiality and be careful about the information that is shared online.
- If in doubt about sharing information either leave it out or clarify with the IASW Board if at all unsure whether or not content is appropriate.
- Provide the Board of the IASW with any interesting content you may have acquired relating to the IASW activities.
- Share, repost, retweet, link and promote IASW social media content.
- Encourage family and friends outside of the IASW to join and engage with IASW social media sites in a positive manner.

# Official Social Media Use by IASW Members

Establishment of social media platforms at any other level of the organisation is at the discretion of the Chair of IASW. Before applying to set up an account, the following considerations should be made:

- Does the capacity exist to produce a minimum of two engaging and well composed posts per week?
- Are there alternate personnel available and capable of maintaining the account to the same high standard in the main account holder's absence?
- Is the content better served on this new account, rather than being propagated on the main IASW accounts?
- If the answer to any of the previous questions is 'No', the minimum criteria for establishing an account has not been met.

## CORU – Code of Professional Conduct & Ethics for Social Workers

Social Workers must adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct & Ethics, in accordance with Section 4 of the Code, Social Workers must use social media responsibly.

<https://coru.ie/files-codes-of-conduct/swrb-code-of-professional-conduct-and-ethics-for-social-workers.pdf>

# Use Social Media Responsibly

## 1 You must:

- Use social media in a responsible way adopting the same professional standards expected in other forms of communication with service users and others
- Always consider the possible impact on service users and others before publishing any material, information or comments on social media, taking care to avoid abusive, unsustainable or defamatory comments.

## 2 You must not:

- Use social media in a way that would breach any of your obligations under this Code
- Discuss or comment on service users on social media platforms.

## 3 You should:

- Use appropriate privacy settings in your use of social media and consider how information and images you post might be interpreted by service users and others were they to become widely available
- Maintain professional boundaries in the use of social media to preserve public trust and confidence in your profession.

## Practical Guidelines

- Do not post material that is unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, slanderous, hateful, or embarrassing to any other person or entity.
- Do not attempt to speak, or be interpreted as speaking, on behalf of the IASW, unless you are specifically authorised to do so by the IASW Board or Chair of the Board.
- Do not offer negative opinion or comment negatively on wider IASW activity or related issues by posting, tweeting, blogging, messaging, sharing, etc.
- Do not comment on any issue relating to controversial, sensitive, or political matters which would be incompatible with membership of the IASW.

# Hacking

**Please note:** all of these actions should be completed IMMEDIATELY on discovery of an official IASW social media account being hacked;

- Immediately log the affected/suspected account out of all devices. All social media platforms have this option within their settings.
- Log back in and change the password of the affected/suspected platform to a completely different password. (Utilise letters, numbers and symbols in the new password)
- If unable to log back in, notify the platform company through its helpdesk and follow the procedures laid out by the developer, as this varies between platforms.
- Notify the Chair of IASW through the Office Manager.

## Social Media Notice and Takedown

**PURPOSE:** This procedure outlines the steps required in order to remove from IASW's social media accounts material that contravenes the above policies.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube or Instagram, and companies that host websites, benefit from the 'safe harbour principle' in EU and US law.

Safe harbour means that the website can't be held responsible for content posted by users or other third parties, so long as the website has a mechanism in place to be notified of and remove unauthorised copies, or copyright infringements.

In making material available online the IASW acts in good faith. However, despite these safeguards, we recognise that material published online may be in breach of copyright or data protection laws, or contain sensitive content, or content that may be regarded as defamatory.

This procedure applies to all online material posted by the IASW, web content, social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.)

# Social Media Notice and Takedown

If you are concerned that you have found material online, for which you have not given permission, contravenes privacy laws, is obscene / defamatory and in terms of copyright law is not covered by a limitation or exception, please contact IASW Office Administrator at [administrator@iasw.ie](mailto:administrator@iasw.ie) or write as soon as possible to Notice and Takedown, Office Administrator, St. Andrews Resource Centre, 114-116 Pearse Street, Dublin 2, stating the following:

- Your contact details.
- The full details of the material.
- The exact and full URL where you found the material, or by saving screenshots of the images you're reporting.
- The reason for your request including but not limited to copyright law, privacy laws, data protection, defamation etc.
- If the request relates to copyright, provide proof that you are the rights holder and a statement that, under penalty of perjury, you are the rights holder or are an authorised representative.

Upon receipt of notification the 'Notice and Takedown' procedure is then invoked as follows:

1 The IASW will acknowledge receipt of your complaint by email or letter and will make an initial assessment of the validity and plausibility of the complaint.

2 Upon receipt of a valid complaint the material will be temporarily removed pending an agreed solution.

3 We will contact the contributor who deposited the material, if relevant. The contributor will be notified that the material is subject to a complaint, under what grounds, and will be encouraged to assuage the complaints concerned.



# Social Media Notice and Takedown

4 All parties will be encouraged to resolve the issue swiftly and amicably and to the satisfaction of all, with the following possible outcomes:

- The material is kept online.
- The material is kept with changes or replaced.
- The material is permanently removed.

5 If the parties involved are unable to agree a solution, the material will remain unavailable until a time when a resolution has been reached. The IASW reserves the right at any time to revise the terms of this procedure. Any such revisions will be notified to you and by continuing to use the relevant social media sites following such notification you will be deemed to have accepted the revised terms of this procedure.



## Contact Us

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<https://www.iasw.ie>



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St. Andrews Resource Centre,  
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The National Social Work Organisation of Ireland  
t/a The Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW)

Representing Social Work in Ireland since 1971  
A Member of the International Federation of Social Worker

