



GRACE HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE (GHCC) Policy on the use of Social Media

Purpose:

This policy is for use by all staff and volunteers at GHCC, and any other key stakeholders identifying themselves as associated with GHCC. The aims are:

- to outline respectful and appropriate use of social media
- to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people
- to assist in protecting the reputation of the individual and the reputation of GHCC
- to ensure all parties are aware of their responsibilities and consequences in regard to the use of social media in a professional and personal context

For the purposes of this document, social media refers to internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among users. Social media tools may include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat)
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo)
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs.
- Forums, discussion boards and groups
- Video and web conferences
- Email and instant messaging
- All other electronic/digital communication, including any new applications (apps) which are available in the future.

'Content' includes photographs, images, audio, videos, personal comments and content created by other users that a person chooses to share or re-post.

Personal Responsibility:

- Teachers, carers, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders are personally responsible for any content they post on social media, whether the information is posted via a professional profile or personal profile or a group medium.
- No person is to post on the GHCC website or other GHCC exclusive social media sites without permission from the GHCC Board of Directors
- No photographs, videos or references to students or families involved with GHCC should be posted on personal social media accounts or public sites without prior consent of GHCC management. All content must be in line with GHCC Photography and Video Code of Conduct.
- Staff and volunteers are not to access social media during work hours unless it is for the direct purpose of their job role at that time. Anyone found to be exploiting their use of social media during work hours may be subject to disciplinary action.

Guidelines:

- *Use common sense when posting online:*

This policy is not intended to limit freedom of speech; however, it remains good practice to not post anything that would embarrass yourself or GHCC or bring any professional reputation into question or ill-repute.

- *Nothing is really private and nothing is ever permanently erased:*

Be mindful that anything posted online remains there for a long time and can show up on other sites and search engines, such as Google. Even if a post is deleted or marked 'private', it can still be accessed, it is never permanently erased. Private posts can be accessed for legal purposes if necessary. Some corporations can store content for up to 7 years for use in employee background checks. Additionally, screenshots can be taken from any social media site at any time.

- *Integrity and discretion:*

It is advisable before posting anything on social media, asking oneself if they would share this in a classroom or in the newspaper.

- *Offensive or inappropriate content:*

Where a staff member publicly identifies himself or herself as associated with GHCC or is known to be associated with GHCC, any unprofessional or offensive public postings from personal accounts could lead to disciplinary action if the reputation of GHCC could be brought into question or damaged in any perceivable way.

- *Always check content of any electronic material for classroom activities prior to the lesson:*

If a teacher or volunteer is planning to use any resource or information from the internet in the classroom, it is advisable that the content is downloaded onto a laptop or at least checked prior to the class. Incidences have occurred where inappropriate content has popped up on a screen or a video automatically following the one which is shown is not suitable for students' viewing.

Staff and Student Relationship

Staff and volunteers are not to initiate or accept friend requests from students or engage with students via social media personal profiles. The reasons for this are:

- **Child Protection:** In accordance with GHCC Code of Conduct, staff and volunteers will not "contact or correspond with students attending the Centre or under the umbrella of GHCC via social networks, emails or letters, except with written permission from GHCC management. This condition continues to apply after the term of employment or volunteer placement ends".

- Staff and Volunteer Safety and Privacy; Relationships between staff and students must always remain professional, and the blurred lines between professional and personal on social media can bring this into question. By accepting a request from a student or having communication via social media, the staff member or volunteer is giving that student access to their personal information and life.
- Favoritism can be perceived, which contradicts the GHCC Code of Conduct

This Policy is effective 30/06/2017 and a copy has been given to all current staff. A copy has been added to the new Staff and Volunteer Induction packages.