

## Social Media Guidelines for Activists

Sinn Féin has social media guidelines for those running Sinn Féin social media accounts at any level of the party (cumainn, Comhairle Ceantair, Cúige, departmental, network, national or international) and for Sinn Féin elected or public representatives. We also have guidelines for activists on their own personal pages.

Social media tools such as facebook, twitter, blogs, etc are powerful political tools that can help accelerate political support for the party when combined with the right political issues and messages. However, a casual, naïve or irresponsible approach to these tools can cause problems for the party, individual representatives and members. It should always be borne in mind that these are public forums and postings using these accounts are as accessible to the public and journalists as any statement issued by the press office.

The below guidelines seek to extract the maximum benefits from these tools while putting in place basic rules that protect the party and members from the potential pitfalls. These guidelines cannot deal with all possible scenarios and cannot replace commonsense and personal responsibility of activists when engaging with these tools.

- Be responsible for your content and exercise good judgement and common sense about what you post. Remember you are representing more than just yourself so keep your posts clean of any foul language and be respectful in how you respond to people online (no matter how obnoxious they may appear or sound). Don't send offensive or harassing material to others.
- Consider your audience – who are you trying to communicate with and how do you make your message relevant to them so they read and share it
- Avoid Trolls: Don't get caught in to an endless and pointless debate with someone whose view you are not going to change in a million years. Yes engage in rational debate with people with an opposing view but know when and how to end the discussion. Check out the profile of the person you are engaging with - it should give you clues as to whether they are a troll or not. A troll will be there to goad you – to try and get you to drop your guard and say something inappropriate out of anger or frustration. Don't fall for it!
- Stick to facts and figures to support your argument: Where possible use statistics and other material from Sinn Féin publications and policy positions to support your arguments.
- Do not discuss any internal party matters online. Discussions or debates with other members, about internal party issues, should not be conducted online.
- Beware of reposting others content: When we repost something from another political/campaign site – acknowledged or not – it will be viewed as a tacit endorsement of that site or page. So we should not be reposting material or endorsing sites, pages or people from people or groups who are politically opposed to us.