



*"Great oaks from
little acorns grow"*

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Right to Disconnect Policy

Following the publication of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) *Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Right to Disconnect*, in April 2021, a recommendation followed that all workplaces should work to develop a Right to Disconnect Policy that takes into account the particular needs of the business and its workforce.

The health and wellbeing of the school staff is of the utmost importance, and staff should be encouraged and supported to prioritise their own health and wellbeing.

Disconnecting from work is vital for wellbeing, and to help achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. Unless there is an emergency, every member of staff is entitled to switch off outside of their normal working hours and enjoy their free time away from work without being disturbed.

What is The Right to Disconnect?

- The right of an employee to not routinely perform work outside their normal working hours;
- The right to not be penalised for refusing to attend to work matters outside of normal working hours;
- The duty to respect another person's right to disconnect (e.g. by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours).

Health & Wellbeing

In accordance with section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (SHWWA 2005), staff must take reasonable care of their health and safety. Staff are reminded to switch off from work, to monitor their working hours and to take breaks away from work devices.

School Leaders

School leaders will endeavour to foster a culture that supports the right to disconnect and acknowledge the importance that, barring emergency situations, all staff should be able to disconnect from work.

Working Hours

'Normal working hours' may be different for staff members within the school, i.e. while some may work a more traditional hourly pattern, others may work flexibly or have varying working time patterns. All staff, including school leaders, have the right to disconnect.

Communications

- The personal time of staff is respected and there is a general expectation that staff will disconnect from work e-mails and communications outside of normal working hours, except where it is necessary for operational reasons – e.g. to inform school leaders about absences.
- Staff should be mindful of and manage how much virtual communication they have each day.
- Where possible, e-mails should be sent or checked only during normal working hours.
- The sender should give due consideration to the timing of their communication and potential for disturbance, and the recipient should understand that, barring emergencies, they will not be expected to respond until their working time recommences.
- Staff should not feel that they must respond to social communications from colleagues outside of their working hours.
- Where a member of staff sends communications outside agreed working hours, unless operational needs dictate that an immediate response is required, a statement should be attached to an out of hours email tempering the expectation of an immediate response.

Suggested email signatures could include:

"My normal working hours are from X to Y. I will respond to you when I am back at work."

"I am currently working flexibly so while it suits me to send this email now, I do not expect a response or action outside your own working hours"

Meetings

Meetings should only be scheduled during normal school hours, except where national agreements and Department circulars stipulate otherwise.

Best Practice

Staff should give consideration to creating a separate work email address and become familiar with 'queuing' emails, so they are sent during the workday. At the start of every school year, it is recommended that the school's position on the Right to Disconnect is circulated to all members of the school community, including management, staff, as well as outside agencies, to draw their attention to best practice.

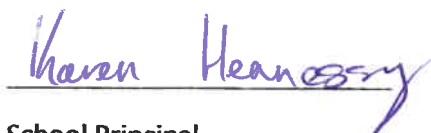
Who is responsible?

There is collective responsibility for the successful implementation of a Right to Disconnect. Individual responsibility on the part of all staff members is also required, e.g. being mindful of other colleagues' right to disconnect.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 11-3-25



Chairperson of the Board of Management



School Principal