



MDI COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

In seeking to achieve its goals, MDI places an emphasis on communications.

Our Communications Systems include computers (including laptops). Software, e mail facilities, telephones (including mobile phones) and communications hardware supplied to staff for work related activities.

Our Communications Systems are provided to enable staff to carry out their work, facilitate research, education, and administration.

The success of the organisation and the services it provides relies greatly on communicating its ideals, principles, objectives, actions and results to stakeholders (those who have an interest/stake in the organisation). These include:

- Members
- The local community and general public
- Funding bodies
- State agencies and voluntary/community groups

External Communications

1. Only a nominated member of staff may represent MDI with the media and/or deal with inquiries from the media. Nominated person in the first instance is Chairperson and in the second instance is Chief Executive Officer.
2. MDI encourages its staff to network with several stakeholder groups on a formal basis. It is important that staff collaborate with representatives of other organisations on joint initiatives.

Internal Communications

1. MDI seeks to promote effective and efficient communications between the National Executive and staff, and between staff.
2. Communication is intended to be open in style. Where staff are unclear about projects, new initiatives, and procedures they should in the first instance seek clarification from the relevant person. Where misunderstandings or problems arise, it is in the interests of all concerned that every effort is made to resolve these difficulties promptly and without resource to external agencies.
3. For this reason, procedures have been developed. It is hoped that most issues causing concern for staff can be resolved informally. However, it is necessary to have formal procedures (*see Discipline and grievance Procedures*) and it is important that these procedures are followed.

May 2010

Reviewed July 2011

Reviewed July 2012

COMPUTERS & E MAIL SERVICES

1. You must ensure, in so far as practicable, that the computers in your office or under your control are not used for unauthorised purposes. Advice and practical help will be available to help you safeguard any computer equipment.
2. All data stored on computers, including emails, is the property of MDI and subject to the Freedom of Information Act.
3. Email is not guaranteed to be private & deletion of an email message does not remove all traces of it.
4. In general, the computer resources of MDI may not be used for illegal acts, for activities in breach of MDI policies, or for personal commercial activity unless specifically authorised.
5. You must take reasonable care to ensure that you do not transmit viruses or other malicious computer code to other users.
6. It is not acceptable to view, download, transmit or store any offensive, indecent images or material.
7. It is not acceptable to attempt to access any files, data or records for which you are not authorised.
8. It is not acceptable to make any comments of a derogatory nature about any individual employed, contracted or volunteering for MDI.
9. If you have access to, or are responsible for data stored on computer you must ensure that the integrity, accessibility, accuracy and confidentiality of such data are maintained.
10. If you keep personal data on others you must comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1988.
11. You must also be aware that The Freedom of Information Act applies to records held in electronic format.
12. Computers are maintained by Unity. If you experience any difficulties with the operation of your computer you should contact MDI Head Office.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES

It is the policy of MDI to supply Youth Respite Workers, Family Support Workers, Drivers and relevant support staff with mobile phones for use in the course of their work.

- Mobile phones are to be used for work purposes only.
- All texts sent and received must be work related and are subject to Data Protection & Freedom of Information Acts and as a result are the property of MDI.
- If a staff member receives inappropriate texts messages or phone calls from members, staff or external personnel please inform your line manager immediately.
- All work related costs associated with mobile phones are covered by the organisation.
- It is the responsibility of staff to ensure mobile phones are secure and safe.

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Staff must set-up a voice-message as outlined in the *Administration Procedures 2006*. This message must be changed to inform callers of availability and leave.

USING MOBILE PHONES IN VEHICLES

- Never use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. It is illegal and distracting.
- Mobile phones must be switched to silent mode when driving a vehicle.
- Use a message service. It is not necessary to always answer the phone when it rings. SET UP your voicemail so it can take messages for you while driving and call back at a more suitable time
- Stop in a safe place. If necessary, stop driving and park in a safe place to make or receive a mobile phone call.
- Concentration. Lack of concentration, even for a brief period, is dangerous and you could be breaking the law. In just one second, a vehicle travelling at 50km/h will travel 14 meters!
- NEVER send text or picture messages while driving even when stopped at the traffic lights.
- Staff are instructed to have a speed-dialled emergency number i.e. 999 /112 stored on their phone that they can access immediately in the case of an emergency.
- Car hands – free sets will-not be issued or replaced to MDI staff or Drivers, from this date forward.
- Switch off. If in doubt, switch off the phone.

DEALING WITH ABUSIVE PHONE CALLS

- No member of staff should have to deal with threats or abuse from any caller.
- If abusive language is being used, explain to the caller that MDI does not accept calls from people who use abusive language.
- If the caller accepts this, or offers an apology, continue with the call. If the abuse continues, advise the caller that you will be terminating the call, and do so.

CONFIDENTIALITY

During your employment with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland you may acquire certain confidential information. Information considered confidential includes:

1. Information which has been specifically designated as confidential by the organisation and/or which comes under the Data Protection Amendment Act, 2003.
2. Information relating to the current or planned activities of the organisation.
3. Personal and/or private information relating to colleagues, individual members, and groups/organisations – any person/group with whom the organisation has contact.
4. There may be certain situations where it is necessary to disclose information on a need to know basis or to fulfil legal requirements e.g. child protection

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issues or Dignity and Respect. Such disclosure is not considered a breach of confidentiality. (Please refer to individual policies for further details)

This list is not exhaustive. Each staff member has the right to privacy. It is also expected that, in turn, staff will respect the right to privacy of others with whom they come into contact.

Confidential information must not be used for personal gain, nor made known to any person, firm, company or other organisation whatsoever, unless authorised by the Director, or required by your duties under your employment contract.

All confidential records, documents, and other papers, together with any copies or extracts thereof, shall be the property of the organisation and must be returned to the organisation on the termination of your employment. The requirement for confidentiality extends beyond the period of your contract with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland.

Signed: Health and Safety Team
Date: 3rd July 2012