



Social Media Policy

Policy Number:	A-2012-01
Applies to:	All Staff and Committee/Board Members and Council
Approval Date:	2012-07-30
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Approval Authority:	Council, approved by Council Resolution No. 182-2023

1. Policy Statement

The Town of Collingwood is committed to communicating and engaging with residents, visitors, and stakeholders in an inclusive and respectful manner, in a variety of ways that work best for all users, including social media. By using one voice across all corporate social media pages, the Town strives to provide timely and reliable information in a professional and welcoming manner.

2. Purpose

The Town of Collingwood is committed to using social media to enhance awareness and information-sharing and increase outreach and engagement with residents, visitors, and stakeholders, in a respectful, and inclusive and welcoming manner, while providing a consistent level of service and reliable access to Town information. The procedures of this policy serve to protect and promote the image of the municipality.

To provide a space that is respectful, inclusive, and welcoming, Users on our social media pages agree to abide by the Terms of Use set out under the roles and responsibilities described below. Social media providers also have their own Terms of Use which should be carefully reviewed and which the user is subject to.

Social Media sites (including direct messaging) owned by the Town of Collingwood, are an extension of the workplace for Town of Collingwood employees and representatives. Consistent with the Town of Collingwood's commitment to a respectful workplace, violent, abusive, or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated.

The Town of Collingwood is committed to providing a safe, secure, and respectful environment for our staff, residents and visitors by:

- providing a violence free workplace
- providing a friendly and safe place
- ensuring the use of respectful language
- behaving in a safe manner

The Social Media Policy defines the terms of use for corporate social media pages.

3. Definitions

- **Follow** means to subscribe to a social media account of another user and receive their posts as updates.
- **Political Material** means comments or posts made by politicians, supporters or otherwise, for the purpose of political gain.
- **Social media** means the web-based technologies and sites (often called Web 2.0) and includes blogging, microblogging (Twitter), photo sharing (Flickr), video sharing and livestreaming (YouTube), and networking (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, wikis, blogs, discussion boards) which allow users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, photographs, videos, and interests.
- **Social Media Moderator** means Town of Collingwood staff (Communications Team) and representatives empowered with posting and reviewing content on Corporate Social Media sites.
- **Town of Collingwood Social Media sites** means social media sites created and managed by Town staff and representatives. For an up-to-date list, visit www.collingwood.ca/stay-connected.

4. Scope

This Social Media Policy applies to all Town of Collingwood staff members, Council and Committee/Board members who must adhere to the Town's Code of Conduct and all other corporate policies and procedures relevant to their position while using the internet. This includes posting, sharing, or commenting on Town of Collingwood owned social media sites and participation on non-municipal social media sites.

Participation in social media by employees and Committee/Board members acting in an official municipal capacity should be viewed in the same way as participating in traditional media or public forums.

The Town of Collingwood owned Social Media Pages are managed and administered by the Communications Division to ensure consistent use, messaging, and monitoring (exceptions include Collingwood Museum, Collingwood Public Library, Economic Development and Simcoe Street Theatre which are managed by designated staff in those departments).

Departments wishing to promote Town programs and services on social media will provide relevant details in advance to the Communications Division for formatting, messaging, and branding prior to posting.

This Social Media Policy also applies to any member of the public commenting on Town of Collingwood owned social media sites.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Employee Use of Social Media

- Employees are welcomed and encouraged to participate in social media, through their own accounts, while respecting the Staff Code of Conduct and applicable Town policies.
- Employees are encouraged to follow the official Town sites and to share their content.
- Employees posting or commenting on Town owned social media pages will ensure compliance with all Town Policies, and that privacy, confidentiality, copyright, and data protection laws are adhered to, and will not make comments that are considered defamatory or libelous or in any way detrimental to the municipality.
- Employees are held to a high standard and have a duty to serve the best interests of the Town. That high standard must be met online. Care should be exercised to ensure that an employee's online presence is not harmful to the Town.
- If employees share content about the Town on their personal social media pages and their friends/followers make negative comments about the Town on their page, employees are encouraged to remove moderate such comments.
- Employees posting on their personal social media channels should be mindful not to:
 - reveal confidential/private or personal information gained through work,
 - use visuals (images, logos, etc.) that suggest the account represents the Town of Collingwood or,
 - Undertake any action which could compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of the public service.
- Employees duty of confidentiality continues to apply while using social media for personal use.
- Care must be exercised to ensure that employees are not misrepresented to be speaking on behalf of the Town. Ultimately your social media audience will decide whether you are perceived to be acting on behalf of the Town.

5.2. Council / Committee/Board Members and Social Media

- Members of Council and Committee/Board members are welcomed and encouraged to participate in social media, through their own accounts, while respecting the Council Code of Conduct and applicable Town Policies. Members of Council and Committee/Board members are encouraged to follow the official Town sites and to share their content.
- Members will be responsible for creating, monitoring, moderating, and updating their personal social media accounts.
- If members share content about the Town on their personal social media pages and their friends/followers make negative comments about the Town

on their page, members are encouraged to remove moderate such comments.

- Members are not permitted to use the Town logo.
- Members are held to a high standard and have a duty to serve the best interests of the Town. That high standard must be met online. Care should be exercised to ensure that an employee's online presence is not harmful to the Town.
- Designated Town Social Media Moderators may use corporate social media accounts to share good news stories related to the work of Council and individual councillors so long as it is directly related to their role as a member of Council.

5.3. Internal/External Content and Commenting Standards

- The Town of Collingwood will create a safe and respectful online space to communicate. Social Media Moderators designated by the Town will monitor corporate social media accounts and use their discretion as communications professionals to take appropriate action when necessary to ensure Town social media accounts remain a welcoming environment for all. To help ensure a respectful dialogue for the public and Town employees and representatives any comment, posts, and messages that contain any of the following may be hidden or deleted:
 - Profane, obscene, racist, or otherwise discriminatory content,
 - Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language,
 - Plagiarized material or copyrighted material,
 - Solicitation of commerce or for personal gain
 - Violations of municipal by-law, provincial or federal law, or encouragement of illegal activity,
 - Confidential information published without prior consent,
 - Promotion of political candidates or other political material,
 - Content considered inappropriate by the Town,
 - Comments not germane to the original post,
 - Comments that are inaccurate, misleading, off-topic, spreading misinformation or disinformation regarding Town Services, programs, operations, staff, or Council,
 - Information that may compromise safety, or security of the public, municipal property, or staff.
- The Town may block, ban, or suspend anyone from Town of Collingwood Social Media pages who continues to post comments as described above.
- All municipal social media pages will post a link to the Town's Social Media Policy which will contain the following terms and conditions:
- All posts are monitored by municipal staff who may delete any message that is in violation of the Social Media Policy. If a submission violates guidelines, or is in any other way disrespectful or inappropriate, the submission will be removed in its entirety from the site. If a user continues to post messages that violate the guidelines, the user may be blocked or suspended from using the site. If you believe a submission to any municipal social media site violates

the guidelines, please report it immediately to the municipality by emailing communications@collingwood.ca or calling 705-445-1030.

- The Town will make a reasonable effort to respond to concerns and questions directed to its social media accounts. However, at its discretion, social media moderators may request the discussion be redirected to a more appropriate channel - either phone or email Service Collingwood (Customer Service). The reason(s) for this request may include but are not limited to – privacy concerns (resident or employee), character limitations for messaging, amount of information required to resolve an inquiry, and to ensure customer enquiries and concerns are logged in the Service Collingwood Portal for tracking and resolution.
- Any person who accesses any social media channels associated with the Town is personally responsible and liable for his or her own actions and/or information they post or provide. This includes but is not limited to any collection, usage, or disclosure of the personal information or copyright of other parties without proper consent and in violation of the law. The Town shall not be responsible or held liable. By copying or distributing material on Town owned social media pages, the user represents that it has obtained all consents and complied with all laws necessary.
- The Town shall hold the user fully responsible for any suit, claim, demand, charge, action, expense, cost (including legal fees) or cause of action brought against the Town by whomsoever in respect of any injury, damage or loss to person or property caused by or arising from, or in any way connected with the user's usage and/or conduct on a social media channel associated with the Town.

6. References and Related Documents

- Code of Conduct Members of Council, Committees and Local Boards
- Responsible Use of Information Services
- Proper Use of E-Mail and Internet Access
- Employee Confidentiality
- Protection of Personal Information
- Discrimination, Violence and Harassment Free Workplace
- Progressive Discipline
- Staff Code of Conduct

7. Consequences of Non-Compliance

An employee's failure to comply with this Policy may result in progressive discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Any violations of the Code of Conduct by Council / Committee/Board Members will be dealt with according to the resolution process outlined in the Code and in consultation with the Town Clerk.

8. Review Cycle

The policy will be reviewed on an as needed basis.