
Policy Type: Operational

Policy Number: **OP – 03**

Policy Title: Social Media Policy

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Next review due: 2027

OP – 03 Social Media Policy

Purpose:

The Hanover Public Library (the library) uses social media to extend its services online, to reach and communicate with people through a broad range of media channels, and to promote its image as a vital, relevant, accessible, welcoming, inclusive and technologically-connected community hub.

Scope:

This policy defines the roles and responsibilities of library staff and the public when using social media for library purposes and to maintain a consistent, appropriate and sustainable online presence.

Definition:

Social media is any web application or account created and maintained by library staff, under the direction of the CEO/Chief Librarian which facilitates an environment for library users to share opinions and information about library-related matters

Principles:

The library is committed to:

- providing accessible and inclusive services; and
- responding to questions and concerns in a timely manner; and
- maintaining the highest levels of accuracy, objectivity, and impartiality in the information that the library communicates; and
- respecting the privacy and anonymity of those with whom the library communicates; and
- respecting freedom of speech and difference of opinion, while protecting library staff and library users from offensive, abusive, or otherwise inappropriate speech.

The library expects all of the following from those who use its social media channels to:

- show courtesy and respect to the library staff and other users;
- post positive, relevant, and constructive contributions;
- adhere to all relevant legislation, including the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Objectives

The objectives of the library's social media presence include the following:

- quick and wide-ranging communication with its community and the world;
- promoting a positive image, awareness of library services, and extending its brand;
- connecting with new audiences;
- improving accessibility through use of a variety of communication channels;
- providing a simple method for library customers to provide feedback and seek assistance;
- extending the reach of the library's customer service online to improve relationships with library customers, potential customers, and key influencers;
- engaging in dialogue using an interactive, real-time platform and an informal voice to provide outreach to the wider community;
- promoting and providing multiple entry points to its services and collections
- demonstrating its commitment to and understanding of emerging media and technology.

Policy:

The library regards social media in the same way as it does its other communication and service channels. Social media will be used as and when appropriate and effective in accordance with the library's mission of serving Hanover's community needs for empowerment, enhancing quality of life, being a community hub and providing access to resources.

To ensure that the library's online presence is consistent with its mission, brand and core principles, only library staff designated as library page administrators are permitted to manage the library's social media channels and to create content and post as the library.

Library page administrators communicating through library social media channels are expected to maintain high standards of honesty, courtesy and customer service. Library page administrators will strive to respond to inquiries within 4 days depending on scheduling and are responsible for upkeep of the social media pages and will provide engaging, useful and accurate content.

Individual library staff members are encouraged to promote the library on their personal social media accounts as appropriate. When using social media for personal use and when identifiable as library staff, individual library staff members must be aware of any potential impact their content will have on the reputation and values of the library.

The library welcomes and encourages public engagement and dialogue, and respects the principle of freedom of speech. However, the library's *Code of Conduct Policy* applies to users of its social media channels. Terms of use will be posted to explain appropriate communication (see the Appendix), and inappropriate content will be removed. All users, including library staff, will comply with all terms of service and standards of use published by the social media channels.

Use by Children

As with more traditional resources, the library does not act in place of or in the absence of a parent. The library is not responsible for enforcing any restrictions which a parent or guardian may place on a minor's use of this resource.

Related Documents:

Copyright Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-42)

Ontario Human Rights Code (R.S.O. 1990, c. H. 19)

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56)

Town of Hanover. *ADM-009 Social Media Policy.*

Hanover Public Library. *OP-02 Code of Conduct Policy.*

Hanover Public Library. *OP-14 Internet and Computer Use Policy.*

APPENDIX

TERMS OF USE – SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to the general rules regarding use of the Hanover Public Library (the library) as stipulated in the library's *Code of Conduct Policy*, the library prohibits the use of its social media channels for any purpose that would contravene any relevant legislation or which might create civil liability by the user or the Hanover Public Library Board to any person. (For example, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* prohibits certain forms of discrimination and harassment of individuals or groups, and Canada's *Criminal Code* includes prohibitions against child pornography, obscenity and hate propaganda. An example of civil liability is the law of libel and slander. This is not an exhaustive list of examples.) Users are reminded that ignorance of the law is not an excuse.

Use of the library's social media channels is conditional on the user's agreement to observe the library's *OP-03 Social Media Policy* (the policy). By continuing to use the library's social media channels, the user indicates agreement to all requirements of the policy. Comments, posts and messages are welcome on the library's social media channels, provided they do not contain any of the following:

- obscene or racist content;
- personal attacks, insults, or threatening language;
- potentially libelous statements;
- plagiarized material;
- private, personal information published without consent;
- comments unrelated to the content of the forum;
- hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion;
- commercial promotions or spam.

All social media channels affiliated with the library will be regularly screened by library page administrators. Any posts or comments which violate the terms outlined in this policy will be removed immediately, and the person responsible for the comment or post will be barred from posting any subsequent messages to the library social media channels.

By posting content the user agrees to indemnify the library, its staff and officers from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages and costs (including legal fees) incurred by any of them which arise out of or are related to the posted content.

Social media may not be used for commercial purposes, proselytizing, or for organized political activity.

If any user does not agree to these terms, the user is not to use the service, as violation of these terms can lead to legal liability.