



## Richmond Hill Public Library Board

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### 1. PURPOSE

Richmond Hill Public Library endorses the use of social media as a communications and community engagement tool that exemplifies the mission, vision and values of the Library through a branded customer experience. The purpose of this policy is to ensure social media tools are used in a strategic way that proactively conveys the Library's reputation, while also providing guidelines for Library employees and volunteers who contribute to official Library social media accounts; and/or personal accounts, where the interests of the Library may be represented.

In this policy, *social media use* is defined as "engaging in an online, social service that builds and connects a virtual community of people who share similar interests." Commonly used *social media platforms* may include, but are not limited to: Facebook, YouTube, Google, Yelp, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs and forums. Common *social interactions* can include comments, shares or reactions (i.e. likes, dislikes).

Social media is to be used as a venue to engage in dialogue with our online community while sharing accurate information in a timely manner. Social media usage is intended to support Library initiatives while enhancing the Library's

reputation. Just as with traditional or in-person communication, it is important to remember our responsibility to serve our community. As such, employees must recognize that they share responsibility in upholding the reputation of the Library.

This policy is largely derived from the City of Richmond Hill's corresponding Social Media Policy, and will be updated based on revisions to the City's policy.

## **2. SCOPE**

The *Social Media Policy* applies to all Library staff and volunteers, as well as members of the public who interact with the Library online and through social media channels. The policy also applies to anyone retained to represent the Library, such as contractors, consultants, and volunteers.

This policy is meant to guide social media usage by Library staff. It provides clarity and guidance to unique considerations associated with online and social media channels and works in collaboration with relevant legislation and other Library policies and procedures.

## **3. OFFICIAL LIBRARY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

Social media accounts should only be used with a full understanding of the professional resources and procedures required to effectively use them. Social media usage is managed, monitored and administrated by the Communications department of the Library, and should be considered as one component of the Library's overall communications strategy. The Communications Manager of the Library may assign contributors who create content for the Library's social media accounts on a regular basis. Official participants will be held accountable for the accuracy and appropriateness of the content they produce.

Official corporate accounts and social pages that represent the Library will be managed and created by the Communications department of the Library. They will be used to disseminate information, engage with the community and respond to commentary about the Library and its interests. New social media accounts or

pages that represent the Library may only be created under direction of the Communications department. Any accounts created without the consent of the Communications Manager will be removed.

#### **4. CONTRIBUTORS TO OFFICIAL RHPL ACCOUNTS**

*Contributors* are staff who have approval of their direct supervisor and the Communications Manager to post and/or comment on behalf of the Library, or on the Library's official social media accounts. Where possible, the staff person must seek to fulfil the Library's overall strategic goals through social content, and they must ensure that the below guidelines are followed:

- Content posted must be approved by Communications staff. Content must be accurate and relevant to the Library's audience, while maintaining professional and inclusive language, tone and content (image/video/text).
- Where applicable, appropriate consent must be obtained prior to sharing images, videos or other materials that do not belong to the Library, and confidentiality must be respected as per the Library's Personnel Policy.
- Staff must consult with the Communications department when there is uncertainty about the confidentiality of the information or if there is a risk pertaining to personal information and customer consent.
- Staff must ensure content of posts is not commercial in nature, and thus does not endorse revenue generation for a particular business or public figure.
- Staff must ensure content of posts contains a tone that is not offensive, violent, hateful, defamatory or in violation of the Library's Personnel Policy.
- Content of posts must be non-partisan in nature. That is, the posts must not communicate personal (i.e. political, religious, etc.) views when representing the Library.

- Moderators or contributors must report any inappropriate content that violates these terms immediately to the Communications Manager.

## **5. RESPONDING TO COMMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

Communications staff or a designate will be responsible for responding to customer comments through official Richmond Hill Public Library profiles, and may use their discretion to remove:

- Comments or posts classified as spam or advertisement. This includes comments determined to be offensive, partisan, disparaging, profane or inappropriate.
- Disparaging comments that violate the Library's Customer Code of Conduct policy, or show disrespect toward a current/former Library employee or member of the Library Board.
- Comments that are inaccurate, off-topic, misleading, threatening, violent, hateful, discriminatory, inaccurate, or otherwise objectionable.

The Library reserves the right to review and moderate comments on, or directed to, Library accounts; and will make every effort to reply to posts in a timely and accurate manner.

## **6. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

All employee actions and behaviours, including those using social media, are guided by the Library's Personnel Policy and other related policies currently in practice. Whether in a private or public setting, employees using social media should be aware of the impact of their actions on the Library's reputation and brand. The Library may observe content and information made available by employees through social media. Employees should use their best judgement in posting material that is either inappropriate or harmful to the Library, its

employees, or any stakeholders. Library staff and volunteers must comply with the following terms:

- While staff are encouraged to follow, share posts by and join in on conversations on Library social media accounts (within the terms of this policy), staff may not engage directly to customers on the Library's social media pages through their personal social media accounts, thereby acting as a representative of the Library.
- Official, designated staff and accounts are responsible for engaging customers through social media. To avoid confusion and misrepresentation, unless approved by Communications, staff may not use their personal social media accounts to respond to inquiries or comments directed specifically to the Library or asking for an official response from the Library.
- Staff are not permitted to complain, react negatively (i.e. dislike), or express concerns regarding aspects of their job, workplace, or programs and services of the Library.
- Staff should not share/post any confidential and/or sensitive information about the Library.
- Staff should be careful when discussing things where emotions run high (e.g. politics and religion), and should show respect for the opinions of others. Staff must ensure that their social media use is consistent with their obligations as a public servant, including conflict of interest and political activity rules.
- Staff should not use visuals (images, logo, etc.) that suggest that their social media account represents Richmond Hill Public Library.
- Staff may choose to use a disclaimer like "Opinions are my own," which can help to clarify that the social account does not speak on behalf of the Library.

However, this disclaimer does not remove an employee’s obligation(s) (noted above and in the Personnel Policy) as a public servant and employees may face employment-related consequences if their behaviour violates existing policies, directives or legislation.

**7. NON COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY**

Any employee or volunteer who is found to have contravened the provisions of the Social Media Policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**8. RELATED POLICIES**

- I. *Customer Code of Conduct Policy* (December 2014)
- ii. *Code of Conduct Personnel Policy* (February 2018)
- II. *Customer Privacy Policy* (December 2017)
- III. *Internet Use Policy* (November 2016)

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<b>Dates</b>	<b>Motion #</b>
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