

**Title**

1. This policy is entitled Social Media Policy.

**Policy Statement**

2. To provide guidance to employees, elected officials, volunteers, and representatives on committees of Council on the use of social media to protect the integrity and reputation of the municipality.

**Purpose**

3. Social Media is used as a broadcast tool for the Municipality. While social media can be a useful tool for communicating and sharing information it can also be the subject of abuse.
4. The purpose of this policy is to:
  - a) Provide clarification on the appropriate use and management of social media by employees, Council members, volunteers and representatives on committees of Council;
  - b) Provide direction to those managing and administering corporate social media sites; and
  - c) Protect the municipality's reputation.

**Overview**

5. The municipality uses social media to support the larger goal of communicating in a clear and direct way with residents of the municipality. Our social media will be:
  - a) **Audience-focused** While accounts may promote government services and information, their primary goal is to give people the information they need.
  - b) **Inclusive** Does not personally attack, harass, discriminate, or display any cultural insensitivity.
  - c) **Coordinated** Social media will be coordinated to avoid unnecessary duplication and give people clear, consistent and trusted information.
  - d) **Safe** Posts are for public distribution, without foreseeable, significant security or privacy risk
  - e) **Accessible** We will increase the amount of information provided in accessible formats.
  - f) **Non-Partisan** We will not share content that promotes or criticizes any political party.

## **Definitions**

**“CAO”** means Chief Administrative Officer.

**“Employee”** means full-time, part-time, casual, temporary, including summer students.

**“Corporate Communications Officer”** means an employee appointed by the CAO to coordinate media relations and communications for the County of Cumberland with authority to interact and coordinate with the media on behalf of the Municipality. The designated social media managers have a responsibility to ensure the appropriateness of content and policy compliance. Only a communications manager has permission to create, publish, or comment on behalf of the Municipality/ department.

**“Council Member”** means a Councilor or Mayor currently serving the Municipality.

**“Committee Member”** means any person currently appointed to a Committee of Council.

**“Municipality”** means the Municipality of the County of Cumberland.

**“Social Media Manager”** means an employee approved by the CAO to manage one or more municipal social media accounts.

## **Policy Objectives**

6. Support social media use in communicating overall municipal themes and policies, providing citizens with better access to municipal programs and services and more choice about how, when, and where to access those services.
7. Direct the appropriate, creative, and effective official and professional use of social media by employees for municipal purposes.
8. Encourage the appropriate personal use of social media by employees.
9. Provide guidance to employees, elected officials, volunteers, and committee members on the use of social media.
10. To ensure that municipal employees who participate in social media communication as social media managers on behalf of the municipality do so in accordance with this policy and related policies.
11. Provide guidance to social media managers when required.
12. To lay out roles and responsibilities for those who must follow and administer this policy.

## **Policy Directives**

13. Spokesperson use of social media
  - a) Employees responsible for managing municipal social media accounts must be approved by the CAO, or their designate.
  - b) As determined by the CAO, or their designate, employees managing social media channels may require training before beginning their duties.

14. Social Media Accounts

- a) To establish new municipal social media accounts, the approval of the CAO, or their designate, is required.
- b) The CAO will designate an employee and/or department, to be responsible for social media accounts and communications via such accounts through an administrative directive.

**Management/Moderating Comments**

15. The CAO will provide guidance through an administrative directive around management and moderation of social media accounts. This will include the default position of turning comments on or off. In most cases, unless otherwise approved, comments should remain disabled for social media posts.

**Oversight of Social Media**

16. The use of social media by an employee brings with it the responsibility to manage it in accordance with this Policy, the Personnel Policy Handbook and any other municipal policies that outline expected employee behaviour.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

17. Council Members/ Committee Members:

- a. Shall participate in social media through their own accounts while respecting the Conduct of Members of Council, as outlined in the Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- b. Shall not hold themselves out to be speaking for the Municipality on personal social media outlets.
- c. Shall correct any erroneous information about municipal decisions, services, etc., that they share on their own social media accounts as soon as possible after being notified by the Clerk or their designate.

18. Municipal Employees:

- a. Shall ensure that participation in any social networking site does not conflict with their role at the municipality and does not harm the municipality's reputation.
- b. Shall not make comments from personal social media accounts on municipal social media posts.
- c. Where necessary, shall clarify any personal views posted on private accounts is not a representation of the municipality's views.
- d. Shall not use municipal logos, slogans or intellectual property on personal social media accounts without prior written authorization.
- e. Shall adhere to privacy, confidentiality, copyright and data protection laws, and avoid making comments that are considered defamatory or libelous.

**Inappropriate Content**

19. Content that provides personal information about an individual(s) other than the person posting the comment.

20. Use of profane language and/or content and/or defamatory statements.
21. Personal attacks on individuals, groups, events or ideas.
22. Content that infringes on another’s intellectual property rights (i.e., copyright, trademarks, design, and patents).
23. Content of a religious nature that might be deemed prejudicial.
24. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination or harassment.
25. Content with the intent to inflict harm.
26. Sexual content, dangerous and/or illegal activity of any kind.
27. Content of a confidential nature pertaining to the Municipality.
28. Content that promotes any candidate and/or materials for federal, provincial or municipal elections or for Council appointments.
29. Derogatory comments about members of Council and/or Municipality employees and/or Municipality services and/or other levels of government.
30. Any content that is determined to be inappropriate in the opinion of the designed employee, and/or the Chief Administrative Officer.

**Effective Date**

31. This Policy is in effect upon adoption and repeals all previous versions of the Social Media Policy.

**Clerks Annotation for Official Policy Book**

Date of Notice to Council Members of Intent to Consider (7 days minimum): March 16, 2016

Date of Passage of Policy: April 6, 2016

Date of Notice to Council of Intent to Consider the Amended Policy: September 18, 2024

Date of Passage of Amended Policy: October 2, 2024

I hereby certify that this Social Media Policy was adopted as indicated above.

Deputy Clerk: *Amanda Kinnear*

Date: October 3, 2024