



MEMORANDUM

To: Newmarket Public Library Board

From: Todd Kyle

Date: September 17, 2014

Re: Social Media Policy

Motion 13.12.279 was passed on December 13, 2013 indicating:

THAT the Library Board consult with the Town of Newmarket Human Resources Department and Legal Services regarding Town of Newmarket Policies on the Library's Social Media and Public Relations Policies.

Discussions were held with Town staff as they drafted their own Social Media Policy, which was passed by Council in May 2014. The current Library policy and the new Town policy were compared for inconsistencies and risk points and a revised draft Library policy is attached for consideration.

The new policy revokes the blanket exemption on commentary made with an explicit "personal opinions only" disclaimer and instead makes clear the risk of damage to the Library's reputation that may ensue when employees comment on controversial matters. It carefully balances this with the right to free expression by counseling discretion rather than disallowing any comment. Although not in the Town policy, it also indicates the disposition of social media accounts used by employees as official representatives of the Library, should they leave the Library's employ.

The following motion is recommended:

THAT the Library Board approve the revised Social Media Policy as drafted.



Draft for Review
Social Media Policy

Purpose

The Newmarket Public Library (the Library) is committed to embracing communications technology in its environment, including social media. The Library understands that use of this technology meets a critical business need by providing a venue for shared information resources with our patrons and partners and providing a means for meaningful two-way communication between patrons, other library users and library staff. This policy governs use of these tools by staff, board members ~~or~~ and volunteers ~~use of these tools~~ for professional as well as personal purposes.

Scope

Appropriate use of the Internet by Library staff is governed by the Newmarket Public Library *Policy on Acceptable Use of Internet and Email by Staff*. This policy augments that policy by setting out the responsibilities of Library employees, Board members, and volunteers regarding their use of social media tools for professional as well as personal purposes. Social media or Web 2.0 technology includes any web applications, both hosted and online, which facilitate an environment for library staff, library users and library partners to share information and opinions about library related subjects and issues. Examples of social media that may be used by the Library include but are not limited to; posts to community reviews and patron ratings, wikis, blogs, RSS feeds and social networking sites. Social media managed by the Library provides an online place to create and disseminate information on relevant library content and topics.

Policy

Responsibilities of Employees, Board Members, and Volunteers (*please note: these bullets are taken from the Town of Newmarket policy, with revisions for the Library tracked*)

- access personal social media accounts using a personal e-mail address
- limit access to personal, social media accounts during working hours to designated breaks
- exclude links or posts to Library email addresses onto personal social media accounts
- exclude the use of Library logos or other marketing images from personal, social media accounts
- use caution, professional discretion and conduct when engaging in social media accounts
- ~~refrain from posting information or engaging in conversations related to the Library that are controversial or contentious~~ refrain from posting content that may be damaging to the Library's reputation or to its ability to carry out its duties, regardless of whether their relationship to the Library is explicit
- be aware that social media posting activities can appear transitory, however they are considered publications, and are subject to laws governing publications
- ~~not generate or respond to content on social media that relates to Town business, programs or services unless identified as a Designated Social Media Moderator~~ only establish or post to social media channels on behalf of the Library if authorized by the C.E.O. or Library Board to do so
- be aware of the consequences of unacceptable actions, which may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or position.
- be aware that they will be personally subject to fines and penalties when in violation of the law with respect to the acceptable use of social media

~~The Library regards online social media in the same way as it does its other information resources in accordance with its mission of serving Newmarket's needs for information sharing and lifelong learning. In addition, the C.E.O. is authorized to remove, edit, or modify any content posted to Library-managed social media channels by any user, as well as barring that user from future posting if warranted.~~

inasmuch as these actions are possible on the particular platform, in the case where the content is deemed to be inappropriate. Examples of this include the following:

In addition to the general rules respecting the use of the Library, Newmarket Public Library prohibits the use of social media for any purpose which would contravene any statute or government regulation, or which might create civil liability by the user or the Library Board to any person. For example, the Ontario *Human Rights Code* prohibits certain forms of discrimination and harassment of other individuals or groups, and the *Criminal Code* of Canada includes prohibitions against child pornography, obscenity, hate literature, sedition and literature for illicit drug use. An example of civil liability is the law of libel and slander. Users are reminded that ignorance of the law is not an excuse. Use of social media managed by the Library is conditional on the employee's agreement to observe this policy.

Comments, posts and messages are welcome on Library social software sites, provided they do not contain:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libelous statements
- Plagiarized material
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Comments or hyperlinks totally unrelated to the content of the forum
- Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Any content that may contravene any statute or government regulation, or which might create civil liability by the user or the Library Board to any person.

All social media sites affiliated with the Library will be regularly screened by Library staff. All postings which contain any prohibited content will be immediately removed and the poster barred from posting any subsequent messages to Library social media sites. The Library also reserves the right to edit or modify any submissions in response to requests for feedback or other commentary. Staff will not share personally identifiable information and/or patron information that is protected by library confidentiality.

Appropriate content for staff to post include but are not limited to:

- Notices of upcoming meetings and events
- Content of all press releases
- Policies and procedures
- Information about library services, trends or technology
- Communication between staff and the library community regarding Library work and/or projects
- Frequently asked questions
- Training and continuing education opportunities

Only authorized staff are permitted to establish social media channels on behalf of the Library or to speak on behalf of the Library in social media channels.

If staff participate in external social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, personal blogs, YouTube, etc., on their personal time and identify themselves as a Library employee:

- When possible, they should use personal contact and email information, rather than their Newmarket Public Library contact information.
- They should be clear that they are speaking for themselves. The following disclaimer can be used for that purpose:

[“This is my personal \[blog, space, comment\] and only contains my own views, thoughts and opinions. It is not endorsed by Newmarket Public Library nor does it constitute an official communication of Newmarket Public Library.”](#)

Related Policies

Public Relations Policy
Acceptable Use of Internet and Email by Staff
Workplace Harassment Policy
Workplace Violence Policy