
Policy Number:	G12
Relevant Delegation:	Not Applicable
Adoption Details:	18 September 2017
Last Review Details:	25 November 2019

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance for the Shire of York to engage and manage social media (SM) in its communication activities with the community.

POLICY SCOPE:

- 1.1 This Policy is designed to provide a framework for the Council to use social media to facilitate collaboration and sharing between the Shire, Council Members, Employees, ratepayers and the community.
- 1.2 This Policy applies to all Shire Employees and Council Members.
- 1.3 The requirements of this Policy apply to all uses of social networking applications, which are applied to any Shire of York related purpose and regardless of whether the applications are hosted corporately or not. They must also be considered where Shire representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

POLICY STATEMENT:

INTRODUCTION

BECOMING AN AUTHORISED CONTRIBUTOR

- 1.1 Before engaging in social media *as a representative of the Shire*, Employees must become authorised to comment.
- 1.2 To become authorised to comment in an official capacity, an Employee will need to gain approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- 1.3 Once you have been authorised, you will be referred to as an 'Authorised Contributor' (see 'Definitions' below).

CEO, PRESIDENT AND COUNCILLOR'S COMMENTS

- 2.1 The CEO and President are not required to obtain authorisation to contribute to the Shire's page – though they must follow the Shire's Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement below.
 - 2.2 Councillors do not have to obtain authorisation to contribute to the Shire's page – though contributions are not encouraged – and they can only "comment", "like" or "share" existing content. Councillors cannot post any new content onto the Shire's page.
 - 2.3 Councillors must also follow the Shire's Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement below, except for 5.3 relating to employees.
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- 2.4 Councillors will only be permitted to “comment”, “like” or “share” providing they disclose that they are a Councillor, and the views expressed are their own.
 - 2.5 Councillors shall not post any material on the Social Media Platform concerning a Council Decision unless:
 - 2.5.1 The Shire’s President has released the information on the Social Media Platform or to the Media and Public; or
 - 2.5.2 The Official Minutes have been made public.
 - 2.6 The CEO, President and Councillors will use their own personal profiles to contribute to the Shire’s SM platforms.

CONTRIBUTING TO OUR PAGE BY STAFF

- 3.1 No staff member may post on the Shire’s page from their own personal SM account, including comments/share/like/re-tweet (and so on), unless approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 3.2 However, as it is 100% innocuous, a staff member is welcome to ‘like’ the Shire of York page and also ‘like’ any post that an Authorised Contributor adds to our page.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. Once authorised to comment as a Shire representative, all ‘Authorised Contributors’ must:
 - 4.1.1. Disclose they are an Employee of the Shire in all cases (this is a given if you are posting using the Shire’s account).
 - 4.1.2. Disclose and comment only on information classified as public domain information.
 - 4.1.3. Post only factual information.
 - 4.1.4. Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant Shire of York Policies, including the Shire’s Media Policy and Code of Conduct.
 - 4.1.5. Ensure comments are respectful of the community in which you are interacting online.
 - 4.1.6. Adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws.
 - 4.2. If a person is authorised to comment, they must not:
 - 4.2.1. Post/respond to material or allow material to stay ‘live’ on our page that you know or could reasonable be expected to know is:
 - offensive
 - hateful
 - obscene
 - racist
 - defamatory
 - sexist
 - threatening
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- infringes copyright
 - harassing
 - constitutes a contempt of court
 - bullying
 - breaches a Court suppression order
 - discriminatory
 - is otherwise unlawful

4.2.2. Use or disclose any confidential or secure information.

4.2.3. Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the Shire's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

4.3. Employees must ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of information acquired at work is protected at all times and treated in accordance with relevant laws and policies. The potential scope and ramifications of a breach of privacy or confidentiality when using social media are severe.

4.4. Shire of York social networking content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:

4.4.1 Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon.

4.4.2 Profane language or content.

4.4.3 Content that promotes fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of:

- race creed
- marital status
- colour
- status with regard to public assistance
- age
- national origin
- religion
- physical or mental disability
- gender
- sexual orientation

4.4.4 Sexual content or links to sexual content.

4.4.5 Solicitations of commerce.

4.4.6 Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.

4.4.7 Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public.

4.4.8 Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

4.5. The Australian Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) has made a landmark ruling that Facebook is an advertising medium and as such therefore falls under the industry's self-regulatory code of ethics – the Australian Association of National Advertiser's (AANA) Code of Ethics. Social media pages must comply with pertinent codes and laws, vetting all public posts to ensure they are (eg) not sexist, racist or factually inaccurate.

Companies can now be fined or publicly shamed for the comments that appear on their social media "brand" pages. The ASB ruled in general that Australia's advertising laws were applicable to everything on a brand's page — the Code applies to the content generated by the page creator as well as material or comments posted by users or friends.

PENALTIES:

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this Policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination or some other contravention of the law.

Any employee who fails to comply with this Policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment.

Council Members who fail to comply with this Policy will be removed from the Social Media Platform and may also face action under the Shire's Code of Conduct.

The CEO is delegated the authority to take appropriate action (including removing a person from the social media platform) if a breach occurs of the Shire's Social Media Policy and Guidelines.

KEY TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

Any definitions listed below apply to this policy only.

Social Media is content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. Social media is distinct from industrial media, such as newspapers, television and film. Social media comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools that enable anyone to publish or access information – industrial media generally requires significant resources to publish information. (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media).

Social media may include (although is not limited to):

- social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer).
 - video and photo sharing websites (eg. Flickr, YouTube).
 - blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs.
 - blogs hosted by media outlets (e.g. 'comments' or 'your say' feature on perthnow.com.au).
 - micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter).
 - wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia).
 - forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool).
 - VOD (video on demand) and podcasting.
 - online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. World of Warcraft, Second Life).
 - instant messaging (including SMS).
 - geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare).
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Authorised Contributor is a person who creates and is responsible for posted articles and information on social media sites on behalf of the Shire of York.

Chief Administrator is the person responsible for the set-up, maintenance and management of all the Shire's SM pages and policies.

Comment is a response to an article or social media content.

Blog (an abridgment of the term web log) is a website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events or other material such as graphics or video.

Public Domain is clip art, images, text, programs etc. that is not copyrighted (i.e. a law that gives only one person the right to produce, sell or use something).

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Contact Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Relevant Legislation: Not applicable

Review History:

Date Review Adopted:	Resolution Number
Adopted – 18 September 2017	
Reviewed – 25 November 2019	291119
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