



Social Media Policy

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Woburn Public Library uses social media platforms with regards to Library events and Library-related topics. Community information such as emergency and safety alerts from the City and community events may also be shared. For the purpose of this policy, the Library defines social media as any online space to which the Library posts content, including but not limited to the Library website, social networking websites, and media sharing websites. It includes any material created or posted on social media sites when staff is representing themselves as a library employee.

GENERAL STANDARDS FOR LIBRARY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

The library evaluates information that it posts online, but sharing or linking to content online does not mean that the library endorses or is affiliated with the content or content creator. Library social media sites that provide for public input, comment, or discussion, shall be limited public forums for discussing library- or community-related services, resources, and events. The library respects diverse viewpoints and encourages thoughtful discussion but does not expressly or impliedly endorse or approve of the content in users' posts on library social media.

The descriptions or user profiles for library social media sites and accounts shall state that each site or account is the "official [social media site/account] site/account for the Woburn (MA) Public Library." The library will maintain a list of all of its official social media sites and accounts on its website, www.woburnpubliclibrary.org.

Library social media sites shall be archived in accordance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Public Records Law¹, including any content edited or removed by the library pursuant to this policy.

USER RESPONSIBILITIES

All persons using library social media ("Users") are subject to and must comply with the following responsibilities in addition to the General Standards set forth above.

Where authorized by the library or allowed by a specific social media provider, patrons may comment on, reply to, and otherwise interact with library social media sites and accounts, and

¹ G.L. c.66, §10 (Public Record Requests); c.4, §7(26) (Exemptions); and 950 CMR 32.00, et seq. (Public Records Access Regulations).

may engage with the library on social media both through publicly visible posts and comments and through "direct messaging" or "private messaging" functions that may be provided by individual sites. No user should have any expectation of privacy when interacting with library social media as even "direct" or "private" messaging as may be described or offered by specific social media providers constitutes a public record and is therefore subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Law².

The library is not responsible for the content of public comments and has no obligation to remove objectionable comments, however, users of library social media are expected to interact with the library and each other in a civil, respectful, and constructive manner. Additionally, the library reserves the right to remove:

- Content that promotes discrimination
- Content that constitutes or encourages illegal activity
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Profane or vulgar language
- Sexual content or links to sexual content
- Content that violates another party's intellectual property rights
- Private information about an individual shared without that individual's consent
- Content that compromises safety or security
- Content regarding political campaigns and ballot measures
- Potentially libelous content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language

In the interests of supporting free expression and exchange of ideas, the library will generally refrain from deleting or hiding content posted or shared by members of the public. However, the library reserves the right to restrict or remove content that is deemed to be in violation of this policy or any applicable federal, state, or local law, regulation, or policy. A copy of any content that is removed or hidden shall be retained by the library along with a description of the reason(s) the specific content was deleted.

The library reserves the right to ban or restrict users from library social media, either temporarily or permanently. A decision to ban or restrict a user shall be made only with the approval of the Library Director. Upon request, that decision may be reviewed by the Library Board of Trustees during a regular meeting of that Board. All decisions by the Board of Trustees will be final and not subject to further review or appeal. Whenever possible, the library will inform a banned or restricted user of the library's decision.

² G.L. c.66, §10 (Public Record Requests); c.4, §7(26) (Exemptions); and 950 CMR 32.00, et seq. (Public Records Access Regulations).

Users may be banned for repeatedly or significantly inappropriate interactions with library social media, including but not limited to:

- Repeatedly violating this policy, or committing a serious one-time violation of this policy (e.g. seriously threatening others)
- Refusing to follow library staff instructions or requests
- Sockpuppeting, or the use of multiple accounts or fake accounts to circumvent bans or manufacture disagreements or controversy
- Repeatedly spamming or posting content that is not related to topics under discussion and not relevant to the library, particularly in the absence of other, appropriate contributions
- Inappropriate behavior on social media that constitutes a continuation of offline behavior the user has previously been told to cease by library staff or that has resulted in the user having been removed or banned from library premises

LIBRARY STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Library staff are subject to and must comply with all General Standards and User Responsibilities set forth above and are additionally subject to and must comply with the following responsibilities.

Library employees who post content to or are responsible for managing library social media shall post in a professional manner including, but not limited to, checking facts, citing sources, avoiding copyright infringement, and correcting errors before posting. Social media content should be written using language like “we” and “our”, as the content is from the library and not from any particular staff member. Staff members should also take care not to use library social media content to express personal opinions.

As with any other content provided by the library, information that is shared by library staff on library social media should be selected with the intention of meeting the diverse interests and needs of the community. The decision to share or post a particular item does not necessarily imply the library's, the Board of Library Trustees', or the City's expressed or implied approval or endorsement of its contents. Community members who are concerned about a library social media post may submit a detailed written complaint to the Library Director, who will consult with the Library Board of Trustees and respond to the concern.

The library reserves the right to like, follow, and share content from other social media. In general, shared content will be from governmental bodies, educational or research institutions, publishers, authors, literary figures, or other individuals that promote topics such as local interests, education, books, reading, literacy, or content that otherwise aligns with the library's mission and goals. Library staff are available to respond to comments and questions during library open hours but cannot assure a timely response to questions and concerns via social media. The best way to contact the Library is by phone or email.

A related consideration is staff and volunteers personal use of social media. If staff or volunteers mention a connection to the Library on their personal sites, anything on the personal site reflects on the Library. Staff and volunteers have a right to speech and privacy, but they also have a responsibility to uphold the Library's mission and values and to exercise good judgment in a public forum.

LIMITS OF LIBRARY RESPONSIBILITY

Social media sites or account providers may have their own policies covering terms of service, privacy, and user behavior, which users may be additionally subject to when using library accounts on these sites. The library is not responsible for the independent actions of any social media site or account provider to restrict or ban a user, restrict or remove content, or otherwise manage the site in accordance with its own internal policies.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 9, 2021.