

COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**ADOPTED BY
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AUGUST 20, 2019**

**REVIEWED
AUGUST 19, 2025**

***Denotes Legal Language**

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

Social media provides a valuable and timely way for the Coal City Public Library District (Library) to disseminate information. It also serves to inspire conversation and expand the Library's connection with the community. The Library regards social media as equally important as any other venue for the dissemination of Library information.

The Library established social media sites primarily in order to inform Library users about Library programs, educational opportunities, events (including those co-sponsored with other organizations), materials, and to encourage dialogue and the exchange of information and knowledge between users and Library staff about these programs, events and materials. The Library's social media sites may also be used to notify the general public of Library employment opportunities and Trustee vacancies. The Library's social media sites are not intended to be traditional public forums for the general exchange of ideas and viewpoints, but are limited to public forums for discussing Library programs, events and materials. The Library does not make its social media accounts available for general public discourse, but rather reserves and limits the topics that may be discussed on its social media accounts. While the Library encourages dialogue, it respectfully requests that participants be mindful that its social media sites are open to the public and that participants be courteous and civil toward one another.

DEFINITIONS

1. "Posting" shall mean any writing, image, video, audio file and hyperlinks to other websites [or media which is downloaded, referenced or inserted] placed upon any Library social media site.
2. "Social media site" shall include any online web site, web application or web account created and/or maintained by the Library, which permits users to communicate with other users through postings.

POSTINGS AND RESTRICTIONS

The Library reserves the right to restrict or remove content that is deemed to be in violation of this policy or any applicable law. Content that is deemed not suitable for posting by the Library because it is not topically related to the particular subject being commented on, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria below, may be removed and retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content was deleted. Content and comments on the Library's social media accounts containing any of the following forms of content and postings shall not be allowed:

- Content not related to Library business, programs, events, services, resources or materials*
- Advertisements or solicitations of commerce*
- Charitable solicitations
- Political campaigning*
- Spam
- Obscenity or child pornography
- Copyrighted or trademarked material
- Private or personal information, including but not limited to phone numbers, addresses, SSN's and other sensitive information*
- Requests for personal information
- Falsification of identity
- Plagiarized material
- Content or encouragement of illegal activity*
- Information which may interfere with or compromise the safety or security of staff, patrons or the public at large*
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, marital status, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, creed, ancestry or any other protected category and
- Slanderous, libelous, threatening, defamatory or profane language and statements.*

EMPLOYEE POSTINGS

Only those employees responsible for the Library's social media sites should be actively participating on those sites during work hours. Employees who contribute to the Library's social media should present content in a professional manner and should check facts, cite sources, avoid copyright infringement, present balanced views,

acknowledge and correct errors, grammar and spelling before posting.

Library employees are not prohibited from posting on the Library's social media sites from personal accounts during their time outside of work. The Library recognizes that public employees do not surrender their First Amendment Rights by reason of their employment and that the First Amendment protects a public employee's right in certain circumstances to speak as a citizen addressing a matter of concern. However, when a public employee makes statements pursuant to his/her official duties, the employee is not speaking as a citizen for First Amendment purposes and the constitution does not insulate his or her communications from potential discipline by the Library. Employees must be aware that information they display or comments they make on Library social media sites may be viewed by other users as representing official Library sponsored information or comments.

Employees should keep in mind the following best practices when posting content about Library-related subjects and issues on personal time:

1. Employees that identify themselves as employees of the Library shall make it clear that the views expressed are their personal views and do not represent the views of the Library.
2. Employees shall respect the Library's confidential and proprietary information and shall not post information that is still in draft form or is confidential.
3. Employees shall respect all Library patrons online as they do in person and on the phone. Comments about patrons in general, about specific questions from patrons or about patron behavior are not appropriate.

TRUSTEE POSTINGS

Library Trustees have the same right to self-expression enjoyed by members of the community as a whole when discussing matters of public concern. Trustees should keep in mind the following best practices when posting content about library-related subjects on social media:

1. Trustees identifying themselves as a Library Trustee need to make it clear that the views expressed are theirs alone and do not represent the views of the Library or other Trustees.
2. Respect the Library's confidential and proprietary information. Do not post information that is still in draft form or is confidential.
3. No comments with any kind of negative, mocking, condescending, etc. slant should be made about Library patrons or staff in general, specific questions from patrons, interactions with staff of the Library or about patron behavior on the Library's social media sites.

RECORD MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

The Library will preserve the content of all social media postings in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

DISCLAIMER

All content posted on Library social media sites is subject to the Illinois Freedom of Information (FOIA) and the State of Illinois records retention laws. Therefore, all Library social media sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. The Library is not responsible or liable for the content of postings by third parties on any Library sponsored social media site, and third party postings do not reflect the opinions or positions of the Coal City Public Library District, its employees or its Board of Trustees.

By posting on the Library's social media sites individuals give the Library permission to use their name, profile picture and the content of any posting they make without compensation or liability on the part of the Library. Users should be aware that third party websites have their own privacy policies and should proceed accordingly.

Users should have no expectation of privacy in postings on Library sponsored social media sites. By using such sites users consent to the Library's right to access, monitor and read any postings on those sites. Users must understand

that social media is permanent, retrievable and public. Messages can potentially be read by anyone once posted, regardless of status on Friends, Follower or Subscriber Lists. The Library recommends users not post personal information or contact information on social media sites.

Users are personally responsible for their commentary and should be aware that they may be held personally liable for commentary that is defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous by any offended party.

By joining, utilizing and/or posting on the Library's social media sites users agree to comply with this Policy.

VIOLATIONS

Users may report violations of the Library's Social Media Policy to the Library by contacting the Library Director or Assistant Director.

Postings that the Library Director or Assistant Director deems to have violated this policy, may be removed in whole or in part. The Library reserves the right to terminate accounts, ban or block users who have posted in violation of this policy on more than one occasion.

APPEAL AND REVIEW

The Board of Trustees of the Coal City Public Library District will review the Social Media Policy periodically and reserves the right to amend it at any time. The Board authorizes the Library Director to waive regulations under appropriate circumstances. The Library Director is the chief person empowered to make decisions regarding the availability and use of social media and commenting.

If a posting is deleted, the person who left the posting may appeal the deletion, in writing, to the Library Director within 30 days. The Library Director will affirm or reverse the decision to delete a posting within 30 days after receiving the written appeal.