



Social Media Policy

updated: winter 2020

Background

The City of Elliot Lake (the City) is responsible for the accurate and transparent sharing of information with the public through education and promotion of various programs, services, initiatives and Council decisions. To effectively share that information, the City uses a combination of traditional communications and online communications to reach the largest number of residents, visitors, and stakeholders as possible.

The popularity of social media sites and/or networks provide the City with a powerful communications tool that allows for information to be shared immediately, effectively and in a cost-efficient manner, while also allowing for engaged discussion with residents and stakeholders.

The CAO's office is the lead authority for the City's online communication strategies. Social media accounts for corporate use will be established and managed by the CAO's office in conjunction with the assistance of appointed senior managers as Social Media Moderators.

Purpose

To provide rules and guidelines on the acceptable participation in social media sites and networks. This policy is to be read in conjunction with other relevant policies such as but not limited to: Code of Conduct (both staff and Council), Staff-Council Relations Policy and Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.

While the City recognizes the popularity of social networking, certain behaviours must be observed to protect both employees' and the corporation's reputation. This policy serves to:

- Safeguard the City's reputation
- Provide employees and members of Council with clear usage guidelines
- Provide protocol around monitoring, administration, acceptable use and privacy.

Definitions

Follow means to subscribe to a social media account of another user and receive their posts as updates.

Political material means comments or posts made by politicians, supporters or otherwise, for the purpose of political gain or to drive a political agenda.

Social media means the web-based technologies and sites and includes blogging, microblogging (Twitter), photo-sharing (Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat), video sharing or webcasting (YouTube, Facebook Live), and social networking (LinkedIn, Facebook, blogs, discussion boards) which allow users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, photographs and interests.

Social Media Moderator means City staff tasked with posting and reviewing content on City Social Media sites.

City Social Media Sites means social media sites created and managed by City staff.

Senior Management Team (SMT) means the group of senior City managers assembled under the direction of the CAO to manage and coordinate corporate affairs and workload

Scope

This Policy applies to all City employees and Councillors participating on all City Social Media Sites. Participating in social media (employees and Councillors) is considered an official corporate act, and therefore must be viewed in the same way as participating in other media, meetings or public forums.

Procedures

a) Creating a City Social Media Site

- Departments wishing to use social media sites should work with the CAO's office to discuss specific goals and objectives and identify specific sites and platforms.
- Login and password information will be provided to the CAO and the applicable Department Head / Director.

b) Administering City Social Media Sites

- All City Social Media Sites are administered by City employees named as Social Media Moderator(s) by the department head or the CAO.
- The CAO's office requires notification when an employee is named as a Moderator.
- When a Social Media Moderator leaves City employment, all passwords should be changed for those City Social Media Sites to which they had access. This will be the responsibility of the relevant Department to ensure the CAO's office is notified.
- An appropriate disclaimer or other terms and conditions, as approved by the CAO, should be accessible from each City Social Media site. See item below for disclaimer examples.
- Content of City Social Media Sites will be monitored by Social Media Moderators who are responsible for:
 - Correcting misinformation and ensuring content is up-to-date;
 - Ensuring responses to posts, in-box messages and discussion comments are made in a timely manner;
 - Removing any post that is considered to be false, defamatory, abusive, hateful, obscene, racist, sexually-oriented, threatening or discriminatory
 - Denying access to, or blocking users, who continue to post inappropriate or offensive comments.

c) Internal / External Content Standards:

- Comments, posts and messages are welcome on City Social Media Sites provided they do not contain:
 - Obscene, racist, or otherwise discriminatory content;
 - Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language;
 - Plagiarized material or copyrighted material
 - Confidential information published without prior consent.
 - Promotion of political candidates or other political material.

- All City Social Media Sites or pages within existing social media services will be required to contain the following terms and conditions / disclaimer:
 - All posts are monitored by municipal staff who may delete any message. If a submission violates guidelines, or is in any other way inappropriate, the submission will be removed in its entirety from the site.
 - If a user continues to post messages that violate the guidelines, the user may be blocked from using the site. If you believe a submission to any municipal social media site violates the guidelines, please report it immediately to the municipality.

d) Employee Personal Use of Social Media

City employees, including part-time, contract and volunteer firefighters, in their private capacity as citizens, may want to use social media to share information and communicate with friends, family and co-workers. Even though they are using social media for personal purposes, some City policies apply to the use of social media by employees when they are off-duty including but not limited to the City's Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.

Employees who identify themselves as City employees or who are identifiable as City employees in their personal social media use should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Always conduct themselves in a manner that conforms to the City's health and safety policies, code of conduct and the Ontario Human Rights Code
- City employees are discouraged from discussing City business through personal social medial accounts, websites, or networks.
- City employees should make it clear that their position does not officially represent the City's position. Use phrases such as "in my personal opinion" or "Personally..." to communicate that you are expressing your personal views.
- City employees must ensure that they do not reveal anyone's personal information gained through their knowledge or work performance.
- Never identify or comment about other City employees without their express consent. Even positive comments may be inappropriate or unwanted.
- City employees must not use social media in a manner that would harm the City's reputation. Such conduct includes slurs, derogatory comments, or insults.

- City employees are responsible not only for their own social media posts but also any comments made to their social media posts that were reasonably encouraged or welcomed by the employee's post.

Employees are reminded that despite efforts they may take to keep social media posts private, there is a public nature to all social media posts. Furthermore, social media users may be denied an opportunity to delete an ill-advised post completely. Screen shots and cached data can maintain a social media post even after the original post is deleted.

City employees are encouraged to use caution in their personal social media use. City employees who violate the terms of this policy with social media use, including personal social media use may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for cause.

e) City Council and Social Media

- City Social Media Sites will follow any current Member of Council's social media accounts, which are used to promote municipal and community information. For clarity: strictly personal accounts will not be followed.
- All accounts owned by Members of Council will be un-followed, and no further material will be shared on City Social Media sites at the start of the nomination period for any municipal elections or by-elections.
- Sitting councillors are discouraged from posting or using City Social Media Sites from the beginning of the nomination period until the election results are made official by the clerk. The City CAO and/or Social Media Moderators reserve the right to delete posts by sitting councillors on City Social Media Sites during municipal election campaigns.
