

1.0 Introduction

Social networking, through the use of Internet-based and other electronic social media tools, is now a part of life for many people. Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogging, photo sharing and other online social media vehicles are commonplace. This document is intended to provide Town of Yarmouth (the “Town”) employees with information about the proper use of social media.

- 1.1** In general, what you do on your own time is your own business. However, activities in or outside of work that affect your job performance, the performance of others, or Town business interests (including the morale in the workplace) are a proper focus for your Employer. Accordingly, the Town is implementing this Policy.

The following guidelines are designed to provide reasonable guidance for online behavior by employees of the Town.

2.0 Your Online Identity

You are responsible for what you post, whether it is through a work account (an email account or domain name attributable to the Town, and/or uses Town assets such as computers or electronic mobile devices, etc.) or through a personal account.

- 2.1** Outside the workplace you have certain rights to privacy and free speech for online activity conducted on your personal social networks with your personal email address. However, what you publish on such personal online sites may affect the Town as your employer. Your personal postings should never be attributed to the Town, appear to be endorsed by the Town, originate from the Town’s domain name, or reveal any private information about the Town. If what you publish on your personal social networks reflects back on the Town you could be disciplined for it, up to and including termination.

3.0 Privacy

While communication through social media networks is primarily a personal matter, this does not mean it is private. Written conversations inside these networks can often be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, the permanence and transferability of anything published or posted online means that there is a possibility that what you have said may be made visible to a wider audience or taken out of context. As a result, all conversations within social media networks should be considered public rather than private.

3.1 Any information that you learn about the Town’s business through the course of your employment is strictly confidential. Only in very limited circumstances may such information be disclosed and such disclosure must be approved by Town management. The obligation to keep Town information confidential applies while you work for the Town and continues even when you no longer work for the Town.

4.0 Guidelines

- a. Do not use, access, or visit social media sites while at work using Town computers, laptops, tablets, or mobile devices unless you are required to do so in order to perform your job.
- b. Do not take photos or videos of co-workers (while they are on duty) on personal devices, including cell phones, unless there is an authorized reason for doing so.
- c. Do not share, post or otherwise disseminate any information, including images, gained during the course of your employment with anyone unless there is a need arising from your employment or other legal obligation to do so.
- d. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Like in-person relationships, the employee has the obligation to establish, communicate and enforce professional boundaries with clients, business contacts and co-workers in the online environment. The fact that a client or business contact may initiate contact with the employee does not permit the employee to engage in a personal relationship with that individual.
- e. Recognize professional boundaries when inviting “friends” or responding to “friend” requests, or providing commentary online (by “liking” or “retweeting” a comment or actually posting content).
- f. Honour our differences – in accordance with human rights legislation, discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of age, race, colour, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability or mental disability, an irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, ethnic, national or aboriginal origin, family status, marital status, source of income, or political belief, affiliation or activity, will not be tolerated.
- g. Do not post content or otherwise speak on behalf of the Town unless authorized to do so and follow all applicable policies of the employer. Any work-related communication or record posted through your personal social media sites may be obtained and disclosed by the Town in respect of legal proceedings or pursuant to Freedom of Information laws as required.
- h. Do not be discourteous, abusive, threatening, or abrasive to clients, co-workers, managers, volunteers, or anyone associated with the Town. Bear in mind that wrongful use of social media could constitute harassment, bullying, or even defamation.
- i. Promptly report any breach of confidentiality you find online to your supervisor.

4.1 Violation of these terms and conditions will result in discipline and could lead to termination where appropriate.

Clerk's Annotation for Official Policy Book

Date of Adoption: May 12th, 2016

I certify that this 'Social Media Policy' was adopted by Council as indicated above.

Town Clerk:

Date: