

EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The library recognizes the value of the exchange of ideas and information through social media available to its employees. At the same time, however, using social media can cause problems for employees, the library, and its patrons. Therefore, the library expects its employees to use social media in a manner that is consistent with this policy.

For purposes of this policy, “social media” includes all means of communicating or posting information, such as words, pictures, videos or any other content, on the Internet. Such technology includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google+, blogs, message boards, wikis, podcasts, product review sites, online forums, gaming sites, or any other site where information can be uploaded or posted. It also includes comments or posts on another person’s social networking site.

While every individual has a right to speak out on issues facing our community, state, and nation, employees must take great care to make it clear that their personal opinions are their own and do not represent the official policy position of the library. It is important for employees to remember that their personal communications, even those done outside of work, may reflect negatively on the library, especially if they are commenting on library business.

Therefore, the following guidelines apply to personal use of social media by employees of the library:

- All library employees must actively protect all confidential information of the library. As used in this Policy, Confidential Information of the library means social security numbers, personal health information protected by HIPPA, library patron information, and similar types of information.
- In accordance with Ohio Revised Code § 149.432, employees are prohibited from sharing on social media: (1) any information that the library requires a patron to provide in order to be eligible to use library services or borrow materials; (2) any information that identifies a patron as having requested or obtained specific materials or materials on a particular subject; (3) any information that is provided by a patron to a library staff member to answer a specific question or to provide information on a particular subject; or (4) any personally identifiable information about an individual who has used any library service or borrowed any library materials.
- Postings and user profiles on personal social media accounts must not state or imply that the views, conclusions, statements or other social media content are an official policy, statement, position, or communication of the library, or represent the views of the library or any library officer or board member. For example, if you choose to make a statement regarding the library, you should state that “these are my views, not the library’s views,” or words to that effect.

- Employees cannot use social media to threaten, libel or slander, defame, maliciously disparage, harass, or discriminate against coworkers, managers, board members, library patrons or visitors, vendors or suppliers, or organizations associated or doing business with the library. The library's anti-discrimination and harassment policies apply to the use of social media, even outside the workplace.
- Be careful to respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws. For the library's protection as well as your own, employees are urged to abide by the laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted materials owned by others, trademarks and other intellectual property, including the library's own copyrights.
- If someone from the media or press contacts you about your personal social media use that relates to the library, you must clearly explain that you do not speak on behalf of the library and that your comments have not been authorized, reviewed, or approved by the library. If the contact is seeking the official position of the library, obtain the name of the person or company requesting information and immediately contact the Director or the Community Relations Coordinator.
- Should you have concerns regarding your employment or the business of the library, the library strives to resolve those concerns whenever possible through informal processes. Nonetheless, if you decide to use social media to express complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, or bullying. Examples of such conduct include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, religion or similar status protected by library policy.
- 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 matters of public concern. Many considerations go into balancing an employee's free speech interests against the interests of the library, including the library's interests in avoiding disruptions in regular operations, disharmony among coworkers, impairment of discipline and supervisory control, and obstructions in the employee's ability to perform work responsibilities. Therefore, employees should use common sense and good judgment before posting any content on a social media site.

The library reserves the right to lawfully monitor employees' use of social media in openly accessible, personal and business discussion forums. Further, employees should have no expectation of privacy while using the library equipment and facilities for any purpose, including the use of social media.

Failing to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The library also may report suspected unlawful conduct to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Approved by the Cuyahoga Falls Library Board of Trustees, January 27, 2015