



## **Social Media**

### **Purpose**

The Guelph Public Library endorses the use of social media channels as a communication and community-building tool to address objectives that are consistent with the Library's [mission, vision and values](#). The Social Media Policy outlines expectations for staff members and the public for participation in social media channels.

### **Definition**

Social media is defined in this policy as any online platform created and maintained by the Guelph Public Library for library users and staff to share opinions and information about library-related subjects or issues. It can include, but is not limited to blogs, wikis, and social networking sites such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Threads and the library catalogue.

## **1 Policy Statement**

- 1.1 The Guelph Public Library supports the responsible and effective use of social media for Library purposes including:
- a. Supporting and improving customer service;
  - b. Promoting library programs and services;
  - c. Listening, engaging with our community;
  - d. Amplifying important information from community partnerships.

- 1.2 The Library assumes no liability regarding any event or interaction that takes place by any participant using library social media platforms and does not endorse or review content outside the accounts created by Guelph Public Library. The Library does not accept any responsibility for any content that appears on the Library's social media channels that does not originate from Guelph Public Library employees.
- 1.3 As with the use of all library services and resources, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians/caregivers to determine and monitor children's use of the Library's social media tools. The Library is not responsible for enforcing any restrictions which a parent/guardian/caregiver may place on a minor's use of this resource.
- 1.4 Users are encouraged to protect their privacy when participating in social media and should be aware that social media that is provided through third party services may have its own privacy policies.
- 1.5 By posting content, the user agrees to release Guelph Public Library and its officers and its employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages, and costs incurred by any of them that arise out of or are related to the posted content.
- 1.6 In addition to the general rules respecting use of the Library, Guelph Public Library prohibits the use of its social media platforms for any purpose that would go against any government statute or regulation, or which might create civil liability by the user or the Library Board to any person.
- 1.7 The Library may follow community groups, organizations or individuals and may share content from other users if it is aligned with the Library's values, programs and services.
- 1.8 The Library's social platforms are for everyone. The Library does not endorse the views or opinions of users' comments on our social posts. We encourage respectful discussions, sharing diverse perspectives, and posting relevant content that contributes to meaningful discussion. While some comments may be seen as controversial, unconventional, unpopular, or perhaps contrary to the mission and values of the Library, the discourse reflects our commitment to intellectual freedom. At Guelph Public Library, intellectual freedom means providing the tools and spaces to support the free exchange of information and ideas, respecting everyone's right to privacy and choice.

The library will not tolerate posts or comments that:

- are unrelated to Library services, programs or to the subject of the post the comment was made on, or are unintelligible or irrelevant;

- are offensive to an individual (including Library staff) or organization, or are profane (including inappropriate language), hateful or defamatory, insulting, rude, abusive, aggressive, or violent;
- promote, foster or perpetuate any form of discrimination;
- contain content of a sexual nature or links to such content;
- conduct or encourage illegal activity;
- are aimed at soliciting business or for marketing purposes;
- contain spam;
- invade privacy, e.g., share information about any identifiable individual including photographs of, information about, or views and opinions of that individual;
- could compromise public safety, security, or Library operations, including comments that contain misinformation or disinformation;
- violate a legal ownership interest of any other party; and
- impersonate or misrepresent someone else, including public figures, Library staff or officials.

1.9 Use of Guelph Public Library social media is conditional on the user's agreement to observe this policy. By continuing to engage with any Library social media platform, the user agrees to all requirements of this policy.

## **2 Responsibilities of Library Staff**

- 2.1 Guelph Public Library recognizes that employees are committed to high standards of ethical and professional communication and expects this behaviour to continue in a social media environment. Social media is an extension of the Library's traditional communication and customer service channels.
- 2.2 Library staff must act according to the Employee Code of Conduct. Regardless if library staff are off work duty, when you're online, you are in the public eye. Library employees serve the public with integrity, honesty, and respect. Before sharing something online, please consider how it could affect the Library's:
- a. Reputation and trust among the community;
  - b. Relationships with or funding from other levels of government;
  - c. Relationships with members of City Council; and
  - d. Ability to attract new partnerships, donors, and employees.

- 2.3 Criticism of other employees or the organization online and/or in the public will not be tolerated. If you have a question, concern, or complaint about a Library program, service, policy or decision, please address this matter using the appropriate internal channels.
- 2.4 Do not share content that reflects poorly on you, your co-workers or the Guelph Public Library. This includes content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates illegal activity or discrimination based on race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.5 Unless employees are an official Guelph Public Library spokesperson, they are not permitted to make statements on behalf of the Guelph Public Library. See the Guelph Public Library Communications Policy for more information about Official Spokespersons.
- 2.6 In accordance with the Guelph Public Library's Employee Code of Conduct, the Library may take appropriate action in response to prohibited behaviour, up to, and including, dismissal and/or legal action.
- 2.7 Any employee who becomes aware of an online incident or any content on a Guelph Public Library social media channel that contravenes the Library's Social Media Policy Statement must report it to a supervisor and the communications team in a timely fashion.

### **3 Social Media Monitoring**

- 3.1 The Library's platforms are monitored 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. local time, Monday to Friday. If you are concerned about activity or comments on a post, please contact the Supervisor of Communications at [kduncan@guelphpl.ca](mailto:kduncan@guelphpl.ca). Alternatively, users can report content that violates third-party platform guidelines, directly to the respective platform (Meta, LinkedIn, YouTube, or X).
- 3.2 The Library may reply to questions or comments if the post asks a sincere question about a Library service, program or policy or if the post includes inaccurate information, which the library may correct.
- 3.3 The Library may not reply to questions or comments if the post includes respectful statements of opinion, even if they disagree with a Library service, program, policy or decision or if the post is respectful and directed at other participants in a conversation.
- 3.4 Guelph Public Library reserves the right to monitor social media content and to hide or remove any messages or postings that violates our Social Media Policy. If a comment or message violates the Library's Social Media Policy, the Library will:
- a. Hide or delete the post or comment, informing the user of the violation and reminding the poster of the Library's policy.
  - b. If the user continues to violate the policy, the Library may ignore, mute or block the user.
- Violation of this policy may also result in criminal prosecution by appropriate authorities.

#### **4 Related Policies**

[OP-1 Code of Conduct](#)

[HR-01 Employee Code of Conduct](#) (not publicly available)

[OP-11 Accessibility in the Library Policy](#)

[OP-12 Communications Policy](#)

[OP-24 Partnership Policy](#)