

		Municipality of Sioux Lookout Human Resources Policy Manual			
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Section:	Personnel	Policy Number:	3-60	By-law Number	83-23
Subject	Social Media	Repeals: Policy Number:		Repeals: By-law Number	

Policy Statement

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout (the Municipality) acknowledged the transformative impact of social media on the way we discover, communicate, and share information. Social media encompasses various online platforms and tools that facilitate the publication, sharing, and discussion of text, photos, video and audio.

In line with our commitment to effective communication, the Municipality embraces the use of appropriate social media tools. We encourage responsible utilization of social media for Municipal matters. As part of this effort, we have established accounts on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The platforms used may change over time as deemed relevant.

Combining social media with traditional communication channels, we aim to improve outreach and engagement with residents and stakeholders. This approach ensures consistent service and access to information while fostering public trust, transparency, and accountability in municipal government. Social media may also be utilized for public consultations and recruitment of employees, volunteers, and public appointees.

While we recognize the widespread popularity of social media, it is important to adhere to certain guidelines to safeguard the Municipality. Employees, volunteers, and Municipal representatives who utilize official Municipality social media accounts or personal profiles are expected to uphold professional and ethical conduct.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees understand their responsibilities when using social media, both personally and professionally, and to maintain the Municipality’s reputation, protect sensitive information, and prevent any potential legal or ethical issues.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, Members of Council, and public appointees associated with the Municipality of Sioux Lookout, regardless of their position or level within the organization.

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, Members of Council, and public appointees at all times and without exception.

Definitions

“Appointees” includes: individuals appointed to all Boards and Committees by Council

“Corporation” means the Corporation of The Municipality of Sioux Lookout

“Corporate Use” means management approved activity on any social media platform or account that is operated and maintained by the Municipality.

“Council” means the elected Municipal Council for the Municipality of Sioux Lookout

“Employee” means any person that is employed by the Corporation of The Municipality of Sioux Lookout. This includes all classifications of employees (e.g. Permanent Full Time, Permanent Part Time, Seasonal, Temporary, Casual, Student, or Contract)

“Municipality” means the Corporation of The Municipality of Sioux Lookout

“Personal Use” means an individual’s use of social media accounts on any social media platform at anytime for non-corporate use

“Social Media” includes any forms of electronic communication through which users create online communications to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, ideas, personal messages, and other content. These include web-based sites that include blogging, micro blogging, photo sharing, video sharing, webcasting, and networking.

“Social Media Account Staff” means the employee(s) of the Municipality who have been designated to establish and administer social media channels, establish social media strategies and reporting, and to serve as social media moderator.

“Volunteer” means any person who undertakes or is assigned responsibilities, who are not paid, on behalf of the Municipality, this does not include those persons appointed to boards and committees by Council.

Retention

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout will ensure that copies of this policy, including any subsequent revisions, are retained in accordance with the Municipal Record and Retention By-law.

Questions or Complaints

Any questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

Policy

The Municipality supports the use of social media to:

- Promote programs
- Educate the public
- Share information
- Gain public feedback and respond to queries
- Alert the community in emergency situations

The use of all social media sites by the Municipality will adhere to:

- Applicable provincial and federal laws, regulations;
- The terms of service of each social media site; and
- All applicable corporate policies, guidelines, and by-laws; including, but not limited to: applicable administrative, human resources policies, and by-laws

All those that fall under this policy are expected to conduct themselves professionally during work and personal time. Even when someone does not publicly associate themselves with the Municipality on social media, all materials associated with their page may be perceived to reflect upon the Municipality.

Social Media Management Responsibility

The use of the Municipality’s social media needs to be carefully coordinated to ensure consistent use, with messaging and monitoring.

Social media communications will be conducted through a “one window” approach meaning there will be only municipal account per social media site. Department specific or any group specific accounts are not permitted without prior authorization

Administration of all social media tools and sites by the Municipality will be centralized with Social Media Account Staff. Social Media Account Staff will monitor and post to social media sites on behalf of the Municipality. Only staff permitted to post on behalf of the Municipality, will be appointed by the CAO and/or Corporate Services Manager.

Municipal departments are encouraged to identify and provide content for the Municipality’s social media and website. All content must be approved by the Department Head prior to submission to Social Media Account Staff. Any required consent documentation must be submitted with content.

As time permits, the Social Media Account Staff will update and monitor the social networking platforms during the Municipality’s regular office hours (8:00 am – 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday, excluding holidays). Social media platforms may occasionally be unavailable and the Municipality accepts no responsibility for lack of service due to down time of any service.

Posting by the public on a social media site of the Municipality is not considered official notice or an official complaint submission to the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. Unless otherwise noted in applicable policies, contact through a social media platform does not constitute formal feedback or consultation.

As time permits, the Social Media Account Staff will read comments and private messages for:

1. Any emerging themes or helpful suggestions which will be forwarded to the relevant departments
2. Any factual errors (misinformation) to be corrected
3. Ensure comments and messages are appropriate
4. Delete offensive content

The Municipality reserves the right to edit or delete comments and posts that contain inappropriate language, commercial advertising, partisan messaging, discriminatory messages, sexual content, and promotion of political candidates or other material deemed inappropriate. Comments that constitute discrimination or harassment under the Ontario Human Rights Code are not permitted and will be removed.

Strategy

Social media should be integrated with a variety of communication tools and tactics, as part of an overall communications strategy, to maximize outreach. The Municipality’s website, www.siuoxlookout.ca is the Municipality’s

primary source for information exchange with the community. The Municipality will only have one website and the Municipality's website will serve as the exclusive and central hub for all social media networks, with postings frequently directing users to relevant sections of the website.

Social Media Account Staff must ensure that the Municipality's official social media sites:

- Educate and inform the public
- Enhance the Municipality's reputation
- Provide a consistent and professional voice so that residents can be assured the information they are receiving is official information from the Municipality of Sioux Lookout
- Are effectively managed to ensure that they provide timely and accurate information
- Adhere to established records retention, privacy and accessibility requirements
- Have content monitored and updated by Social Media Account Staff
- Are not used to promote individual political opinions or campaigns
- Ensure AODA compliance

Risks and Benefits

Social media presents opportunities to engage citizens and residents.

Benefits:

- Increase resident's access to local government programs and services
- Allow the Municipality to be more active in building relationships with residents, partners, and stakeholders
- Increase speed and responsiveness of communications, especially in emergency situations
- Promote services, initiatives and events

Risks:

- Defamatory comments
- Business solicitations by external parties
- Offensive emotional discussions
- Negative responses to municipal postings about programs, services and events

Conduct

While the use of social media sites creates new opportunities for enhanced communication and collaboration with residents and other stakeholders, it also creates new responsibilities.

Communication on social media sites or accounts should always be considered public and permanent. Online communities are not private. Postings may be accessed by a wider audience than intended or copied by others and posted elsewhere without the author's permission or knowledge.

All those who this policy applies to should not expect confidentiality or privacy in relation to their online activities as they pertain to the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. Posting content on social media sites about an employer is considered publication and not a private activity. All those who this policy applies to are personally responsible for the content they publish online as it relates to the Municipality.

Social Media Account Staff using social media on behalf of the Municipality will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, including:

- Post accurate, credible and consistent information and links. (Department Heads are responsible for the accuracy and relevancy of any information forwarded to the Social Media Account Staff for posting.)
- Link Corporate social media sites back to the official Municipality of Sioux Lookout website for forms, documents, online services, and other information whenever possible.
- Strive for transparency and openness.
- Publicly correct any information in a timely manner that has been communicated and found to be in error.
- Post content in a manner that does not disclose confidential information or release personal or corporate information, without prior consent.
- Social Media content must take the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) into consideration.
- Must not engage in offensive language, respond in a confrontational manner, or post content that is not professional or that contravenes Municipal policies.
- Must not use corporate accounts to express personal opinions or further personal agendas.
- Ensure proper protocols and permissions are obtained for posting any copyrighted material (including documents, websites, logos, images)
- Ensure security of social media accounts is maintained, including password and login information.
- Maintain timely postings on corporate social media sites, updating information as necessary.

The Municipality reserves the right to remove in appropriate, in accurate, irrelevant or unproductive content (i.e. posts and comments) from social media accounts. If the user continues to post inappropriate, irrelevant, inaccurate or unproductive content, the Municipality may ban/block the user from the site at the direction of staff.

Comments, posts, or articles containing the following content will not be allowed:

- Comments not related to the topic and/or issue being commented upon:
- Account spamming, trolling or overposting;
- Posts that are meant to solicit sales, products, or goods and services;
- Profane, aggressive, hateful, defamatory, insulting, rude, abusive or violent language or content;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may compromise the privacy, safety or security of the Municipality or public;
- Comments or posts that impersonate or misrepresent someone else, including public figures, municipal staff or municipal officials;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is not responsible for any comments or use of material posted by users.

External Promotion

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout may promote events on its website and/or social media sites if the Municipality is involved as a participant, host, partner or sponsor. Other area events may be posted on the Municipality's social media sites. Social Media Account Staff will be monitoring postings for appropriateness.

Records

Comments and messages posted to the Municipalities official social media sites are considered transitory records and will not be kept as a permanent record by the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. Information specifically collected as part of an official public engagement exercise will be kept in accordance with the Municipality's Records Retention By-law.

Privacy and Disclaimer

Privacy

Unless obligated by applicable law, by-law, legislation, or to demonstrate negative behaviour from a user, the Municipality of Sioux Lookout does not capture or record the contact details of parties interacting with its social media accounts.

The Municipality does not collect information for commercial or marketing purposes, nor does it sell, exchange, or otherwise distribute information collected.

Disclaimers

Third-party comments are not official communications of the Municipality of Sioux Lookout.

Comments made by members of the public are not official communications of the Municipality and are owned by the contributing commenter. These comments are not reflective of the Municipality's views, opinions or policies.

Violation of Policy

A violation of this policy by an employee is a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination.

Employees of the Municipality of Sioux Lookout

All Municipal employees must ensure the following:

1. You are permitted to access social networking sites on Municipal computers and equipment during working hours as necessary to carry out your job duties.
2. Your participation in any social networking site must not conflict with your role at the Municipality and must in no way harm the Municipality's reputation.
3. The use of social media devices including personal cameras, cell phones, audio recording devices, etc. shall not be permitted to be used by Municipality staff at emergency scenes. (Confidential sensitive information that is intended to be kept private shall not be posted to any website).
4. Employees must ensure that privacy, confidentiality, copyright, and data protection laws are adhered to, and must not make comments that are considered defamatory or libelous. Employees will be held accountable for what they write and post on social media or internet pages. Inflammatory comments, unprofessional remarks or disparaging remarks made about the Municipality, its employees, ratepayers, or vendors may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
5. The use of social media regardless of whether you are on or off duty or access social media at home or at work, any derogatory or offensive comments about your co-workers in social media may be considered a form of harassment.

6. Employees should always represent the Municipality in a positive and professional manner. Employees who are photographed or recorded acting inappropriately or unprofessionally while on shift may be subject to disciplinary action.

Members of Council and Public Appointees

Members of Council are welcomed and encouraged to participate in social media, through their own accounts. All members of Council and Appointees must ensure the following:

1. The Council Code of Conduct is respected.
2. Privacy, confidentiality, copyright and data protection laws are adhered to.
3. There is no use of Municipal logos, slogans, or intellectual property on personal or other accounts without prior written authorization.
4. Any derogatory or offensive comments about others on social media may be considered a form of harassment, regardless of whether you are on or off duty, or have access to social media at home or at work.
5. Always represent the Municipality in a positive and professional manner. Those who are photographed or recorded acting inappropriately and or unprofessionally may impact the reputation of the Municipality.

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout will not intercede on behalf of Members of Council for items members post on their own social media accounts. In the case where a member shares erroneous information about municipal decisions, services, etc., the Clerk or their designate will bring their matter to the attention of the member directly, with the expectation the member will correct the error as soon as possible.

During nomination period of a municipal election, candidates or people acting on their behalf are not permitted to post on Municipality of Sioux Lookout social media sites. In addition, incumbent Members of Municipal Council who may seek re-election in a forthcoming term, may not utilize the Municipality of Sioux Lookout social media sites to post individual campaign related information.