



Social Media Policy

Policy Number: 026

Supersedes Policy #026 - 8/27/2014, 3/22/2017

Approved: 7/22/2020

Authorized by: Board of Trustees

Effective: 8/1/2020 – 6/30/2023

Review Date: 4/30/2023

1) Purpose:

To describe Timberland Regional Library's (TRL) use of social media, and ensure the proper use of social media by agency staff and the public.

2) Scope:

This policy applies to all TRL employees, Board of Trustees, and the public.

3) Background:

Social media tools provide new opportunities to engage with members of our community. We anticipate frequent changes in social media tools to keep connected to our various audiences.

4) Definitions:

Social media includes: online tools, networks, websites, and applications that facilitate sharing information and forming connections between individuals and groups.

5) Policy:

A. TRL's social media sites are created and moderated by designated employees, and TRL encourages and supports employees' efforts to engage with communities served by TRL through the use of TRL's social media accounts. TRL's social media constitutes a limited public forum, and TRL reserves the right to moderate, restrict, or remove any content that is deemed to violate TRL's policies or applicable law without warning or explanation. For example, TRL will edit or delete posts, comments or links that contain any of the following:

1. Obscene or profane content.
2. Personal attacks and name-calling.
3. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or disability.
4. Sexual content or links to sexual content.
5. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
6. Threats.
7. Information that may compromise the safety of the public or public systems.
8. Content that violates the privacy policies or terms of use of the social media platform.
9. Spam and multiple disruptive or repetitive messages.

10. Commercial materials, advertising, chain letters, pyramid schemes, and solicitations.
 11. Possible copyright violations.
 12. Posting or requesting personal information such as last name, age, phone number, address.
 13. Falsely stating or otherwise misrepresenting an affiliation with a person or entity.
 14. Support for or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures (see RCW 42.17A.555).
 15. Any activity prohibited by law not otherwise mentioned above.
- B. Upon supervisor approval, employees may access or moderate TRL social media accounts to facilitate community engagement within the scope of their duties during work time. However, employees may not use personal social media to conduct TRL business or use TRL email addresses for personal social media accounts. Employees are prohibited from publishing, posting, or releasing any confidential TRL information.
- C. Employees are to conduct themselves in a professional manner when communicating as a representative of TRL on social media.
- D. Social media content is considered a public record subject to Washington's Public Records Act, RCW 42.56, and are also subject to relevant record retention schedules. Patrons and staff are strongly encouraged to protect their privacy when commenting or posting. If an employee uses a personal device to post to social media on behalf of TRL, information the social media content, and the information regarding the social media content, that is contained on the personal device may be subject to public record laws and relevant retention schedules.
- E. Communications to TRL on social media do not constitute official notice to TRL or any TRL personnel. For example, public records requests may not be made through social media.
- F. TRL is not responsible for the content that appears on outside links, and when TRL provides links in social media posts, it does so as a convenience only.
- G. Opinions expressed by visitors to TRL social media pages do not reflect the opinions of TRL.
- H. All information and materials generated by TRL and provided on TRL social media are the property of TRL. TRL retains copyright on all text, graphic images, and other content produced by TRL and found on TRL social media. Commercial use of TRL text, logos, photos or other graphics is prohibited without written permission from TRL.
- I. Employees may use their personal devices when accessing TRL social media on work time.
- J. Off-duty, personal use of social media by employees is not prohibited, and TRL does not seek to censor employees who use social media on their own time using
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their own computer and technology resources. However, there are situations where employees may be held accountable or disciplined for their social media activity, even when that activity occurs on the employee's own time. The following guidelines apply to employees' personal use of social media:

1. Even when a communication occurs on personal time and/or away from work, employees should carefully distinguish between postings or comments made in their individual capacity versus their capacity as a person who is professionally affiliated with TRL. If any confusion is reasonably likely, the employee should expressly state with a disclaimer that he/she is speaking in his individual capacity, and not for or on behalf of TRL. For example, if you identify yourself as a TRL employee as part of the posting, you should disclaim any inference that you are speaking in your capacity as a TRL representative.
2. Employees must adhere to the same ethical obligations that govern their behavior while on the job. For example, confidential TRL information or documents must not be disclosed or discussed.
3. Employees must exercise discretion and good judgment when commenting upon colleagues or coworkers, either professionally or personally. This is particularly true when the comments are derogatory and derisive, or constitute name calling or slurs. This is also true when the comments are on publicly available social media sites likely to be seen by other coworkers or the target of the comments.
4. Employees shall not post, share or support comments or other content that negatively affects TRL's operations or ability to serve the public. Prohibited content includes:
 - a. any posting that includes harassment, threats of violence, or similar inappropriate conduct;
 - b. any posting that ridicules, maligns, disparages, expresses bias, negative connotations, or disrespect toward any race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or any other protected class of individuals;
 - c. any posting that suggests that TRL personnel are engaged in behavior reasonably considered to be unlawful or reckless toward public interests;
 - d. any posting that otherwise violates any law or TRL policy.
5. Public employers such as TRL may lawfully impose disciplinary action for speech, even when such speech touches on a matter of public concern, when such speech also impairs discipline or control by supervisors; disrupts coworker relations; erodes close working relationships premised on personal loyalty and confidentiality; interferes with the speaker's performance of duties; or obstructs operations. TRL employees may be subject to discipline up to and including discharge for social media activity that violates these standards or otherwise violates this policy.
6. TRL maintains policies that are intended to encourage employees to report workplace concerns, including our Anti-Harassment and Non-Retaliation policies. If you have concerns about a workplace issue, TRL encourages you to present such concerns through the appropriate channels. Keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing one of the reporting mechanisms designed to address such concerns rather

than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements or content that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that defames or disparages others, or that might constitute harassment. Examples of such conduct might 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, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or TRL policy.

K. Account information for every social media account created will be collected and stored by Public Services.

6) References:

- A. Social Media Procedure
- B. TRL Disruptive Patron Behavior Manual
- C. TRL Anti-Harassment Policy
- D. TRL Non-Retaliation Policy

7) Citations:

- A. Preservation and Destruction of Public Records, RCW 40.14, *et seq.*
- B. Preservation of Electronic Public Records, WAC 434-662
- C. Public Records Act, RCW 42.56, *et seq.*
- D. Secretary of State Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule, Version 4.0 (May 2017)

By the enactment of this policy the Board of Trustees of Timberland Regional Library is concurrently rescinding any prior policy or procedure within TRL that is either in conflict with or expansive of the matters addressed in this policy.
