



## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**Policy #:** 8002

**Effective Date:** 3/4/26

### I. POLICY STATEMENT.

The purpose of this Social Media Policy is to set parameters for the monitoring and management of comments on the Library's social media accounts. Because many Sonoma County residents and other stakeholders utilize social media for news, resources, events, and communications, Sonoma County Library ("Library") has developed its own social media accounts, which help the Library inform the public about its work, resources, events, and mission.

### II. DEFINITIONS.

The following definitions shall apply to this Policy unless the use and context clearly indicates otherwise.

- A. "Comment" means any writing, digital content, information, links, images, videos, or any other form of communicative content posted in reply or response to a social media account operated by the Library, whether public or private.
- B. "Director" means the Director of the Sonoma County Public Library, or designee.
- C. "Policy" means this Social Media Policy approved by the Library Commission, and as may be amended from time to time.
- D. "User" means a member of the public who views, comments, directly messages, or otherwise interacts with a Library social media account.

### III. POLICY.

- A. **Scope.** This policy applies to all official Library accounts on social media platforms. A link to this policy shall be available on the Library website.

- B. **Policy Standards.**

- i) **User Responsibilities and Consent.**

- Posts and comments on, and direct messages to, official Library social media pages and accounts may be public records under the California Public Records Act. The Library will make disclosures to lawful Public Records Act requests, along with any requisite redactions as required by law, including redaction of confidential patron use records.

The Library is not responsible for content posted by other users but will attempt to monitor such in line with this policy, other Library policies, and applicable local, state and federal law.

Library social media accounts shall not be used in an attempt to obtain emergency services. The Library is not a provider of emergency services. Anyone in need of emergency services should call 9-1-1 or emergency services dispatch to request emergency services.

The Library does not guarantee it will respond to comments or messages sent or received on Library social media accounts. The Library shall respond to comments and messages at its sole discretion. The Library will, as it deems appropriate, address or respond to concerns raised by a user about content created or linked by another user in line with this policy, other Library policies, and applicable law. The Library is not required to notify the reporting user of any remedial action.

### C. **Administrative Procedures.**

#### i) **Limited Public Forum.**

Library social media accounts are created and maintained as limited public forums, as defined by case law pertaining to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Library invites members of the public to view, comment, and otherwise engage on its social media accounts. As a general rule, the Library will not remove, hide, or delete comments solely because such comments are critical of the Library or its officials; however, the Library may remove, hide, or delete certain comments that are prohibited under this Policy as allowed under the First Amendment..

#### ii) **Prohibited Content.**

Pursuant to established law, the Library may remove, hide, or delete certain comments on its social media accounts. Comments containing any of the following may be removed from Library social media as soon as the Library is made aware of the comment and without warning:

- (1) *Obscene content*, meaning speech that is without serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value, appeals to the average person's prurient interest, and is patently offensive.
- (2) *Incitement and fighting words*, meaning speech directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless actions and is likely to incite or produce such action.
- (3) *Intimidation and personal threats*, meaning speech communicating a serious expression of intent to commit an act of unlawful violence to a particular individual or group.
- (4) *Defamatory statements*, meaning false statements intentionally communicated to a third party harmful to another's reputation.
- (5) Content reproducing speech protected by copyright, trademark, and intellectual property laws and regulations.
- (6) *Commercial speech*, meaning speech that is an advertisement, spam, or solicitation for a business, product, fundraisers, and other endeavors that are not reasonably related the topic of the specific post or the general operations and services of the Library.
- (7) *Speech integral to criminal conduct*, such as provision of personal information protected by State and federal privacy laws.
- (8) Content that is otherwise not reasonably related to the topic of the specific post being replied to or commented upon, or the general operation and services of the Library, regardless of the viewpoint expressed.

iii) **Retention.**

When a comment containing prohibited content is posted to the Library's social media account, a copy or electronic record of that comment may be archived pursuant to the Library's records retention policy, along with a brief description of the reason the comment was deleted. Once documented, the comment shall be removed, hidden, or deleted, where possible, from Library social media account(s).

iv) **Blocking a User.**

Platform-initiated blocks: A user's access to or ability to participate in a Library social media account may be blocked by the platform for a violation of the respective platform's protocols or rules. The Library is not responsible for platform-initiated actions against user accounts.

Library-initiated blocks: A user's access to or ability participate in a Library social media account may be blocked by the Library as a last resort for repeated policy violations, or if otherwise deemed necessary to prevent further disruption to Library social media services.

D. **Library Director Authority.** The Library Director, or designee, is expressly authorized to make minor amendments to this Policy, including, but not limited to, imposing additional policies or procedures that are deemed necessary for the efficient and safe functioning of the Library, so long as in line with the purpose of this Policy.

**IV. APPLICABLE LAW AND REGULATIONS.**

- A. California Public Records Act, Government Code, § 7920.000 et seq.
- B. *Miller v. California* (1973) 413 U.S. 15 – Defining “obscene” speech.
- C. *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969) 395 U.S. 444 - Defining speech that is inciting violence.
- D. *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire* (1942) 315 U.S. 568 – Defining “fighting words.”
- E. *Virginia v. Black* (2003) 538 U.S. 343 – Defining threats as unprotected speech.
- F. California Constitution, article I, § 2(a) – Providing the right to free speech.
- G. U.S. Constitution, amendment I – Providing the federal right to free speech, as applied to the states under the 14th Amendment.

**V. REVISION HISTORY.**

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**Significant Changes:** Policy on new template.

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