



Title:	Social Media Policy		
Policy Group: Your Government and People	Policy Administrator: Community Services, Programs & Initiatives		
Resolution No. CW-242-2022	Policy Number: CSPI-03		
Approval Date: 2022-08-15	Revision Date: 2026-08-15		

1. Policy Statement

- a) The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward (hereafter "The County") is committed to encourage transparent and proactive communications with stakeholders, which includes using social media to provide an accessible platform to the public about issues relevant to the municipality.

2. Purpose

- a) The objective of this policy is to:
 - i. Ensure proactive communication on major initiatives and issues, with clear, timely and accurate information.
 - ii. Provide an accessible platform to engage the public about issues relevant to the municipality.
 - iii. Guide employee use of County social media platforms and activity by ensuring consistent and professional use that supports the County's strategic goals.
 - iv. Provide context for the application of procedures that oversee County social media use, such as The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward Social Media Guidelines.
 - v. Define clear roles to ensure consistent administration and maintenance of County social media platforms and activity.
 - vi. Ensure the use of Social Media by County employees complies with all other associated by-laws, policies, and procedures.

3. Scope

- a) This Social Media Policy applies to the use of Social Media platforms and accounts managed by the County.

4. Legislative Authority

- a) This Policy is subject to Ontario's *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 19*

5. Definitions

- a) **Social Media** means immediate and interactive online platforms that allow user driven communications, engagement, and marketing. Intended to share information, opinions, and build relationships. As social media platforms are continuously changing and evolving, they can include, but are not limited to: social networks, blogs, and wikis. Includes, but is not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, LinkedIn, Blogs, RSS News Feeds, MySpace, Wikis, Flickr, Foursquare, mobile applications, and other online social groups.
- b) **County** means the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward.

6. General

- a) Maintenance
 - i. Continuous maintenance of this policy and associated guidelines is essential to ensure the needs of stakeholders are being served and the interests of the municipality are being met.
 - ii. The County's Corporate Communications and Consultation Supervisor will continually monitor this policy and the County's Social Media Guidelines. Ongoing maintenance will ensure the County's use of Social Media remains relevant and beneficial in an ever-changing technological environment.
- b) Personal Use
 - i. Elected Officials:
 - As elected officials represent the general population of the municipality, they are encouraged to express their personal opinions, those of their constituents, and their stance on municipal issues. In doing so, confidentiality and respect for the decision-making process of Council should be maintained, even if in disagreement with decisions made by Council.
 - Social Media use by elected officials will not be considered official communications of the County (exception being official notices from the Mayor's office, when distributed through corporate accounts). The Mayor and Councillors may choose to use Social Media to engage with their constituents, but this use

would be considered "personal use". The Media Relations Policy and the Code of Conduct for Members of Council should apply to personal use of Social Media for the duration of a Councillor's term. The potential implications listed below for personal use of Social Media should be considered.

c) County Employees

- i. When using Social Media for municipal business, employees shall post only under the voice of municipally managed pages.
- ii. It is understood that County employees will use personal Social Media accounts from time to time. When using personal Social Media accounts in a private capacity as an ordinary citizen, employees shall consider the potential implications listed below.

d) Personal Use of Social Media – Considerations:

- i. Social Media can be used for a variety of purposes, and some employees use it in both their work and business lives. While conducting County business, employees should only use Social Media accounts set up specifically for work purposes.
- ii. County employees can be identified as such by listing occupational information, their post content, or other identifiers.
- iii. Personal use of Social Media must not be mistaken for official communications of the County. If individuals are identifiable as County employees/elected officials, they should consider indicating that any discussion of municipal affairs or "work" does not reflect the County's position. High profile employees and elected officials should consider including a disclaimer indicating that the views expressed are their own.
- iv. Caution should be taken when referencing any issues about meetings, work, the office, colleagues, supervisors, or elected officials.
- v. Any Social Media activity could generate media attention. As such, employees and elected officials should proceed with caution.
- vi. Precaution must be taken to avoid revealing any confidential information that is privy only to County employees/elected officials.
- vii. Personal use of Social Media on County devices and internet services must comply with the County's IT policy.
- viii. Components of the County's Employee Code of Conduct, Respect in the Workplace – Harassment and Violence, and Progressive Discipline Policy also apply to personal and corporate use of Social Media.

e) Inappropriate content:

- i. The County will not tolerate posts or comments that include:
 - Profane or inappropriate language or content;
 - Personal attacks on individuals or specific groups;

- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
 - Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - Content for the purposes of promoting or opposing a candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election;
 - Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - Content that is believed to be inappropriate in the opinion of the Corporate Communications and Consultation Supervisor.
- ii. The County may ask users to refrain from posting inappropriate comments, or mute, block or ban users for violating these social media commenting guidelines.
 - iii. Posts that include profane and disrespectful language directed at County employees are not appropriate and will not be tolerated and the County will hide or delete the post if possible.

7. Responsibility and Implementation

- a) Council is responsible for approving this Policy.
- b) The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for
 - i. directing compliance and resolving any conflicts with this Policy;
 - ii. assigning appropriate service departments for the application of this Policy;
 - iii. establishing procedural guidelines; and
 - iv. making routine changes to the Policy, as required.
- c) All County employees are responsible for understanding and applying all associated By-Laws, Policies and Procedures associated with the use of Social Media as outlined below.
- d) All Managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees are advised of and understand the application of the County's Social Media Policy.
- e) The Corporate Communications and Consultation Supervisor:
 - i. Provides guidance in the maintenance and implementation of both this policy and the County's Social Media Guidelines.
 - ii. is responsible for granting approval of all new Social Media programs and accounts that are initiated or managed by the County.

iii. will determine the appropriateness of new Social Media accounts and platforms based on:

- a need to reach a specific audience for departmental/project specific goals and objectives;
- a need to meet specific marketing and/or promotional objectives that could otherwise not be achieved through existing County Social Media platforms.

f) Departmental Social Media Administrators will enforce this policy while acting as Social Media administrators on behalf of their respective departments/work area.

8. Documentation and Forms

a) Other relevant By-Laws, Policies and Procedures including, but not limited to:

- By-law 3056-2012, Emergency Plan – Schedule A
- Corporate Communications Plan
- Advertising Policy
- Customer Service Policy and Procedures
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Respect in the Workplace – Harassment and Violence
- Progressive Discipline Policy
- Information Technologies and Internet Use Policy
- Website Content Management Policy
- Customer Bill of Rights
- Social Media Guidelines
- The County Branding Guidelines
- Code of Conduct for Members of Council