

# Bastrop Public Library SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## Introduction

The mission of the Bastrop Public Library is to provide free and unrestricted access to information, educational, cultural, and recreational library materials and services in a clean, comfortable, secure environment for people of all ages. *Because many patrons and other community members are on the internet and various social media platforms, the library needs to meet patrons where they are at in sharing informational, educational, cultural, and recreational resources* (Note 1). However, because there are many and various social media platforms and there is a limited number of employees, *the library is committed to providing positive and quality social media interactions across a few platforms rather than average or even subpar quality interactions across all of the social media platforms* (Note 2).

Social media encompasses “forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)” (Merriam-Webster, 2017). As of August 2018, the main social media platforms that Bastrop Public Library actively participates in include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Instagram for teens, and the Bastrop Public Library Teens Weebly site.

*The purpose of participating in the different social media platforms is* (Note 3)

- *To promote library programs and events* (Note 4)
  - *Secondarily, other community or local library events and programs may be promoted (i.e. Texas Book Festival or Bastrop Lighted Christmas Parade)*
- *To share volunteer and community involvement opportunities*
- *To assist in reference questions and information literacy*
- *To share the story of Bastrop Public Library and its readers and patrons*
- *To promote reading and good literacy practices*
- *To provide quality articles that may be of interest to the audience (i.e. parenting or recycling)*
- *To spread cultural awareness (i.e. Chinese New Year or Dia de los Muertos)*
- *To educate on nonpartisan, political literacy (i.e. information on where early voting is held in Bastrop County or how to promote libraries)*
- *To foster an online community hub in lieu of being able to meet in person at the library* (Note 5)

## A Decentralized Approach

*The Library Director and their designee may appoint any library employee to have access to and/or to create social media platforms in order to post, monitor interactions, delete inappropriate posts, and to curate interest and interactions* (Note 6). *In addition, the City of Bastrop IT Director will have administrative access to all social media platforms for archiving and public recording purposes* (Note 7).

*Employees are encouraged to interact with audience members and to create posts that are (Note 8):*

- *Honest and transparent*
- *Within one's area of expertise*
- *Inclusive of useful information*
- *Professional and do not encourage or participate in confrontation*
- *Accurate*
- *Corrected when errors are made*
- *Responsive to citizens' concerns*

Employees are prohibited from posting the following to any social media platform:

- Information about actual or potential claims and litigation involving the government
- The intellectual property of others, without written permission
- Photographs of employees or members of the public who have verbally or in writing expressed their preference for their image(s) to remain off the web
- Defamatory material
- Any personal, sensitive, or confidential information about anyone
- Obscene, pornographic, or other offensive/illegal materials or links
- Racist, sexist, or other disparaging language about a group of people
- Sexual comments about, or directed, to anyone
- Religious affiliations and/or religious promotions
- Political campaign materials or comments
- Threatening or harassing comments
- Other information that is not public in nature

### **Interactions on Platforms**

*Comments, posts, and messages from audience members are welcomed and encouraged. While Bastrop Public Library recognizes and respects differences in opinion, all interactions with patrons and community members will be regularly monitored and reviewed for content and relevancy (before publishing when possible). All postings that contain any of the following will be removed and the poster will be barred from sharing any subsequent messages on any and all Bastrop Public Library social media platforms (Note 9):*

- *Obscene or racist content*
- *Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language*
- *Potentially libelous statements*
- *Plagiarized or copy-written material*
- *Private, personal information published without consent*
- *Comments totally unrelated to the content of the platform and/or original post*
- *Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion*
- *Commercial promotions or spam*
- *Organized political activity*
- *Photos or other images that fall in any of the above categories*

*Additionally, Bastrop Public Library reserves the right to edit or modify any posts or comments for space or content while retaining the intent of the original post (Note 10).*

*Bastrop Public Library shall also be granted the right to reproduce comments, posts, and messages in other public venues* (Note 11). For example, a response to a Facebook book review may be quoted on a book recommendations flyer that is printed and posted in the library. Identifying information, other than first name, will be removed unless approval is granted by the user.

### **Evolution of Social Media**

Because social media evolves quickly, it is good practice for the employee(s) who runs a social media platform to evaluate whether or not the social media platform is a good use of time and energy. Posting guidelines need to be revised to meet the constantly changing environment.

Due to the dynamic nature of social media and the fact that different platforms attract certain audiences over others (i.e. SnapChat is used more by teens than by middle-aged parents), each social media platform will have its own target audience(s), goals, and posting schedule identified. These will not be a part of the official policy to make it easier to adapt them as platform administrators change and as audience whims and interests ebb and flow.

### **Bibliography**

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