

Social Media Policy Draft

Changes as recommended by City Attorney 10/3/2025

Purpose

The Whitewater Public Library maintains a Social Media presence to engage with the community, promote Library services and events, and share information. Content on Social Media is permanent, retrievable, and public. For the purposes of these guidelines, “social media” refers to any public website or application that enables users to create and share content or to participate in social interaction. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Employee Responsibilities

No Library Employee may establish a work-related Social Media Account without the authorization of the Library Director. The Library Director may delegate managers and librarians to administer and provide content for the Library’s Social Media Account. Employees so designated are required to read and follow the Library’s social media policy. The Library Director may revoke access to Library Social Media accounts at any time.

Use of Social Media sites must be consistent with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies, including record retention requirements. Employees shall not blur or combine their personal Social Media with the Library’s Social Media. Employees cannot use Library Social Media for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or engage in private business activities. Usage of Social Media in violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Public Responsibilities

The Library’s Social Media is public record. All submitted content to the Library’s Social Media is subject to Wisconsin Public Records Law and the Library’s Records Retention Policy and may be subject to public disclosure.

By submitting comments, photos, posts, or other content on the Library’s Social Media pages, patrons give the Library the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display, delete, and otherwise use those submissions for any purpose, in any form, on any media.

While posting to Library-sponsored Social Media accounts patrons may not:

- Post personal attacks, bullying, libel, or threats, or use profanity and abusive language
- Post obscene, sexual, or pornographic content
- Post solicitations or advertisements of any commercial entity, product, or service other than those which are directly related to Library and community collaborations
- Post comments that suggest or encourage illegal or lascivious activity and may not violate any federal, state, or local law

- Post personal or contact information or any private information published without consent
- Post copyrighted or plagiarized materials, not including works used under Fair Use
- Post unrelated hyperlinks or spam
- Post information that could compromise the safety of the public or content that promotes discrimination or hate speech
- Post anything unrelated to the purpose and scope of the account

The Library reserves the right (but is not obligated) to do any of the following:

- Hide from public view any of the prohibited commentary
- Ban people who are spamming or continuously ignoring the Social Media policy from the page or group
- Access, monitor, and read any submission on Library-sponsored Social Media accounts

The Library does not guarantee a response to all correspondence on Social Media. Those requesting immediate assistance must follow normal procedures for contacting the Library.

The Library (and, subsequently, the City of Whitewater or its representatives) is not responsible for any damages, losses, liabilities, judgments, costs, or expenses (including attorney's fees) arising out of a claim by a third party related to any material a member of the public has posted.

Any legal expenses or costs incurred by the City of Whitewater related to the enforcement of any part of this policy shall be reimbursed by the person or group against whom the policy is enforced.

Removal of Posts

Content that is in clear violation of the Social Media Policy may be deleted, hidden, or otherwise removed from a Library Social Media account. If content is deleted, it is documented in a content removal log. If it is determined that a specific user has violated the Social Media policy three or more times within any 12-month period, Library Staff may delete the content, or block or ban the user account to prevent further violations. The duration of the block or ban is determined by the Library Director and is based on the severity of the behavior.

Appeals

For the purposes of this section, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 68.16, Whitewater Public Library is specifically electing not to be governed by Chapter 68 "Municipal Administrative Procedure" and instead sets forth the following procedure to appeal any decisions made under this policy.

1) If a user feels their content or access to Whitewater Public Library's digital forums were unjustly removed, they can file an appeal for reconsideration by sending a written request to the Library Director within thirty (30) days.

- i. Within seven (7) days of receiving the appeal, the Library Director shall review the request, determine if the content violates this policy, and send a written response to the appellant with a decision.

2) The requester may appeal the Library Director's decision by submitting a written request to the President of the Library Board of Trustees for a hearing before the Library Board of Trustees at its next regularly scheduled meeting. This request must be submitted within sixty (60) days of receipt of the Library Director's decision.

- i. To allow staff sufficient time to respond to this appeal and prepare the agenda, appeals received less than seven (7) business days before that month's meeting may be postponed to the next month's meeting.
- ii. The requester will be notified in advance as to the date and time when they may address the Library Board.
- iii. The Board reserves the right to limit the length of the requester's presentation at the hearing.
- iiii. The Library Board's responsibility upon hearing an appeal is limited to determining whether the Library Director handled the appeal in accordance with these stated policies and procedures of the Whitewater Public Library. If the Library Board determines that the Library Director followed WPL's policies and procedures, it must affirm the Library Director's decision.
- iiiii. After the Library Board has heard the requester's presentation and heard from the Library Director, the Board will conduct a vote to determine if the Director followed all policies and procedures in addressing the Request for Reconsideration.
- iiiii. The Library Board President will communicate the Library Board's decision in writing to the requester within five (5) business days of the vote.
- iiiii. The Whitewater Public Library Board of Trustees serves as the final authority and its decision is final.