

## **Social Media Policy**

The Voorheesville Public Library (“The Library”) uses social media to increase awareness of, and accessibility to its programs, resources and services in order to serve its mission. The purpose of this policy is to address use of social media activities including, but not limited to blogs, social networks, online communications, online catalogs, websites, and mobile applications by the Library and its employees, volunteers, elected officials, and patrons. The Library’s social media sites are not intended to be traditional public forums for the general exchange of ideas and viewpoints, but a limited public forum for discussing Library programs, events and materials. The Library does not make its social media accounts available for general public discourse, but rather reserves and limits the topics that may be discussed on social media accounts.

### **Article I. Library – Sponsored Social Media**

Only those employees responsible for the Library’s social media sites shall be actively participating on those sites during work hours. Employees who contribute to the Library’s social media shall present content in a professional manner and shall check facts, cite sources, avoid copyright infringement, present balanced views, acknowledge and correct errors, and check grammar and spelling before posting.

Employees shall not discuss confidential, work-related matters through social media.

Content that is posted on Library-sponsored social media sites is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and records retention requirements.

### **Article II. Employee Personal Use of Social Media**

Library employees have the same right to self-expression enjoyed by members of the community as a whole when discussing matters of public concern. As public employees, Library employees are cautioned that speech made pursuant to official duties is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed a violation of any policy of the Library. Employees shall comply with the following best practices when posting content about library-related subjects and issues on personal time.

1. If you identify yourself as an employee of the Library, make it clear that the views expressed are yours alone, and do not represent the views of the Library

2. Respect the Library's confidential and proprietary information. Do not post information that is still in draft form or is confidential.
3. Avoid mocking, condescending, or otherwise negative comments about patrons in general, specific questions from patrons, or patron behavior on the Library's social media sites.
4. The Library does not endorse, monitor, or review the content of personal, non-Library related social media activity of its employees.
5. Employee use of personal social media is not permitted during working hours except for work-related purposes such as professional development or library-related social media outlets.

### **Article III. Trustee Use of Social Media**

Library trustees have the same right to self-expression enjoyed by members of the community as a whole when discussing matters of public concern. Trustees should comply with the following best practices when posting content about library- related subjects on social media.

1. If you identify yourself as a Library Trustee, make it clear that the views expressed are yours alone and do not represent the views of the Library or other trustees.
2. Respect the Library's confidential and proprietary information. Do not post information that is still in draft form or is confidential.
3. Avoid comments with any kind of mocking, condescending, or otherwise negative slant about library patrons or staff in general, specific questions from patrons, interactions with staff of the library, or patron behavior on the Library's social media sites.

### **Article IV. Posting on Social Media**

The Library permits patrons to comment on Library posts and patrons are invited to share opinions about Library-related subjects, resources and programs. Postings do not indicate Library endorsement of the ideas, issues, or opinions expressed in posts on its social media sites.

The purpose of the Library's social media sites is to inform Library users about educational opportunities, library programs, events (including those co-sponsored with other organizations) and materials, and to encourage dialogue and the exchange of information and knowledge between users and Library staff about these programs, events and materials. The Library reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed to be in violation of this policy or any applicable law. Content that is deemed not suitable for posting by the Library because it is not topically related to the particular subject being commented on, or is deemed prohibited based on the criteria defined below, shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason(s) the specific content was deleted. Content and comments on the Library's social media accounts containing any of the following forms of content and postings shall not be allowed:

1. Obscenity or pornography

2. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, age, gender, marital status, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, ancestry, or any other protected category.
3. Slanderous, libelous, threatening or defamatory statements.
4. Copyrighted or trademarked material.
5. Content not related to Library business, programs, events, resources and materials.
6. Advertising or sale of merchandise or services; or
7. Political campaigning
8. Commercial or charitable solicitations, with the exception of promoting functions and fundraising by the Friends of the Voorheesville Public Library.

#### **Article V.**

The Library, its employees, agents and officials assume no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from participation in Library-sponsored social media. Violations of this policy by employees may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

#### **Article VI. Public Participation**

This article states what the public should be aware of when posting comments on a Library social media site.

**By joining, utilizing and/or posting on the Library's social media sites, you agree to comply with this Policy, and the Library's Policy on Internet and Computer Use, as applicable. The Library's Social Media Policy applies whether or not a patron chooses to post comments using a computer at the Library or when posting from any other computer to any Library social media site. While the Library encourages dialogue, it respectfully requests that commenters be mindful that its social media sites are open to the public and that commenters be courteous and civil toward one another.**

**Postings on a Library social media site are public records and shall be treated as such. Patrons should be aware that they may be held personally liable for commentary that is defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous by any offended party, not just the Library.**