

Title: *Social Media Policy*

Effective Date: 2/19/25

Authorized By: Library Board of Trustees

Date of Last Revision: 2/19/25

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media sites as a means of engaging with patrons, promoting events and services, and showcasing the Library. The Library's social media sites are not intended to be public forums for the general exchange of ideas and viewpoints, but a limited forum for the presentation of Library-related information.

In its use of social media, the Huntington City-Township Public Library (HCTPL) will:

- Maintain the highest levels of accuracy, objectivity, and impartiality in the information that we communicate
- Provide accessible and inclusive services
- Respond to questions and concerns
- Respect freedom of speech and difference of opinion while protecting staff and users from offensive, abusive, racist, or otherwise inappropriate speech

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy, "social media" is understood to be electronic communication through which users create or interact in online spaces to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. Social media includes any online forum through which HCTPL has an account and interacts with other users.

Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

For the purposes of this policy, "comments" include information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of content posted by an individual or a representative of the library.

Administrative Guidelines:

- Library social media communications and sites will be clearly identified as belonging to, and representing, HCTPL.

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- All HCTPL social media sites are subject to administrative oversight by the Library Director or their designee, the Communications Team.
- The Communications Team will monitor content on Library social media sites to ensure adherence to both the Library's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Library.
- The Communications Team will monitor social media posts and comments from outside the library to identify any items that may affect the Library. These posts or comments should be reported to the Library Director.
- Staff assigned as social media administrators should take care to ensure that they are liking and posting things under the official account.
- All Library social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
- Library staff should protect patron privacy and confidentiality whenever possible; however, the Library cannot guarantee the privacy of any patron using this service.
 - The Library reserves the right to reproduce comments and posts tagging the Library in other public venues. By tagging or mentioning the Library in any social media post, users give the Library permission to use their name, profile picture, and the content of any posting without compensation to the user or liability on the part of the Library. This permission ends when the content is deleted.
 - The Library will not sell, make public, or knowingly transfer to any third party any personally identifiable information related to social media engagement with the Library. We will share personal data with other institutions only as required by law.
- The Library will abide by all policies established by the social media site that is being used.
- The social media content of a public library may be subject to an open records, or Freedom of Information Act request and will be archived according to the most current relevant guidelines issued by any state or federal agency.

Library Staff Guidelines:

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- Oversight of content creation, implementation, and strategy is the responsibility of the Communications Team, subject to review by the Library Director. The Communications Team will be the only staff members to post to official Library accounts, unless other specific arrangements have been approved. The Communications Team shall be the primary admin of social media accounts, and the other admin shall be the Technology Specialist.
- All Library staff responsible for contributions to Library social media platforms will be thoroughly trained, not only in best practices for individual social media platforms, but in the mission, values, and expectations of the Library. All social media posts on Library sites will conform to the Library's brand guidelines.
- Employees representing the Library via Library social media sites must conduct themselves, at all times, as a representative of the Library and in accordance with all Library policies. Personal/political opinions, negative comments and inappropriate and/or discriminatory language will not be tolerated. Violation of this policy item may result in discipline up to, and including, termination.
- The Communications Team shall monitor its social media sites for comments requesting responses from the Library. Responses to public comments shall remain factual and civil. Responses to public comments shall not be argumentative in nature. Only the Communications Team or the Library Director will be allowed to respond to patron comments as a representative of the Library, unless another employee is specifically instructed to do so. All responses will be made from the Library's official account.
 - Questions posted by the public on Library social media sites may be forwarded to other staff members for answers. However, no staff should reply to questions on a social media site without the explicit permission of the Communications Team. This includes direct messages and chats.
- Library employees are permitted to comment on the Library's social media posts, tag the Library in posts, and react to Library posts and comments using their personal accounts during their personal time outside of work. In doing so they speak only as a citizen addressing matters of public concern. When a Library employee posts information or makes comments on Library social media sites, they are not representing official Library positions, and should make clear as

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such, unless specifically stating they have been authorized by the Library to speak on the Library's behalf. When utilizing the Library's social media, Library employees must also follow all established employment-related policies and guidelines. Any misrepresentation of personal comments as official Library communication may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- No employee may link a personal account to the Library's official account for the purpose of posting on behalf of the Library.
 - No employee may answer questions or respond to comments from their personal accounts on the Library's social media when they are acting on behalf of the Library.
- Employees should not generate their own graphics, advertisements, or other promotional material representing the Library on their personal sites, but should instead share official posts from the Library's page. Any individual concerns regarding advertising for a specific library event or service should be reported to the Communications Team.
- All employees will immediately report any questions or concerns about social media posts on Library social media sites to the Communications Team.
- Only the Communications Team will be allowed to follow or like other social media accounts from official Library accounts, unless another employee is specifically given permission to do so
- Logins and passwords should be documented for use in a place accessible by all staff with administrative responsibilities.

Public Guidelines

- The nature of social media means that individuals will be viewing and reacting to Library posts and comments. Any member of the public should take care in their social media use.
- Although the Library welcomes the comments, posts, and messages of other social media users that relate to the Library, and recognizes and respects differences in opinion, the social media sites are limited public forums and are subject to review by Library staff members. The Library reserves the right to, but

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is not required to, hide any comment, post, or message that it deems in violation of this Policy.

- Users should have no expectation of privacy when commenting on Library posts or tagging the Library. Comments and posts may be read by anyone once posted, regardless of one's friends, followers, or subscribers list. The Library advises users against posting their personal information or contact information on social media sites. Comments and posts may also be subject to disclosure and archiving under the Freedom of Information Act and Indiana State Archives guidelines.
- The Library is not responsible for the content of posts made by third parties, including patrons, reviewers, advertisers, and others who may post comments. Comments posted by a member of the public on any Library social media site are the opinion of the commenter or poster only and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Library, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Library. Social media users should exercise their own judgment about the quality and accuracy of any information presented through social media by third parties.
- Comments should not be made on topics or issues that are not related to Library services.
- To ensure a healthy, safe space to discuss Library services, resources, and events, the Communications Team will monitor all Library social media sites. Content containing any of the following may be hidden by the Communications Team from any Library social media forum:
 - Obscene, illegal, sexually harassing, threatening, racist, or abusive speech
 - Threats to any person or organization, and any post that affects the safety and security of the Library, its property, patrons and staff or creates a hostile work environment
 - Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or any other personal characteristics

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- Private or personal information, including phone numbers and addresses, or requests for personal information
- False or misleading information related to the Library and its services, and any statement by a user under a false name or any falsification of identity
- Spam or other commercial messages and posts
- Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures
- Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments
- Solicitation of funds
- Any comment, post or other content that violates any person's intellectual property rights, including but not limited to violations of the Copyright Act.
- Any information deemed harmful to minors
- Any post that violates any Library policy
- Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law
- Encouragement of illegal activity
- Any images, links, or other content that falls into the above categories
- Responsibility for social media content engaged with by children and adolescents rests with the youth's parents or legal guardians. The Library does not stand in loco parentis.
- Users are expected to abide by the terms and conditions set by third party social media platforms as well as follow appropriate Federal and State Law.

Photos and Consent

By attending Library events in public spaces, patrons give the Library permission to use their likeness (or their child's likeness) in photographs in print and online, including on social media and in press releases, without compensation to the user or liability on the part of the Library. This permission may be revoked in writing at any time. The Library Photography and Video Policy will apply in its entirety to social media content.

Violations and Appeals

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The Huntington City-Township Public Library reserves the right to deny access to Library social media sites for any individual who violates the Library's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice. The Library also reserves the right to hide posts or comments in violation of this policy. To the extent the Library has sufficient contact information, the Library will message users that have been blocked to explain the issue and notify the person of the action. Any person who has been blocked or whose post or comment has been removed has the right to appeal that decision.

Staff response to any behavior issues related to social media will mirror the procedure outlined in the Behavior in the Library Policy.

Any person who has questions regarding hidden comments can message the Library through the social media site and they will receive a response from the Communications Team. Anyone who would like to appeal for changes to the Social Media Policy, who have had their content hidden, or who have been prohibited from participating on a Library social media page may submit a formal request in writing to the Library Director to have the decision reviewed.