

Objectives: Progressive

Outcome: 4.1 - A resilient, efficient and effective organisation.

Strategy: 4.1.2 - Maximise the Shire's brand and reputation in the community.

Purpose

This policy sets out a basic Code of Conduct and guidelines for the use of social media at the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale for Council staff. This policy is designed to provide a framework for social media used at the Shire, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.

Social media, such as Facebook is being utilised to ensure the Shire is communicating effectively in reaching their target public, particularly as part of consultation campaigns.

Definitions

“social media” is the term used for internet based tools for sharing and discussing information among people and communities. It refers to user-generated information, opinion and other content shared and discussed over open digital networks. Social media may include (although it is not limited to):

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace)
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, Youtube)
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs (eg Blogspot, Blogger, Wordpress)
- Micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter)
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool)
- Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Vod and podcasting
- Email and instant messaging.

Social media also includes all other emerging electronic/digital communication applications.

At the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, social media is used as follows:

Administration Building (Executive Services):	The Shire's Facebook page
Mundijong Public Library:	The Shire's Library Facebook page

Policy

The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale is committed to engaging with its community and staff in relevant and meaningful ways, and is cognisant of the ever increasing and important role of online social media for communication, engagement and interaction.



This policy and guidelines will promote wider and responsible use of these technologies within the organisation now and into the future. Online collaboration technologies are changing the way we work, providing new avenues to engage with customers, colleagues, and the public. They provide new models for interaction and can help build stronger, more successful relationships.

If you are a Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale staff member, employee or contractor, volunteer and are creating, using or contributing to social media then these guidelines are designed to assist you.

Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Provide guidance for the appropriate use of social media tools for the Shire;
- Highlight the effectiveness of social media within community engagement programs;
- Address perceived and real issues surrounding social media;
- Minimise the likelihood of miscommunication or inappropriate communications;
- Suggest guidelines, limitations and parameters regarding use by social media users;
- Provides clarification for the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale concerning obligations under the Code of Conduct;
- Reflects the provisions of the Code of Conduct that hold employees accountable for the consequences of their private actions where they may have a bearing on their standing as a public official;
- Makes it clear that participating in social media is subject to the same standards of behaviour,
- Is a reminder that ramifications of breaching the Code of Conduct when using social media may result in disciplinary action.
- This policy applies to all employees and Elected Members.
- To define the responsibility of staff when using social media in public within the work environment and to differentiate this activity from private use.

Responsibilities

The Communications Department will be responsible for the Shire's Facebook page and all other social media communication tools.

Similar to website content, any social media content to be posted should be approved by the Manager prior to publication, to ensure the Shire is presented professionally.

The Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Shire staff based around a framework of principles and obligations.

Spokespeople/Media Announcements

Employees are not authorised to speak to the media or issue statements on behalf of Council. Social media is considered a public forum, and staff should not post information or statements when they are not authorised to speak on behalf of Council.

**Breaches**

A breach of this policy may lead to performance management or disciplinary action, at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO reserves the right to remove, where possible, content which violates the policy or associated guidelines.

Social media users must also comply with all relevant laws and regulations (especially those relating to identity and representation), respect competitors and detractors and adhere to the Shire's confidentiality, legal and privacy guidelines.

Community Engagement

Social media is an integral component for any best practice communication/marketing campaign.

Use of social media within community engagement should be used to enhance communication between the Shire and its stakeholders. All engagements in social media must ensure the content of any interaction is:

- Accurate and truthful
- Meets quality requirements of the Shire
- Transparent

Content must not be:

- Abusive, profane or sexual language, commercial solicitations or transactions.
- Discriminatory material aligned with age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender, nationality, marital status, parental status, political opinion/affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, race or social origin, religious beliefs/activity, responsibilities, sex or sexual orientation.
- Copyright or ownership protected materials.
- Illegal or materials designed to encourage law breaking.
- Materials that could compromise Council, employees or system safety.
- Materials which would breach applicable laws (defamation, privacy, trade practices, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks.)
- Material that would offend contemporary standards of taste and decency.
- Material which would bring the Council or its stakeholders and/or their reputation into disrepute.
- Sexual content or links to it.
- Spam, meaning the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages.

Confidential and Protected Information

Permission to use copyrighted material must be sought from the creator or copyright owner. A user may breach confidentiality if they disseminate information on social media sites by an employee, associate or other relevant stakeholder may be a breach of their confidentiality obligations to the Council or a third party.

**Social Media and the Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct applies when participating in social media in the same way as when participating in any other media, public forum or engagement with the community. The Code of Conduct applies to Shire staff when participating in social media for official and private use.

Official and Private Use

Whether using social media for official or private purposes, employees are reminded that comments will often be permanently available and able to be reproduced in other media. For the purposes of this guidance, the definition of official and private use is as follows:

Official use: Using social media tools when acting as an official representative of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale.

Private use: Using social media tools in a personal, private capacity.

Remaining Apolitical

Where staff are authorised to use social media relating to the administration of policies and programs of the Shire they should avoid making statements or engaging in activities of a party political nature.

Making Public Comment

- Use of social media for making public comment in relation to duties must follow the appropriate internal communications process and authorisation.
- When using social media for official purposes it should not be used to express personal opinions.
- When using social media for private purposes, staff must ensure that they make it clear that any comments relating to the Shire's activities are not official, and that they are speaking only on behalf of themselves.
- Staff must ensure that any personal comments don't compromise their capacity to perform their public role in an unbiased manner.

Public Trust

Whether using social media for official use, or in a private capacity, staff must not do anything that may adversely affect their standing as a public official or which could bring themselves or the Shire into disrepute. The nature of social media increases the risk of reputational damage through private activities such as:

- posting images, information or links to images or information;
- disclosing one's own and others' personal information;
- engaging in a heated debate or argument.

**Social Media Strategic Plan**

A social media strategic plan is to be developed to provide a framework for the relevant use of applications by the Shire's sections and units. The strategic plan is to provide a clear unambiguous set of objectives for the use of social media and community engagement. The strategic plan will be part of the wider communications activity of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale and will be owned by the Communications section of Council however all staff using social media will be expected to contribute to the plan and abide by its various provisions.

It is a requirement of this policy that the Shire website is the main hub for the Shire's online presence and social media sites used by staff should link back to the main website. No social media sites with Shire activity should be unlinked.

Work Resources

Staff must comply with Shire policies regarding private use of work resources, including their use in engaging in social media. Those policies will have regard to not only the efficient and effective use of public resources, but also the risks associated with their use for private purposes (e.g. 'electronic footprints' which could identify the user as working for the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale).

Open to Scrutiny

Staff must maintain accurate and reliable records of their official use of social media as required by relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

Register and Passwords

A register of official social media sites and tools will be owned by the Communications Section. It is Shire policy that owners of social media presences from various Council programs must create and maintain their entry in the Social Media Register. The register will record the device/platform being used, the name of the principal Council staff member user and the access passwords.

Access to passwords will be limited to designated staff listed on the register and nominated by respective work sections/units. This is to ensure that there is one consistent and professional message given to the public.

Protocols and Rules

Where the Shire has a presence or web pages on social media sites, rules and protocols for participation and interaction with the Shire on the site are to be published and available to all participants.

Facilitators and Moderators

All social media sites where the Shire has a presence must have moderators and facilitators appointed to: enable oversight of activity within the online space; monitor and decide on content; ensure moderation rules are followed; encourage participation and enable an understanding of common objectives for participants.



Fair and Objective Treatment

All communication of an official nature should be objective and courteous in dealings with the government, other Councils and the wider community.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Staff must ensure the privacy and confidentiality of information acquired at work is protected at all times and treated in accordance with relevant laws and policies. The potential scope and ramifications of a breach of privacy or confidentiality when using social media are severe.

Complaints Management

The Shire maintains a separate Complaints Resolution Policy and Customer Request Management (CRM) System and the HPRM system. Complaints regarding social media are encompassed within that policy and any complaints received are to be entered into the CRM/HPRM system and a response determined.

Staff Comment on Local Issues

Shire staff who are local residents and have a specific interest in a specific Shire issue should be mindful of clearly differentiating between their employment commitment to the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale and personal/private interests. Accordingly, any comments on Shire matters may only be made in a strictly private and personal capacity and not by virtue of employment at the Shire.

Equity and Diversity

Obligations on Shire staff to support an environment free of discrimination, harassment and bullying also apply to their use of social media.

Basic Principles

These apply to both personal and professional use.

Separate your personal life from your professional life. Use different accounts or different services for each.

Official/Professional Use

1. Seek the permission of your Supervisor and/or Manager before establishing a social media site for your project or event. This should also be discussed with the Shire's Communications Team to ensure appropriateness, relevance and administration arrangements for the site. The decision as to whether to use a social media site will need to be in compliance with the Shire's Strategic Plan for the use of social media.
2. Nominate an officer as the administrator of the site. Nominate an alternative administrator in the event the primary administrator is not available. A moderator and/or facilitator will also need to be appointed for the site and these may also perform the function of administrator.



3. Establish a project plan for the installation and implementation of a social media site. This should include a communication plan and a records management strategy.
4. Rules and protocols will also need to be publicly available for participation and interaction on the site.
5. Check the site daily for any inappropriate or offensive material and take action as required.
6. Contribute to the site regularly through posts, discussions, links, or photos. The success use of this policy relies on interaction, discussion and two-way conversations and dialogue, not just broadcasting.
7. Do not conduct Shire business transactions, such as customer requests, over social media. Refer the user to the Shire's Customer Service Centre, by phone or email to: info@sjshire.wa.gov.au, or to the Shire's website at www.sjshire.wa.gov.au.
8. Consider Records Management and the requirement to retain records particularly if there is a particularly sensitive issue or campaign to consider.
9. Be responsible for what you write.
10. Your words will be archived and available for many years into the future. Readers in the future may be potential employers, clients or friends and family.
11. Do not share the Shire's Intellectual Property.
12. Use a different password for each site. Make the passwords unguessable. Don't assume that your access is private just because you have to login.
13. Do not click unsolicited links. These often conceal malware, spyware, phishing or other malevolent software used by scammers.
14. Do not reveal sensitive personal information, such as birthdays, children's or partner's names etc.
15. Do not reveal other people's sensitive information.
16. If an entry is made on a personal basis, it is not appropriate to use the name of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale on your entries.
17. Personal use of social media during work hours for private matters is generally not permissible by the Shire. If you are using social media this should be limited to your lunch break and/or before or after working hours.

Council accepts that social media is a reciprocal medium and content on specific issues may not always be complimentary. To the extent that criticism is established as having valid grounds, a response will be provided by the Shire.

**Private Use**

Personal or private use at home of social media is a matter of a staff member's private interests however many of the points above provide some helpful hints on usage.

References

Name of Policy	1.3.3 Social Media
Previous Policy	New Policy
Date of Adoption and Resolution Number	Adopted OCM179/12/17 18/12/2017 Ordinary Council Meeting
Review dates and Resolution Numbers	
Next review date	
Related documents	<p>Acts/Regulations <i>Local Government Act 1995</i></p> <p>Plans/Strategies Strategic Community Plan 2017 - 2027</p> <p>Policies Business Operating Policy (BOP) 2.2.1 – Social Media Business Operating Policy (BOP) 2.2.2 – Media Business Operating Policy (BOP) 2.3.1 – Email and Internet Usage Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Code of Conduct for Councillors and Employees</p> <p>References Nil</p> <p>Delegations Nil</p> <p>Work Procedures Nil</p>

Note: changes to references may be made without the need to take the Policy to Council for review.