



**Section:** Information Technology and Management  
**Subject:** Social Media Policy  
**Number:**  
**Effective Date:** September 3, 2025  
**Last Review Date:**  
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## **Purpose**

To identify responsibilities and standards for the establishment and administration of corporate social media sites.

To provide rules on the acceptable participation in social networks by Members of Council and Municipal employees. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Employee Code of Conduct, Council Code of Conduct, and Respect in the Workplace policies.

## **Introduction**

The Municipality of Southwest Middlesex supports the open and transparent use of social media to further corporate goals and objectives where appropriate. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media tools so the dissemination of timely and accurate information is balanced with the Corporation's need to ensure:

- The use of social media tools does not compromise public safety or the Corporation's image;
- The information disseminated through the social media sites reflects corporate and community values;
- Social media content does not violate individual privacy or conflict with existing municipal policies and by-laws;
- Social media content posted on behalf of the Municipality is accurate, accessible, transparent and accountable; and
- The use of social media by those with a direct working relationship with the Municipality are accountable.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Members of Council and employees of the Municipality (including part-time and volunteer positions). This policy applies to usage during and outside work hours.

## **Definitions**

"MFIPPA" means the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

“Social Media Moderators” means employees within the Municipality who have been delegated to speak on behalf of the Municipality through updating the content on the Municipality’s social media channels.

## **Administration**

The use of all Social Media sites by the Municipality will adhere to:

- Applicable provincial and federal laws, regulations;
- The Terms of Service of each Social Media site; and
- All applicable corporate policies, guidelines, and by-laws, including, but not limited to: applicable Administrative, Human Resources policies, Information Security policies and Records Management policies and bylaws.

All new and existing Social Media tools being used to conduct municipal business will be established and administered by a Social Media Moderator as designated by the Administration Department.

## **Social Media Management Responsibility**

The Administration Department will serve as the centralized resource for the oversight and use of Social Media tools and sites for business of the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex, as well as for the creation and maintenance of content on those sites.

Final approval for the use of existing or new social media and/or accounts on Social Media sites already in use by the Municipality will be the responsibility of the CAO and Clerk to protect the Municipality from the rapidly changing social media environment, the CAO, Clerk or his/her designate may also amend the attached Schedule "B".

## **Social Media Moderator Responsibilities**

Municipal employees who participate in social media communication as Social Media Moderators on behalf of the Municipality must do so in accordance with the following employee expectations and responsibilities:

- Use of an employee's Municipal e-mail address, communicating in an official capacity, or discussing municipal business on corporate Social Media sites will constitute conducting municipal business;
- Social Media Moderators shall at all times conduct themselves in a positive, professional, honest, ethical, and fair manner in accordance with this Policy and related policies;
- Social Media Moderators are expected, at all times, to conduct themselves in the best interest of the Corporation;

- and if immediate response is needed, corporate responses to online postings about municipal related business will be coordinated through the Administration Department.

Social Media Moderators who fail to comply with this Policy may be subject to corrective action or disciplinary action.

Any content that is deemed inappropriate or does not adhere to the 'Social Media Policy' must be immediately brought to the attention of the Chief Administrative Officer or their delegate.

### **Personal Use of Social Media**

Use of Personal Social Media may not conflict with any of the Municipality's existing policies. This includes, but is not limited to: Code of Conduct for Employees Policy; Code of Conduct for Council Members; Privacy Policy; Acceptable Use of Technology; and Respect in the Workplace (Harassment and Violence) Policy.

Posts violating the following will not be tolerated and will subject the individual to disciplinary action:

- Employees, Council and committee/board members must ensure that privacy, confidentiality, copyright and data protection laws are adhered to, and must not make comments that are considered defamatory or libelous;
- As a representative of the Municipality, it is expected that any time a public statement is made regarding the Municipality (including on personal social media accounts), that the individual (employee, Council or committee/ board member) making the statement would be held to the same standards of professionalism that they would be at work.

### **Council/ Committee/ Board Members**

Members of Council are welcomed and encouraged to participate in social media, through their own accounts, while respecting the Conduct of Members of Council, as outlined in the Council Code of Conduct Policy. Members of Council are encouraged to follow the official Municipal sites and to share content.

During nomination period of a municipal election, candidates, or people acting on their behalf, are not permitted to post on Southwest Middlesex social media sites or use Southwest Middlesex resources for campaigning. Any violations of the Conduct of Members of Council, as outlined in the Council Code of Conduct Policy, will be dealt with according to the resolution process outlined in the Code.

## **Records Management and Retention**

Social Media posts on Social Media sites moderated by the Municipality may only be destroyed in accordance with the Records Retention By-law. Posts that are Transitory Records of the Municipality may be deleted from the website as soon as they are no longer needed.

**NOTE:** Third party social media sites are pages with their own terms of service and privacy policies. The Municipality does not accept any responsibility for the operation of third -party social media sites and is unable to guarantee the privacy of individuals who access content provided to such sites by the Municipality.

## Schedule A – Social Media General Terms of Use

### **Purpose**

Unless otherwise stated within this or any other Municipal policy, or in further attached schedules, these are the general operating terms for any form of social networking platform the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex chooses to participate on.

### **Availability**

As time permits, the Social Media Moderator or delegate will update and monitor the social networking platforms it deems active during regular office hours, 8:30a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. The platform may occasionally be unavailable, and the Municipality accepts no responsibility for lack of service due to the services downtime.

### **Privacy**

Unless obligated to by applicable law, by-law, legislation, or to demonstrate negative behaviour from a user, Southwest Middlesex does not capture or record the contact details of parties interacting with its social media accounts. Any information identified and deemed confidential or private is treated in accordance with MFIPPA.

### **Replies/ Comments/ Messages**

Posting on a social media site is not considered official notice or an official complaint submission to the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex. Unless otherwise noted in applicable policies, contact through a social media platform does not constitute formal feedback or consultation. Comments on municipal posts are turned off for this reason.

The Social Media Moderators may read the comments and private messages and ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are forwarded to the relevant department. Southwest Middlesex may issue a general notification to all parties if common messages/comments are received and/or where common topics and requests exist. The usual ways of contacting a department for official correspondence are detailed on the Staff Directory section of the municipal website.

### **Posting and Comment Policy**

The Municipality reserves the right to remove inappropriate posts and comments from its social media platforms. Inappropriate posts and comments can consist of spam, vulgar language, solicitations and other inappropriate content as decided by the Municipality. Southwest Middlesex may at its discretion allow content that is of a factual and non-political nature.

The purpose of these posts must be to communicate one or more of the following:

- a) Information exclusively related to the Municipality, related agencies, or other level of governments;
- b) Information that poses an immediate threat to the safety of the community;

- c) Information regarding positive community engagement of Council members or members of the community that do not constitute or could be perceived as an endorsement of a private corporation or business entity. Posts to recognize community groups and businesses for achievements may be posted on our official social media platforms and website.

Correspondence shall come from designated staff using official Municipal social media accounts, and not through staff/volunteer/Council personal pages.

### **Disclaimer**

Each Social Media site maintained by the Municipality shall contain a disclaimer or a link to one, stating "The Municipality is not responsible for content posted by other Users." Each site will also contain, or provide, a link to the Municipality's Terms of Use regarding site content.

### **Decommissioning**

When a social media site is deemed to no longer meet the needs of the Corporation it shall be decommissioned.

## Schedule B - Social Media Content Standards

The Municipality of Southwest Middlesex's social media platforms are used as an auxiliary municipal information feed, to provide an informal source of information. The operation and use of the platforms is strictly to enhance formal processes, and to provide information that could be a benefit to the community, that may not be within the scope of the formal processes and procedures. The following guidelines are to assist in determining what is appropriate content to be posted or retained on the site.

### **Internal/External**

Content, comments, or links containing any of the following will not be permitted (or, in some cases acknowledged) on any Municipality of Southwest Middlesex's social media outlets.

The Social Media Moderator reserves the right to remove posts/ links containing the following at their discretion:

- Comments that disclose confidential information, or compromise the impartiality or integrity of staff or Council;
- Defamatory statements, allegations, inferences, impertinent, disrespectful or improper matter
- Threats to any person or organization; Comments not directly related to the particular post or article;
- Slandorous remarks, obscene language or sexual content;
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Commercial endorsement or solicitation: includes content that is commercial in nature and that attempts to endorse, advertise or sell the products or services of an individual, business or organization;
- Personal religious content: includes content that promotes an individual's religion or religious service.
- To promote organizations with a political mandate and/or clubs with exclusive membership;
- To support or promote our services geared specifically to activities related to ratepayer or tenant/ landlord associations;
- Promotion of political candidates;
- Promotion of political material;
- Promotion of illegal activity;
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content that is known to or may be considered to violate a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Municipality reserves the right to block/ban specific users from the Municipality's official social media channels whose activities do not comply with the above criteria. If a submission violates the above guidelines, or in any other way is deemed as inappropriate at the discretion of the Moderator(s), the submission will be removed in its entirety from the site.

### **Sharing/ Following Guidelines**

Posts containing information identified above will not be shared. Information on the following will be permitted:

- Municipal sponsored events and activities;
- Municipal services;
- Public Health and Safety (i.e. road closures, inclement weather, etc.);
- Emergency Services;
- Community events and/ or community group events, which are open to the public and where membership is not required to participate in the event;
- Public Service Announcements from other government agencies; and
- Recognition of local achievements.

## Policy Tracking

Date:	Version:	By-law/ Resolution/ Report:
December 1, 2013	New Policy	By-law 2014/093 – Repealed
September 3, 2025	New Policy	Resolution 2025-252