

Policy Number:	CAS-015
Policy Name:	Social Media Policy
Approved By:	Chief Administrative Officer
Approval Date:	February 28, 2024
Amendment Date:	
Department:	Corporate Services

PURPOSE

The District of Oak Bay recognizes the importance of social media as a tool for the purpose of sharing information and engaging in dialogue with the public. The District of Oak Bay employs social media to effectively communicate and engage with residents, employees, and other key stakeholders.

The District encourages the use of social media to:

- Increase awareness of municipal services, news, events and community information
- Further the Priorities of Council
- Disseminate time-sensitive information quickly
- Correct misinformation
- Build relationships and collaborate with the public, external organizations, and other levels of government and municipalities
- Provide another method by which residents can engage with the District of Oak Bay
- Employ social media analytics to help monitor and evaluate District communications

SCOPE

This policy applies to all District of Oak Bay elected officials, employees, volunteers, advisory body members, consultants and contractors.

DEFINITIONS

District of Oak Bay Social Media refers to platforms used to share information, promote discussion, and build relationships online. Social media includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Connect Oak Bay

Personal Use refers to online identity, use, and posting as an individual or citizen.

Post refers to any online content, including but not limited to comments, links, documents, images, videos and graphics.

POLICY STATEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO):

The CAO is responsible for overseeing this policy. The CAO may appoint a designate to be responsible for the day-to-day administration and stewardship of the policy.

Communications Department:

The Communications Department is responsible for:

- Creating and maintaining all District of Oak Bay social media accounts.
- Approves and oversees all official District of Oak Bay social media accounts.
- Responds to requests for new social media accounts.
- Creates and schedules content, monitors accounts, and responds to questions and comments.
- Ensures consistent messaging and branding for all District social media accounts.
- Ensures District Social Media accounts comply with the applicable District of Oak Bay policies.

Directors/Managers/Supervisors/Fire Chief:

Any level of manager or supervisor is responsible for ensuring that employees and contractors or consultants retained by the District of Oak Bay are informed of and abide by the Social Media Policy.

Employees

Employees are responsible for adhering to the Policy. Employees are to report instances of activities in contravention to this Policy to the CAO or designate.

Social Media – District Use

When representing the District on social media, employees are expected to communicate in a respectful and professional manner as a representative of the District. Only employees designated to post content or interact on social media platforms may post as the District of Oak Bay.

The District reserves the right to remove posted content, comments or links from District social media platforms and connect.oakbay.ca that contain:

- Slanderous or derogatory remarks, obscenities, profanity, or explicit content
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public, staff or Council
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates hate, disinformation or discrimination
- Comments that are not related to a particular post by the District
- Promotion of political candidates or parties
- Promotion of illegal activity
- Spam
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

Social Media – Personal Use

The District of Oak Bay acknowledges and respects that employees choose to participate on social media as private citizens. District employees are encouraged to follow and amplify the District's social media channels to stay informed about District activities. While employees may express their views as private citizens, employees will be accountable for their off duty conduct on their personal social media that could harm the reputation of the District of Oak Bay.

Employees should be mindful of the potential risks associated with social media and recognize that the public may hold an employee's personal opinions on District matters to a higher standard than others and may perceive an employee's personal comments as representative of the District.

When using social media as a private citizens, employees must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Blogging or posting to websites or other Social Media by employees, whether using the District of Oak Bay's property and systems or personal computer systems, is also subject to the terms and restrictions set forth in the Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Limited and occasional use of the District of Oak Bay's systems to engage in blogging is acceptable, provided that it is done in a professional and responsible manner, does not otherwise violate the District of Oak Bay's policy, is not detrimental to the District of Oak Bay's best interests, and does not interfere with an employee's regular work duties. Posting from the District of Oak Bay's systems is also subject to monitoring.
- The District of Oak Bay's employees are prohibited from revealing any District of Oak Bay confidential or proprietary information, trade secrets or any other material when engaged in posting. Employees must also adhere to the terms of the *Privacy Policy* and *Electronic Communications for Records Management Policy*.
- Employees shall not engage in any posting that may harm or tarnish the image, reputation and/or goodwill of the District of Oak Bay and/or any of its employees. Employees are also prohibited from making any discriminatory, disparaging, defamatory or harassing comments when posting or otherwise engaging in any conduct prohibited by the District of Oak Bay's Respectful Workplace policy.
- Employees may also not attribute personal statements, opinions or beliefs to the District of Oak Bay when engaged in posting. If an employee is expressing his or her beliefs and/or opinions on Social Media, the employee may not, expressly or implicitly, represent themselves as an employee or representative of the District of Oak Bay. Employees assume any and all risk associated with posting.
- Employees who receive inquiries on their personal social media related to their work or any District-related information from members of the media should immediately forward the details of the request to communications for further stewardship.
- Apart from following all laws pertaining to the handling and disclosure of copyrighted or export controlled materials, the District of Oak Bay's trademarks, logos and any other the

District of Oak Bay intellectual property may also not be used in connection with any posting activity.

Social Media – Council, Commission and Advisory Body Member Use

- If Mayor, Council, or Advisory Body members publish content on social media relevant to the District in a personal capacity, they must use the following disclaimer: “All opinions and posts are my own and do not represent the District of Oak Bay.”
- Mayor, Council, and Advisory Body members participation should in no way harm the District’s reputation, Council’s reputation or the reputation of any persons employed by the District of Oak Bay.
- Mayor, Council, and Advisory Body members are prohibited from posting harassing, derogatory, slanderous, defamatory, discriminatory or false comments about the District, its work and persons associated by the District of Oak Bay.
- Mayor, Council, and Advisory Body members are prohibited from posting or discussing any confidential or other proprietary information.
- All District-related information posted to personal Council and Advisory Body member accounts should direct users to the District’s website and social media accounts for official information.

District Communication Devices and Personal Use of Social Media

The use of District-issued communication devices (e.g. iPhone, iPad, laptop, desktop, etc.) for social media activity must be in accordance with the IT Acceptable Use Policy.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

Employees, volunteers, advisory body members, consultants and contractors who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment/contract.

Unauthorized use of District internet, email, and social media will result in the loss of access, and depending on the seriousness of the infraction, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The District reserves the right to restrict or remove any content from District social media sites that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.

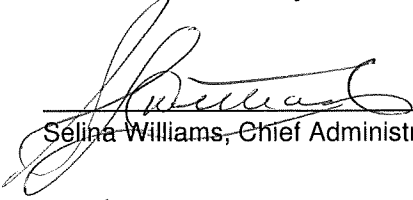
Confidentiality and Privacy

Content posted or received through District social media channels are considered official records of the District. The District will handle any information in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

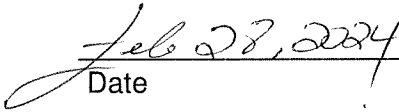
Related Policies

- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Records and Information Management Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy

- Media Policy



Selina Williams, Chief Administrative Officer



Date