



Town of Whately Social Media Policy

As part of the official Internet presence for the Town of Whately, the Town's social media sites will be used by the Town and its agencies for communicating information with the goal of informing the public of the activities, accomplishments, news, and updates of various Town departments. The Town's social media sites are subject to the same rules as other government publications. The Town is not obligated to comment or reply to any response, comments or messages but will moderate comments/contributions to the site by the public to comply with federal, state, and local laws, and within our own policies.

Purpose

The Town of Whately (the "Town") policy establishes guidelines for the creation and use by the Town of Whately, its departments, offices, boards, commissions, committees and/or employees of the Town's social media sites for work related purposes (including but not limited to Facebook and Twitter) as a means of conveying Town information to its citizens.

The intended purpose behind establishing Town of Whately social media sites is to disseminate information from the Town, about the Town, to its citizens.

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures governing the use of Town social media accounts.

General Policy

- The Town of Whately has created numerous social media accounts as a customer service tool for the dissemination of unbiased, factual information to the public. Such social media sites are subject to the approval of the Selectboard or its Designee.
- Only social media accounts that are listed on www.whately.org shall be considered official accounts. Official accounts must indicate in the profile that they are an official site and should include a link back to [whately.org](http://www.whately.org) and to this policy.
- The Town's social media site will be used by the Town and its departments for communicating information with the purpose of informing the public of the work, news, events, and updates of the various Town departments. The Town is not obligated to respond to any comments or private messages.
- Any dialogue or private messaging over social media should be followed with a public version of a post providing the same information unless it is not suitable for public consumption.
- The Town and its departments are not obligated to "follow" or "friend" any organization or individual. The Town and its departments may follow other public entities such as another municipal, state, quasi-state or federal agency for the coordination and dissemination of interest to the general public.
- Any posts that may be deemed as promotion of private commercial interests or political activity or political news is prohibited.
- No comments will be accepted through the Town's social media accounts for any public hearing or meeting, either adjudicatory public hearings or any other notified public hearing. Residents must attend public hearings and meetings or directly communicate with the

deliberative body.

- Comments and messaging cannot be used as any formal notification or request for any public documents or services unless it is referring to information already posted on www.whately.org.
- Content posted to social media is subject to Massachusetts Public Records Law, including, but not limited to a page's list of subscribers/followers, posted communication and communication submitted for posting.
- The Town is responsible solely for the content uploaded to the official Town accounts, and not for any related or "suggested" videos, linked photos linked from other users, nor for any advertising or other content contained on the relevant platform.
- The Town's social media accounts are not open forums and are limited to the subject matter posted by the various town departments.

Monitoring

The Town expressly reserves the right to remove from public view any post, comment, photo, web/internet link or remark that does not conform with the terms of this Policy or contains the following content from the social media site.

- Content violates the host site's terms of use or policy
- Comments not topically related to the particular social media article or thread
- Content that is abusive, defamatory or disparages an individual or potentially libelous statements
- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language
- Comments in support of or in opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures
- Profane language or content
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of any protected class under state or federal law
- Sexual content
- Religious content
- Solicitations of commerce
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Personal and private information
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party
- Comments or hyperlinks unrelated to posted information
- Commercial promotions or spam content

Primary Use by Employees

The Town's social media sites shall be used to communicate the following:

- Announcements about departmental or community items of interest

- Emergency notifications
- Highlighting of Town events and activities
- Provision of historical and/or current information relative to the Department or Town of Whately
- To direct the public to content on www.whately.org

Employees whom have been approved to communicate through the Town's social media sites shall also adhere to the following:

- Employees representing the Town on the Town's social media sites shall always conduct themselves as a professional representative of the Town and in accordance with all Town policies.
- Any employee authorized to post information on any of the Town's social media sites shall review, be familiar with and comply with the guidelines of this policy.
- Any employee authorized to post information on any of the Town's social media sites shall not express his/her own personal views or concerns through such postings. Postings shall only reflect the views of the Town.
- Town social media sites shall use authorized Town contact information for account set-up, monitoring and access. The use of personal e-mail accounts or phone numbers by any Town employee is not allowed for the purpose of setting-up, monitoring or accessing a Town social media site.
- Employees may remove posts from public view in order to adhere to the monitoring guidelines as indicated in this policy. If a deletion from the Social Media platform is necessary to remove from public view, employees are required to document the original post, the date of deletion and the reason the post was deleted from the platform. It is the employees' responsibility to retain and maintain all deletion logs affiliated with their department's accounts.

Policy Changes

The Town reserves the right to change, modify or amend all or part of this policy at any given time.

Adopted by the Whately Selectboard on December 9, 2020