



## BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CATEGORY: Public Relations #1

POLICY REPLACING: New

SUBJECT: Social Media

BOARD APPROVAL DATE: April 14, 2015

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### RATIONALE

Social media has augmented the way individuals and organizations communicate. Bracebridge Public Library welcomes online communication and respects differences in opinions.

Bracebridge Public Library regards online social media in the same way as its other information resources and services. In keeping with its Purpose, Principles, Policies and Procedures and as enunciated in the Principles: *Meeting the Future* and *Collaboration*, the Library recognizes the value in social networking to connect with library users and the public by providing online information, resources and interaction beyond the physical library.

As with more traditional resources, the Library does not act in place of or in the absence of a parent. The Library is not responsible for enforcing any restrictions which a parent or guardian may place on a minor's use of this resource.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Social media:** Social media is defined as any web application, site or account created and maintained by Bracebridge Public Library to facilitate an environment for library staff, library users and the public to share information and observations about library-related subjects or issues.

**Copyright:** Copyright protects the right of an author to control the reproduction and use of any creative expression that has been fixed in tangible form, such as literary works, graphical works, photographic works, audiovisual works, electronic works and musical works. It is illegal to reproduce and use copyrighted material through social media channels without the permission of the copyright owner.

If content is downloaded off the Internet, and then uploaded to a social media account, it is considered as being hosted by that account. This distinction is important because it is generally illegal to host copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

**Library relationships:** These relationships include but are not limited to connections to Town Council and other levels of government, the public, community partners, vendors, local businesses.

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### CODE OF CONDUCT ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Bracebridge Public Library has a Code of Conduct for those physically present in the library. This Code of Conduct on Social Media Sites applies to online interactions. Online postings must be respectful, courteous and appropriate. Persons posting to the Library's Social Media websites, as well as authorized Library staff, will follow these additional, but not exhaustive, rules of conduct.

- Users of the website will be honest about their identities.
- Facts that are posted should be accurate. If an error has been made, it should be corrected quickly. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible.



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- Because no posting to a website is private but can be retrieved by search engines years later, consider carefully what is written and the tone of the message.
- If you discuss a situation involving individuals on a social-media site, whether positive or negative, be sure that they cannot be identified. We request that any comments regarding specific staff or Board members be emailed to the CEO or Library Board Chair. Addresses are available on the Library website [www.bracebridgelibrary.ca](http://www.bracebridgelibrary.ca)

While not an exhaustive list, online postings may not include:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libelous statements
- Copyrighted or plagiarized material
- Private, personal information or images published without consent
- Confidential information which includes but is not limited to legal matters that are not public knowledge; financial information that would not be available in an annual report; business processes; contractual agreements with vendors, third parties, consultants; and employment-related information
- Comments or hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion or Library
- Commercial and political promotions, or spam

### **TERMS OF USE, CONSEQUENCES AND OVERSIGHT**

Bracebridge Public Library prohibits the use of its social media sites for any purpose which would contravene any legislation or government regulation, such as the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Criminal Code of Canada or which might create civil liability, for example, in matters of libel and slander. Users are reminded that ignorance of the law is no excuse. By posting content, the user agrees to indemnify Bracebridge Public Library, its Board Members and staff from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages and costs (including attorney's fees) incurred by any of them which arise out of or are related to the posted comment. If any user does not agree to these terms, they are not to use the service, as violation of the terms can lead to legal liability.

All social media sites affiliated with the Library will be regularly screened by Library staff. All postings which contravene the Code of Conduct on Social Media will be immediately removed and the individual who has posted the material may be barred from posting any subsequent messages to Library social media sites.

The Library also reserves the right to reproduce uncopyrighted comments, posts and messages in other public venues. Response to queries and posts will take place in a timely fashion.

Patrons are encouraged to protect their privacy when participating in online public forums. Bracebridge Public Library is committed to protecting patron privacy; however, patron privacy does not extend to public forums, including social media applications where a user may choose to identify himself/herself as a patron of Bracebridge Public Library. By posting content in a public forum, the user acknowledges that he or she may forfeit any expectation of patron privacy.



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### **COPYRIGHT**

**Those posting to the Bracebridge Public Library social media sites must follow copyright law.**

### **STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS AND THE LIBRARY'S SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

When posting on the Library's social media sites, staff and Board members must follow all the previously stated guidelines and restrictions.

Staff members designated to officially speak on behalf of the Library on social media do so under the supervision of the Library CEO. The Library Board speaks as one voice, with the Board Chair or their designate speaking on behalf of the Board.

### **STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR PERSONAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SITES**

Staff and Board members of Bracebridge Public Library must not represent or be perceived to represent the Library on their personal social media and communication sites. They must not use Bracebridge Public Library's name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party or candidate, or pretend to be someone else and post about the Library. Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced back to their authors.

Staff who utilize social media in such a manner that it damages the reputation or goals of the Library or compromises Library relationships may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Board members who utilize social media in the same manner, may be subject to consequences up to and including those specified in the Ontario Municipal Act Section 223. Such actions may include but are not limited to, comments of a harassing or discriminatory nature, or breaches of confidentiality.

- **Disclaimer.** A common practice among individuals who write about the field in which they work is to include a disclaimer on their site, usually on their "About Me" page or in the footer. If library issues are discussed on a personal social media site, it is suggested that a sentence similar to this be included: "*The views expressed on this (blog, website, forum) are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Bracebridge Public Library.*" Be aware that if you identify your affiliation with Bracebridge Public Library, readers will associate you with the Library even with a disclaimer that your views are your own. Be careful about what you post.

### **RELATED DOCUMENTATION:**

Bracebridge Public Library Guiding Principles (2013)

Canadian Copyright Act

Ontario Municipal Act (2001)

PREVIOUS REVISIONS: None

ADAPTED FROM: Ottawa Public Library, Toronto Public Library, other Canadian Public libraries and Red Deer College Library