



Section: Administration

Policy: A09-CORP-001 Social Media

Effective Date: April 18, 2024

Revised Date:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy outlines the responsibilities for authorizing, establishing, and managing corporate social media platforms. Additionally, it establishes usage guidelines within the Township of Malahide organization.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The Township's website is the primary source of online information exchange with the public and is the Township's official internet presence. The Township supports the open and transparent use of social media to further corporate goals and objectives where appropriate. The Township leverages social media platforms to facilitate engagement and communication by sharing information with the public and other audiences.
- 2.2 This Policy outlines guidelines for utilizing social media tools to maintain a balance between sharing timely and accurate information while adhering to the Corporation's need to ensure:
- a) The use of social media tools does not compromise public safety or the Corporation's image;
 - b) The information disseminated through the social media sites on behalf of the Township reflects corporate and community values;
 - c) Social media content does not violate individual privacy or conflict with existing municipal policies and by-laws; and
 - d) Social media content maintains the highest levels of accuracy, objectivity, transparency and impartiality in the information communicated.

3. Policy Compliance

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all municipal employees, council members and individuals who represent the Township, specifically in the role of a social media coordinator. The social media coordinator is tasked with updating content on the Township's social media platforms and pages

4. Site Administration

- 4.1 The use of all Social Media sites by the Municipality will adhere to:
- a) Applicable provincial and federal laws, regulations;
 - b) The Terms of Service of each Social Media site; and
 - c) All applicable corporate policies, guidelines, and by-laws, including, but not limited to: applicable Administrative and Human Resources policies, Information Security policies and Records Management policies and bylaws.

5. Social Media Management Responsibility

- 5.1 The Clerk will serve as the centralized resource for the oversight and use of social media platforms for business of the Township of Malahide, as well as for the creation and maintenance of content on those sites. The administrative staff of each department will also assist with the creation of content for social media platforms. Municipal employees acting as social media coordinators for the Township must adhere to the guidelines of this policy.
- 5.2 Final approval for the use of existing or new social media accounts by the Township will be the responsibility of the CAO and Clerk to protect the Township from the rapidly changing social media environment, the CAO, Clerk or his/her designate may also amend the attached Schedule 'B' and Schedule 'C'.
- 5.3 All social media sites affiliated with the Township will be regularly screened by Township employees. All postings which are deemed to be inappropriate as outlined in Schedule B will be removed at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.4 Any content that is deemed inappropriate or does not adhere to this Policy must be immediately brought to the attention of the Clerk and or CAO.

6. Personal Use of Social Media

- 6.1 Employees are encouraged to follow the Township's social media accounts and use their personal accounts to share positive stories about their coworkers, programs and services.

- 6.2 Even if employees do not identify themselves as Township of Malahide employees on their personal websites, blogs or social media profiles, employees must act according to the Township's Code of Conduct.
- 6.3 The Township does not expect or encourage employees to deliver customer service on behalf of the Township using personal accounts. If there are questions about Township programs or services, they should be directed through social media, the Township website, by phone, or via email.
- 6.4 The Township does not expect or encourage employees to use personal accounts to respond to questions or comments about Township programs, services, decisions or policies on media websites, people's blogs, community-run social media groups or pages, or other public forums.
- 6.5 When employees are online, they are in public and are expected to serve the public with integrity, honesty and respect. Employees must not share private or confidential information, or any other content that reflects poorly on them, their co-workers or the Township of Malahide.
- 6.6 Opinions expressed on an employee's personal website, blog and/or social media account do not reflect the official position of the Township of Malahide.

7.Council/Committee/ Board Members

- 7.1 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 official Municipal sites and to share content.

8.Records Management and Retention

- 8.1 Social Media posts on Social Media sites moderated by the Township may only be destroyed in accordance with the Records Retention By-law. Posts that are considered to be Transitory Records of the Municipality may be deleted/ purged from the website as soon as they are no longer needed.
- 8.2 Third-party social media sites are private businesses with their own terms of service and privacy policies. The Township 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 Township.

SCHEDULE 'A' – Social Media General Terms of Use

Availability

As time permits, the social media coordinator or delegate will update and monitor active social networking platforms during regular office hours, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, Monday to Friday. The Township may schedule promotional messages after business hours or on weekends. The platform may occasionally be unavailable and the Municipality accepts no responsibility for lack of service due to downtime of the service.

Privacy

Unless obligated to by applicable law, by-law, legislation, or to demonstrate negative behaviour from a user, Malahide Township 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.

Social Media Coordinator

Designated staff will respond where applicable to appropriate comments and inquiries (as per the subsequent section of this policy) that are generated by the public as a result of content posted on social media sites used by the Township during business hours. Every attempt for a timely response will be made.

Staff are expected to always act in the best interest of the Township, demonstrating a positive, professional, honest, ethical, and fair demeanour that aligns with this policy and associated policies.

Posting and Comment Policy

Posting on a social media site does not constitute official notice or an official complaint submission to the Township of Malahide. Unless otherwise noted in applicable policies, contact through a social media platform does not constitute formal feedback or consultation.

The standard method to communicate with the Township is to contact staff by either phone or via email. The contact information is available on the municipal website, in the "Contact Us" section.

The Township **may reply** to questions or comments if:

- the post asks a sincere question about a Township service, program or policy
- the post includes inaccurate information – the Township may provide a correction

The Township **may not reply** to questions or comments if:

- the post includes respectful statements of opinion – people are welcome to express their views even if they disagree with Township policies, programs or decisions
- the post is respectful, and directed at other participants in the conversation

The Township of Malahide reserves the right to remove inappropriate posts and comments from its social media platforms. Inappropriate posts and comments are outlined in 'Schedule B'.

Disclaimer

The Township is not responsible for comments made by subscribers or members related to its social media applications.

Decommissioning

If a social media platform no longer fulfills the Corporation's requirements, it will be decommissioned.

SCHEDULE 'B' - Social Media Content Standard Guidelines

Introduction

Malahide's social media channels serve as an additional source of municipal information, aiming to offer an informal source of information. The platforms are operated with the sole purpose of complementing formal procedures and sharing valuable community information, that may not be within the scope of the formal processes and procedures. The provided guidelines aim to help identify suitable content for posting or keeping on the site.

Internal/External

The Township invites people impacted by and interested in our work to post, share, discuss and debate the subjects of Township posts on its social channels with the Township and each other while treating each other with respect.

The Township will not tolerate posts or comments that:

- are unrelated to Township services, programs, or projects or to the subject of the post the comment was made on, or are unintelligible or irrelevant;
- are offensive to an individual (including Township staff or a representative of the Township) or organization, or are profane (including inappropriate language), hateful or defamatory, insulting, rude, abusive, aggressive, or violent;
- promote, foster or perpetuate any form of discrimination;
- contain content of a sexual nature or links to such content;
- conduct or encourage illegal activity;
- are aimed at soliciting business or for marketing purposes;
- contain spam;
- invade privacy, e.g., share information about any identifiable individual including photographs of, information about, or views and opinions of that individual;
- could compromise public safety, security, or Township operations, including comments that contain misinformation or disinformation;
- violate a legal ownership interest of any other party;
- impersonate or misrepresent someone else, including public figures, Township staff, or Township officials; and
- do not add to the normal flow of conversation, dialogue, or debate

The Township of Malahide is not responsible for any use of Township content or materials by other users.

The Township may ask users to refrain from posting inappropriate comments, or mute, block or ban users for violating these social media commenting guidelines

Sharing/Following Guidelines

Posts for the purposes listed below will be permitted, including but not limited to:

- 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

SCHEDULE 'C' - Social Media

Social Media Accounts

Malahide Social Media Accounts

The Township of Malahide will utilize the following social media platforms:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- X (formerly Twitter)

*This list can be adjusted by the CAO and Clerk as they will keep updated on developments and determine whether to create new social media accounts for the Township to ensure its presence remains current in the ever-evolving social media landscape.