



Policy #	TITLE	Effective Date
8002	Social Media Policy	10/4/23

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

Because many Sonoma County residents and other stakeholders utilize social media for news, resources, events, and communications, Sonoma County Library ("Library") has developed its own social media accounts, which help the Library inform the public about its work, resources, events, and mission. The purpose of this policy is to set parameters for the monitoring and management of comments on the Library's social media accounts.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- **“Social media”** is defined as digital content created or utilized by the Library and communicated on a platform that allows viewing, sharing, commenting, or engagement from the public. Examples of social media on which the Library may maintain an account and use include, but are not limited to, Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, NextDoor, TikTok, and LinkedIn.
- **“Comment”** is defined as any writing, digital content, information, links, images, videos, or any other form of communicative content posted in reply or response to a social media account operated by the Library, whether public or private.
- **“User”** is defined as a member of the public who views, comments, directly messages, or otherwise interacts with a Library social media account.

## III. POLICY

### A. Scope.

This policy applies to all social media used by the Library. A link to this policy shall be available on the Library website.

### B. User Responsibilities and Consent.

By engaging with Library social media, a user acknowledges and consents that Library social media posts and all associated comments and replies to those posts as well as any direct or private messages sent to the Library may be public records subject to disclosure without notice to the user. (See, California Public Records Act, Government

Code, § 7920.000 et seq.) A user also acknowledges and consents that the Library is not responsible for content posted by other users but will attempt to monitor such in line with this policy, other Library policies, and applicable local, state and federal law.

Library social media accounts shall not to be used in an attempt to obtain emergency services. The Library is not a provider of emergency services. Anyone in need of emergency services should call 9-1-1.

The Library does not guarantee it will respond to comments or messages sent or received on Library social media accounts. The Library shall respond to comments and messages at its sole discretion. The Library will, as it deems appropriate, address or respond to concerns raised by a user about content created or linked by another user in line with this policy, other Library policies, and applicable law. The Library is not required to notify the reporting user of any remedial action.

### **C. Limited Public Forum.**

Library social media accounts are created and maintained as limited public forums, as defined by case law pertaining to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Library invites members of the public to view, comment, and otherwise engage on its social media accounts. As a general rule, the Library will not remove, hide, or delete comments solely because such comments are critical of the Library or its officials, however, the First Amendment and case law permits the Library to remove, hide, or delete certain comments for being unprotected or permissibly regulated.

### **D. Prohibited Content.**

Pursuant to established law, the Library may remove, hide, or delete certain comments on its social media accounts. Comments containing any of the following may be removed from Library social media as soon as the Library is made aware of the comment and without warning:

- *Obscene content*, meaning speech that appeals to the average person's prurient interest, is patently offensive, and lacks serious value
- *Incitement and fighting words*, meaning speech directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless actions and is likely to incite or produce such action
- *Intimidation and personal threats*, meaning speech communicating a serious expression of intent to commit an act of unlawful violence to a particular individual or group
- *Defamatory statements*, meaning false statements intentionally communicated to a third party harmful to another's reputation
- Content reproducing speech protected by copyright, trademark, and intellectual property laws and regulations
- *Commercial speech*, including solicitation of funds, links to products, and reference to businesses or business endeavors
- *Speech integral to criminal conduct*, such as provision of personal information protected by State and federal privacy laws

- Content irrelevant to any Library resources, programs, or mission, regardless of the viewpoint expressed

**E. Retention.**

When a comment containing prohibited content is posted to the Library’s social media account, a copy or electronic record of that comment may be archived pursuant to the Library’s records retention policy, along with a brief description of the reason the comment was deleted. Once documented, the comment shall be removed, hidden, or deleted, where possible, from Library social media account(s).

**F. Right of Appeal.**

If Library staff removes, hides, or deletes a user’s comment pursuant to this policy, the user has the right to appeal. When a comment is removed, the Library shall notify the user via the social media platform that the comment was removed/hidden/deleted, that the user may appeal, and how. The user may appeal the decision by sending an email or letter to the Library within 10 days explaining the grounds for appeal to the following:

Library Director  
 6135 State Farm Drive  
 Rohnert Park, CA 94928  
 director@sonomalibrary.org

Upon receipt of an appeal, the Library Director, or designee, shall review the comment, the grounds for appeal, Library policies, and determine whether the comment was properly removed, hidden, or deleted and issue written notice to the appellant. The Library Director or designee's decision shall be final. If the appeal is successful, the comment may be restored for public view (if possible), or the user will be permitted to repost the comment.

**G. Blocking a User.**

A user's access to or ability to participate in a Library social media account may be blocked by the platform for a violation of the respective platform's protocols or rules.

**IV. REVISION HISTORY.**

<b>Policy #</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Significant Changes</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Previous Policy # and Date</b>
<b>8002</b>	<b>10/4/23</b>	<b>New</b>	<b>Library Commission</b>	<b>N/A</b>