

MUNICIPALITY OF  
**EASTERN  
CHARLOTTE**

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**POLICY 02-2023  
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy is to direct employees and elected officials in matters pertaining to the social media accounts of Eastern Charlotte. Employee obligations as outlined in the in the Human Resources code of conduct. Network Usage Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy and Values and Ethics Guide always apply when using social media.

**INTENT**

Social media is a valuable tool for providing information, promoting awareness of Eastern Charlotte programs and services, and engaging with stakeholders and the public. With social media use becoming increasingly common, there is an expectation that when using social media, employees and elected officials conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their function and role the Eastern Charlotte.

Eastern Charlotte is committed to open and transparent communication.

The Local Government will communicate to its resident using a variety of accepted tools, including its own website and social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube).

Social media intent is providing information about municipal programs, services, activities, amenities, and events:

- To promote the Eastern Charlotte economic, social, and cultural quality of life.
- To further the interests of local agencies, associations, and businesses that support the municipality's goals, policies and purposes.

**POLICY APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all Eastern Charlotte employees and elected officials who use social media for official, employment-related or personal purposes. Social media refers to publicly-accessible Eastern Charlotte government and third-party-hosted social media platforms and sites. This

includes, but is not limited to, social networks, video and photo file sharing, social bookmarking, blogs, micro-blogs, podcasting, and other similar tools. Social media also refers to freely accessible online tools used to produce, post and interact using text, images, video, and audio to communicate, share, collaborate, or network.

The Local Government's website and or social media will provide hyperlinks to websites for:

- Government and educational institutions;
- Organizations with some economic or subject matter relationship to the municipality (including but not limited to those contracting with the municipality, those sponsoring municipal activities or programs, and those participating in municipal activities or programs);
- Generally recognized community or civic organizations;
- Organizations providing information about art, cultural, and sporting activities in the municipality;
- Organizations related to the municipality's tourism industry.

The municipality's website and social media pages will not provide hyperlinks to websites for:

- Candidates for elected office;
- Political organizations or other organizations advocating a position on a local, provincial, or federal issue;
- Corporate or other for-profit organizations unless they fit the criteria stated above;
- Individual or personal home pages.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Employees and or elected officials shall not post, comment on and/or disclose confidential information or matters concerning Eastern Charlotte, or information which comes to their knowledge solely by virtue of their employment and or position. Sharing of information is permitted once an approved post has been made.
- Employees and elected officials must be aware that personal thoughts they publish online, even through use of a personal account or account indicating some affiliation with the Local Government during or outside of working hours, may be misunderstood as expressing the positions or opinions on behalf of Eastern Charlotte. For Individuals who hold elected positions or who work in politically sensitive areas, a policy of this nature does not by itself exempt them from special responsibility when posting online. By virtue of their position, these individuals should consider whether personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing the positions or opinions Eastern Charlotte. Careful consideration must be given to social media which directly links the individual to Eastern Charlotte.

- All conversations on social media networks should be considered public rather than private. Any post, photo, comment, etc. posted on the internet may be permanent despite efforts to delete them.
- Employees and elected officials will be held accountable for what they post online, even when using a disclaimer such as “My views are my own” or equivalent. Inappropriate conduct using social media which may bring disrepute to the employer may be investigated and subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- Social media sites represent the Mayor and Council and are bound by Code of Conduct for Members of Council. However, employees of the Local Government who are asked to update sites on behalf of Council or their committees must comply with this policy when posting.
- No confidential information will be posted to any social media under any circumstances.

### **Employment-Related Social Media Use**

Employment-related social media refers to the authorized use of social media as part of job responsibilities by an employee or council. Employees must receive department approval prior to establishing or utilizing a social media account for employment-related purposes.

Comments containing any of the following shall not be allowed on Eastern Charlotte social media sites and may be removed by Administrators of the site:

- Comments not topically related to the issue or article being commented on.
- Profane language or content.
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation.
- Sexual content or links to sexual content.
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Anything political in nature.
- Content related to non-government related sales, advertising or promotions.
- Comments determined by the Local Government to be a specific attack on groups or individuals or to be inherently political in nature or cause.
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that reveals personal or private information about any particular person or is otherwise protected by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or any other applicable privacy legislation.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- Content that is deemed disrespectful to Eastern Charlotte, staff or elected officials.

## **PRIVACY**

The protection of individual privacy is a concern to the Municipality of Eastern Charlotte and is governed by local and provincial laws. The municipality has created this privacy statement in order to demonstrate its commitment to privacy.

The following discloses the municipality's information gathering and dissemination practices for its website and social media accounts:

*No personally identifiable information is automatically collected about visitors who simply browse the municipality's website or who download information from it. As a governmental agency, the municipality is governed by Province of New Brunswick, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*

*Any articles and any information posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.*

## **POLICY DETAILS & AUTHORITY**

### **Social Media Policy (02-2023)**

Reviewed by Personnel Committee on 07 February 2023.

Adopted by Resolution of Council on 16 February 2023.