



# City of Choctaw Social Media Policy

## **Purpose**

Third party social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are a valuable resource for sharing information with the community. They are a valuable component of the City of Choctaw's overall communications strategy. This policy provides a reasonable and flexible guideline for the use of social media as a communication tool for the City.

## **Policy**

The use of social media sites by departments must be coordinated through the Administration Department and conform to specific standards in terms of content and administration in order to ensure that sites meet appropriate legal and professional standards.

This policy applies to all City of Choctaw departments, divisions and authorized representatives.

## **Definitions**

*Social Media:* Third party website which allow for the creation of content and dialogue around a specific issue or area of interest.

*City Social Media Sites:* Social media websites that are established or maintained by an employee of the City who is authorized to do so as part of the employee's job, and that are used to conduct City business, communicate information or gather feedback from residents or other interested parties.

*City Social Media Content:* Information posted or provided to a City Social Media Site by a City employee or authorized representative.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the Department Directors' responsibility to ensure employees are aware and follow the City's Social Media Policy.

City employees or authorized representatives are responsible for ensuring all contributions to social media sites adhere to the social media policy.

The City Clerk, or his/her designee, and Administration Department will review, approve, monitor, and govern all City social media sites.

### **Corresponding policies**

All applicable City policies governing employee conduct and communications apply in the administration of this policy.

The Oklahoma Open Records Act applies to social media content. All records must be maintained and archived. For more information contact the City Clerk at 405.390.8198

### **General Governance of City Social Media Sites**

The City of Choctaw has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the City on social media sites. Certain City employees may be asked to receive information from or provide information to members of the public and other persons using social networking sites and/or social media maintained by the City. The following general rules apply to such social media usage:

1. Social network sites shall be used to promote the City, City services, job opportunities and City events.
2. All social media sites shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the City of Choctaw and shall have City of Choctaw contact information available on the site.
3. No City employee personal e-mail addresses should be posted on these sites.
4. All City of Choctaw social media is managed by the City Clerk, or his/her designee, unless authorized permission is given. If a City employee wishes to have something posted to or displayed on any of the City’s social media sites they shall contact the City Clerk, or his/her designee.
5. The City Clerk, or his/her designee, and the Administration Department will maintain the usernames and passwords for all social media accounts. Account passwords shall promptly be reset when an employee is removed as an account administrator.
6. All City social sites must be approved by the City Clerk and Administration Department in advance of creating the site.
7. Social media sites must have a designated employee assigned to posting, responding and monitoring content.
8. Employees creating or posting information to a City social media site must conduct themselves at all times as a representatives of the City and in accord with personnel policies.
9. Information sent, transmitted, published or released by a City employee is deemed to be communication by and on behalf of the City. Accordingly, such information must be truthful, accurate, non-offensive and authorized for release and opinions on the City of

Choctaw social media platforms are not permitted unless authorized by an appropriate City Official.

10. Employees found in violation of any part of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
11. Approval is required by the City Clerk and/or Administration Department before linking to external sites to parties that: are used primarily to raise funds through products or advertising of products, inappropriate sites or parties (i.e. information about illegal activities, pornography or sites with excessive negative commentary), are primarily vanity sites, or may raise legal issues for the City of Choctaw.
12. Emails and other correspondence conducted over personal social media channels that are official business of the City of Choctaw should be preserved and retained in a manner similar to other documents. If you receive an unsolicited, official contact through your personal email or social media presence, forward a copy of the correspondence to your official City of Choctaw email account and respond from that platform.
13. If a social media site or any other web based platform used by the City allows for comments to be posted by the public, the City Clerk and Administration Department reserves the right to edit or remove content based on the criteria listed below. The City also reserves the right to turn off the ability of third parties to post or comment, in its discretion. The City's intent is not to create a public forum, but to maintain a moderated online discussion directly relating to topics posted by the City, with language that is appropriate for citizens, including minors, to read, consistent with the following criteria:
  - a. Comments not topically related to the particular article being commented upon;
  - b. Profane language or content;
  - c. 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;
  - d. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - e. Solicitations of commerce;
  - f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
14. This use of social media and web based platforms shall be for the purpose of allowing the City to distribute information regarding topics determined by the City. If any platform allows for posting comments by third parties, then third party comments may be allowed by the City in its sole discretion subject to the right of the City Clerk and Administration Department to remove inappropriate content that is determined to be inappropriate in violation of one or more of the standards enumerated in this policy. To the extent the City permits a web based feature or social networking facility to be utilized as a limited forum for expression, the only content that will be permitted will be responses or postings that are relevant to the City initiated topics and discussion, and under circumstances where such comments and postings are consistent with the standards of appropriate communication available to all citizens, including minors, as set forth in this policy. The following statement will be prominently displayed on all City involved social networking sites/internet facilities:
  - a. "All information posted by the City of Choctaw on external sites is subject to the Oklahoma Open Records Act"

15. To the fullest extent possible, the City Clerk, and his/her designee, and other personnel responsible for development and maintenance of the Records Retention Schedule of the City of Choctaw will develop categories of record retention that will permit the disposal of transitory electronic communications received from third parties on such social media and external website facilities that are subject to this policy on the shortest time frame reasonably allowable. Official materials posted by the City of Choctaw or authorized personnel will be scheduled for disposal on the records retention schedule in accordance with the content of such items. Officials and employees of the City are reminded that the use of personal computers and other electronic communication devices such as PDA's, iPhones, and other similar devices for communication or posting of matters related to public business of the City of Choctaw may subject such devices to inspection.
16. On each social media and external internet site established by the City, the City shall cause a notice to be published that informs third parties that any posting or information submitted by a third party will be a public record and advising third parties that the City reserves the right to suspend posting of information by outside parties and to remove inappropriate material that is deemed inappropriate because it is in violation of a standard set out in this policy.

### **Design and Content of City Social Media Sites**

- A. City social media sites must be focused and limited in scope and topic, and must complement the City's website and branding standards.
- B. The City of Choctaw shall make every effort to clearly identify the official status of the City, Account or Page names should incorporate the department name or acronym whenever possible and should display the appropriate official logo if/when possible.
- C. Information that is proprietary, copyrighted, attorney-client privileged or subject to state or federal privacy laws must not be posted on a City social media site.
- D. A clear statement of intent, purpose and subject matter of the site must clearly be posted on any City social media site.
- E. All City social media sites shall clearly indicate that it is maintained by the City and shall have appropriate City contact information prominently displayed.
- F. All social media sites must be open and accessible to the public.
- G. All social media postings, including the sharing of another organizations' information or content, should not advocate outside opinions, interests, or political affiliations.
- H. Design elements (logos, background images, images) must be official and approved by the City Clerk and Administration Office.
- I. Any employee using social media sites, whether as an administrator or as a responder to a posting, will follow these principles:
  - a. Unless posting or responding as the site administrator, employees must be clear about his/her role in regards to the subject.
  - b. Keep postings factual and accurate. If a mistake is made, admit to it and post a correction as soon as possible.
  - c. Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.

- d. When disagreeing with others' opinions or providing comments, be sure that the comments are meaningful, respectful and relevant to the topic.
- e. Understand that postings are widely accessible, not retractable and retained or referenced for a long period of time, so consider content carefully.
- f. Never comment on anything related to legal or personnel matters, litigation or any parties with whom the City may be in litigation without approval.
- g. Never offer your personal opinion or position regarding policies, programs or practices of the City or other public agencies, political organizations, private companies or non-profit groups.
- h. Routine media requests may be responded to by employees designated to do so by the Department Director using social media sites. This includes information that is incidental to inconsequential in nature like the events calendars, verification of facts, etc. If you have not been designated to talk to the media, immediately refer the reported to your Department's Director, spokesperson or the City Clerk and Administration Department.
- i. Employees who receive a City-related media question on social media sites must immediately contact the Department Director, the City Clerk and Administration Office. Non-routine calls include situations that are of Citywide significance, are likely to result in controversy or relate to an emergency.

### **Public Comments and Interactive Features**

- A. City social media accounts must be set up in a way that either allows public comments or limits the resource to City posting only. The Administration Office's preference is to allow public comments.
- B. Membership to a City social media site must not be required in order for the public to obtain information. If this is not possible, then a City e-mail address must be posted as an alternative for providing comments. Exceptions can be requested to the City Clerk or his/her designee and Administration Office.
- C. A public comment may be edited if one of the following situations exists. Contact the City Clerk prior to taking action.
  - a. Clearly violates the third party's site's terms of service.
  - b. Would reasonably be considered pornographic, obscene or defamatory in nature.
  - c. Directly promotes or advocates violence or the threat of violence.
  - d. Are solicitations of commerce or promotion of private business enterprises.
  - e. Contain or links to inappropriate sexual content.
  - f. Encourages or promotes illegal activity.
  - g. Includes information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.