



Town of Lake Lure Social Media Policy

Purpose

In the ever-expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the Town of Lake Lure, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The Town of Lake Lure recognizes that social networking and Internet services have become a common form of communication in the workplace and among stakeholders, residents and visitors. The Town believes that effective and efficient engagement with the public may be attained using online technology to present matters of public interest in Lake Lure. This Policy is designed to define social media, the process of using social media, and the rights of the Town in its use of social media.

To address this fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, the Town of Lake Lure may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The Town encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the Town and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

This Social Media Policy and Guidelines is intended to provide guidance to Town of Lake Lure employees, contractors, interns, appointed and elected officials and departments in the implementation, management and maintenance of social media platforms in order to prevent violations of existing Town policies; utilize technology to support the Town's communication needs; ensure appropriate review by communications and social media staff; and protect against inappropriate social media content.

Definitions

Account Names (user names) - Typically, the name used to sign in to a social networking site.

Article - An original posting of content to a Town of Lake Lure-related social media site by an author.

Comment - A response to content submitted by a commenter.

Commenter - A Lake Lure employee, contractor, intern, official or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a social media.

Content - Posts, videos or any source of information written by users within each social media platform. (i.e. writing a post on the 'wall' of a Facebook page.)

Copyrighted material - Materials that may be protected by Copyright Law (for example, a cartoon, article, or excerpt from a book) and may not be publicly circulated without prior authorization from the copyright holder.

Cyberbullying/Cyberstalking - When a commenter's tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another, depending upon age, using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

Direct Message - Also known as "DM," it is a private form of communication between social media users that is only visible to the sender and recipient(s). You can only direct message a user who is following you.

Engagement - Any action taken by a social media user. This can be in the form of likes, comments, reactions and shares.

Handle - It can refer to a user's account name on social media platforms and begins with the "@" symbol. Each handle is unique and can be used to identify other users on the platform.

Hashtag - A hashtag is a keyword or phrase that is preceded by a pound (#) sign and indicates a topic of conversation and categorizes tweets. Anybody who clicks the hashtag will be led to a page that lists all users who have applied the hashtag in their own posts.

Moderation - Editorial review of content or comments before the information is posted for public view.

Moderator - A person assigned to editorially review content or comments before the information is posted for public view or if any content violated the social media policy regulations.

Post - A comment made to a social media or social networking page or site.

Social Media Platforms - Social media websites or technologies focus on creating and fostering online social communities for a specific purpose and connecting users from varying locations and interest areas. Some examples include: Facebook (including Facebook Live), Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube, Nextdoor, Periscope, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Instagram.

Social Networking - The act of connecting people who share common interests or backgrounds through the use of web-based services. Typically, these sites use multiple methods to connect to registered users such as status updates, instant messaging, blogs, polls, photo sharing, video sharing, etc.

Speech - Expression or communication of thoughts in spoken words, writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape or related forms of communication.

Sponsored Post - Posts or content that an organization has paid to promote or “boost.” Posts originally appear on the organization’s Facebook timeline as organic content, but are able to get a boost in visibility due to paid promotion. Sponsored content then appears in the Facebook user’s news feed just as any other post.

Tags - Keywords that help people find content on social networking platforms.

Terms of Service/Use - Rules by which one must agree to abide in order to use a service. It is generally assumed such terms are legally binding.

Trolling - Making a deliberately offensive or provocative online posting with the aim of upsetting someone or eliciting an angry response.

Public Records Statute

Social Media users will recognize that all content posted on Town of Lake Lure-related platforms are subject to Chapter 132 of the NC Open Records Law. Content in Town social media platforms, including a list of subscribers, friends, likes and posted communication is public record. The department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public information requests for information on social media. Content shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request. In a case where there is conflict of interest, the Communications Department will conduct the public information request.

Restricted Content

1. Comments submitted for posting that are deemed not suitable by a Lake Lure social media moderator shall be removed from the site, but retained, along with a description of the reason the specific content was removed. A statement of and reason for removal will be included in its place. A user will be banned from the Town’s social media account after two consecutive violations of the Town’s social media policy.
2. The Town of Lake Lure media platform content, including articles, links and posts/comments containing any of the following shall not be allowed, and Lake Lure reserves the right to delete submissions including, but not limited to:
 - A. Vulgar and profane language or content, including verbiage submitted in a different language and/or acronyms
 - B. Comments unrelated to the topic of conversation
 - C. Personal attacks of any kind

- D. Comments or 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
- E. Spam or links to websites deemed inappropriate
- F. Solicitation of commerce
- G. Conduct or encouragement of any illegal activity
- H. Promotion or opposition of particular services, products, person or political organizations campaigning for election to a political office or promoting or opposing any ballot proposition
- I. Infringe on copyrights or trademark laws and/or patents
- J. Sexual content or links to sexual content
- K. Personally identifiable medical information or social security numbers
- L. Information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations
- M. Any form of cyberbullying, cyberstalking or trolling methods

3. The Town of Lake Lure reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Policy or any applicable law.

Effective Date

Adopted this 13th day of April, 2021.

Carol C. Pritchett, Mayor

Attest:

Michelle Jolley, Town Clerk

