
SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY & PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Social Media Policy and Procedure is to make it clear to employees how they should conduct themselves when using social media sites both at work and outside work. It aims to minimise any risk that employees may put themselves in unintentionally by writing or posting inappropriate comments on social networking sites that relate to work and/or work colleagues.

The policy sits alongside existing policies which need to be taken into consideration when using social media sites. These include:

1. Equalities Policy
2. Data Protection Policy
3. Communication Policy
4. Bullying and Harassment Policy
5. Internet and Email Policy
6. Customer Service Policy

This list is not exhaustive and all other current and relevant policies will apply.

SCOPE

The policy applies to all employees and workers of Melton Borough Council including fixed term, casual and agency staff.

The policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to) :

Facebook, Myspace and other social networking sites

Twitter and other micro blogging sites

You Tube and other video clips and podcast sites

LinkedIn

Blogs and discussion forums eg Communities of Practice.

PRINCIPALS

1. MBC recognises the benefit of the use of social media in the work place. It sees social media as a powerful communication tool which can be used alongside other communication methods.

2. The use of social media is not to replace existing forms of communication but to enhance communication. Therefore existing means of communication should continue with social media being an additional option.
3. The policy is not intended to restrict employees from using social media at work and at home, but to make them aware of the risks they could potentially face with sharing information.

PROCEDURE

1. Twitter will be used for the purpose of communicating information about the authority by nominated Communication Representatives in each service area. Examples of information that may be “Tweeted” include:
 - Advertising events and activities
 - Good news stories linked website or press page
 - Job vacancies
 - Retweeting information from partners ie Police, Library and Health
 - Announcing new information
2. There will be one MBC Twitter profile which all Communication Representatives will have access to.
3. MBC will not have a single Facebook page for the Authority as a whole. Facebook pages should be used for events, activities, projects or established groups only.
4. Permission to set up a Facebook page should be agreed by a Head of Service in consultation with the Head of Communications/HR Officer/Customer Services Manager.
5. Creators of such groups/pages are responsible for the monitoring of the content posted and ensuring it complies with the Social Media Policy.
6. All social media sites in use should be checked and updated on a regular basis. Remember, our customers and partners will want to see a benefit to following or liking our pages. This is getting quality information FIRST.

POLICY

1. Disparaging remarks about the Authority, its partners, work colleagues and service users should not be posted on any social media site from both personal and work profiles.
2. Data Protection should be taken into consideration when posting information. All users will be responsible for what they publish and not disclose personal, sensitive and confidential information.
3. Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.
4. Employees should not accept friend requests, like pages or follow organisations or persons where there is a potential conflict of interest ie befriending vulnerable adults known through work or following a racist organisation.

5. Work contacts and networks with groups should be made via an approved page and not via personal profiles.
6. Employees should be mindful of the information they post on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council.
7. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site.
8. Employees should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to or bring the Council into disrepute or is contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct or any other Policies.
9. Employees should report any concerns they have regarding content placed by Council employees and workers on social media sites. Misuse of such sites in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in disciplinary action.
10. As with personal use of the internet, use of social media sites may be monitored by ICT and excessive or inappropriate use during work time may be considered a conduct issue.
11. Any complaints relating to "cyber bullying" will be dealt with through the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

All staff should be aware that placing information including photos and videos on social media sites is potentially visible by a large audience. This increases the scope for causing offence and embarrassment even though it may be unintentional. In some circumstances it can lead to bringing the Council into disrepute and/or damage to an individual's professional reputation. Therefore first and foremost consideration should be given to the information posted on sites and the security settings that are in place.