



SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY, STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

Effective Date: May 1, 2017

Revision Date(s): February, 2018

Purpose

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet; the manner in which residents and businesses communicate; and to obtain information about the Borough of Chester Heights, Pennsylvania online, the Borough of Chester Heights (the "Borough") may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The Borough encourages the use of social media to further its goals and missions, where appropriate.

The Borough has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "announced" or "spoken" on behalf of itself on social media sites. This policy establishes internal procedures for the use of social media.

References: Chester Heights Communications Matrix

Definitions

- "Social media" shall include but not be limited to Facebook, blogs, RSS, You Tube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Google Plus, Instagram, Pinterest, websites, discussion blogs and forums, Digg and Reddit and shall extend to and include all future forms of social media.
- "Borough-related information" shall refer to comments, information, articles, pictures, photos and other images.
- "Borough entity" shall refer to Council or Committees and any other group organized or created by the Borough or reporting to it.

Control

- Borough Council at large will control the approval of establishment and termination of Borough social media accounts and approval and enforcement of the Borough social media policy.

- The Borough Communications Committee will have the authority to establish and terminate social media accounts that have been approved by Council.
- The Borough Communications Committee will have the designated responsibility to develop and monitor social media strategy and presence.
- All Borough social media postings will be centralized and made by or subject to approval by the Communications Committee Chair or their designee.
- The Borough’s website (<http://www.chesterheights.org>) will remain the Borough’s primary and predominant internet presence.
- The most appropriate uses of social media tools are as informational channels to increase the Borough’s ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
- Social media will not be the primary tool used for disseminating emergency information. Emergency information may be released on social media sites, but not before release on emergency information systems.
- Wherever possible, content posted to the Borough’s social media sites will also be made available on the Borough’s website.
- Wherever possible, content posted to the Borough’s social media sites must contain hyperlinks directing users back to the Borough’s official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the Borough of Chester Heights.
- This Social Media Policy shall be posted on the official Borough website.
- All social media sites created or used by Borough entities authorized to do so shall have a hyperlink to this Social Media Policy on the Borough website.
- The email address socialmedia@chesterheights.org will be used to register social media sites and for community feedback. This email address will be accessible by the Communications Committee Chair or designee and will be easily transferred as committee members change.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all Borough officials, volunteers, and employees.

Guidelines for Use of Social Media

The Borough will adhere to strict guidelines governing the use of its social media sites.

All postings on the Borough social media sites are required to:

- Be honest and factual
- Be professional and avoid inflammatory remarks
- Be accurate
- Be responsive
- Be useful
- Be viewpoint neutral

The following are prohibited from being posted on any social media site owned and managed by the Borough:

- Information about actual or potential claims and/or litigation involving the Borough
- The intellectual property of others without their written permission
- Bad information (i.e. fake news) that misleads the public or causes harm
- Photographs of members of the public without their written permission
- Defamatory material
- Obscene, pornographic, or offensive material; sexual comments
- Racist, sexist, or other disparaging language
- Political campaign materials or comments
- Threatening or harassing comments
- Information not of a public nature

The following are special guidelines for elected officials:

- Elected officials may not use their own personal page to conduct official business of the Borough
- Elected officials who use social media for campaigning must establish separate social media accounts for that purpose
- Elected officials must refrain from holding social media discussions with other elected officials for risk of having a quorum that subjects them to open meeting laws.
- Elected officials running for office will not have a byline or be featured on social media sites during an active election cycle.

Viewpoint neutral criteria will be used to determine when a comment posted by the public will be removed. Such comments include those that are: off topic, obscene, pornographic, defamatory, harassing, commercial, criminal, political, or that violate the neutral viewpoint standard.

The Borough reserves the right to remove posts that violate this policy.

Comments will be monitored only during specified business hours. Any information conveyed after hours will not be reviewed until the next business day.

All comments are subject to disclosure as public records.

Guidance for Social Media Tools

The following social media tools have been approved by the Borough and standards have been developed for their use:

- Twitter - Twitter Standard
- Facebook - Facebook Standard
- Instagram – Instagram Standard

The use of other sites must be approved by the Borough Council at large and the Communications Committee Chair or designee.

Twitter Standard

Twitter is a micro-blogging tool that allows account holders to tweet up to 140 characters of information to followers.

Twitter accounts shall serve three primary purposes:

- Disseminate immediate interesting or important information to residents
- Promote Borough-sponsored meetings, events, programs and facilities
- Refer followers to a news item or content hosted at the Borough’s website or Facebook page

Information posted on Twitter shall conform to the existing protocols. Tweets shall be relevant, timely and informative.

Tweets will use proper grammar and will avoid the use of jargon and abbreviations. Twitter is more casual than most other communication tools, but communications must still best represent the Borough at all times.

The Communications Committee Chair or designee shall be responsive to those constituents who communicate via Twitter's @reply or direct message functions. Communication with followers will be timely and consistent with existing protocols.

Facebook Standard

Facebook is a social networking site that continues to grow in popularity and functionality. Businesses and government agencies have joined individuals in using Facebook to promote activities, programs, projects and events.

The Borough will create “pages” in Facebook (not “groups”). Facebook “pages” offer distinct advantages including greater visibility, customization and measurability.

Format

- The Borough is listed as a Government Organization.
- The main image shall be the Borough logo or an appropriate photo.
- A mission statement or descriptive text is in the introduction box on the page's wall.
- Using the FBML static page application, a boilerplate section should contain a department/program description and the following:
 - "This is an official Facebook page of the Borough of Chester Heights. For more information about the Borough please visit www.chesterheights.org. This site is intended to serve as a mechanism for communication between the public and the department on the listed topics and as a forum to further the mission of the department. Any comment submitted to this page and its list of fans may be considered a public record."
- If comments are turned on, the FBML page shall also include a Comment Policy Box with the following disclaimer:
 - "Comments posted to this page will be monitored and inappropriate content will be removed as soon as possible. Under the Borough of Chester Heights Social Media Use Policy, Standards and Procedures, the Borough reserves the right to remove inappropriate content, including, but not limited to, those items that have obscene language or sexual content, threaten or defame any person or organization, violate the legal ownership interest of another party, promote illegal activity and promote commercial services or products. The Borough disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials that the Borough deems inappropriate for posting, which cannot be removed in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner."
- A link to www.chesterheights.org will be included on the Info page.

Page Administrators

- A successful page requires consistent attention. The Communications Committee Chairperson will designate one or more staff members as page administrators who will be responsible for monitoring the department's Facebook page. Only the Communications Committee Chairperson or their designee will make posts.
- The Communications Committee Chairperson or designee will be responsible for ensuring content is not stale.

Comments and Discussion Boards

- Comments to the Wall generally will be allowed if the Borough can and does regularly monitor content. If unable to do so, comments to the Wall shall be turned off. Discussion Boards shall be turned off unless approved by the Communications Committee Chair or designee.

Photos and Video

- Page administrators may add photos and videos to the department’s Facebook page. The approval of the Communications Committee Chairperson will not be required. If there are postings of photos and/or videos of the public, waivers must be secured by individuals depicted in the photo and/or video.
- The ability for the public to post photos, videos and links shall be turned off.

Style

- Posts will use proper grammar, and will avoid the use of jargon and abbreviations. Facebook is more casual than most other communication tools, but communications must still best represent the Borough at all times.

Applications

- There are thousands of Facebook applications. Common applications can allow users to stream video and music, post photos, and view and subscribe to RSS feeds. While some may be useful to the page's mission, they can cause clutter and security risks.
- An application must not be used unless it serves an appropriate and a valid business purpose, adds to the user experience, comes from a trusted source, and is approved by Council and the Communications Committee.

General Policy

- All postings should be spelled correctly and use good grammar.
- All postings should be consistent with the Chester Heights Communications Matrix.
- Any social media sites created by a Borough official and/or Borough entity remain the property of the Borough, including all the followers and friends generated by the site and may be deleted by the Borough if it deems it appropriate to do so.
- All site names, passwords and/or access codes or information or changes to these shall be filed with the Borough Communications Committee Chair and updated within two days of any change.
- If the Borough Communications Committee Chair who created the social media site leaves their position, the passwords and/or access codes to the site shall be changed within two days of the change.
- This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Borough Council.