

TOWN OF SUFFIELD SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

- I. The TOWN OF SUFFIELD will use social media tools and other emerging media platforms in specific ways to reach a broader audience and increase citizen engagement. The Town encourages the use of diverse communication platforms to further the goals of the Town and its departments, where appropriate, through dissemination of information about the Town's mission, meetings, activities and current issues to members of the public. The Town has an overriding interest in deciding what is stated or set forth on behalf of the Town on social media sites.
- II. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to set forth the Town's policies and procedures regulating the Town's presence on social media websites and guiding the activities of employees who are responsible for maintaining the Town's presence on social media websites. This policy does not govern or regulate the use of personal social media sites by Town employees or the privacy rights associated therewith. The goals of Town of Suffield social media sites are to increase the public's knowledge, trust, and use of Town services; promote the value and importance of Town services among and between governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public; and maintain open, professional and responsive communication with members of the public and the news media.
- III. Ownership: All social media communications composed, sent, or received on Town equipment are the property of the Town. While the social media sites are administered by the Town, the content on the sites is not entirely controlled by the Town. The Town will do its best to prevent usage of its social media sites by commercial interests and Town does not endorse any links or advertisements on its social media sites placed by the site owners or their vendors or partners. All Social Media is subject to the Connecticut Freedom of

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Information Act and must be retained according to the standards set forth by the Connecticut State Library.

- IV. General Policy: A) The Town will maintain Town wide accounts on various social media platforms that will be used to disseminate Town news. The social media platforms used must be approved by the First Selectman or designee. B) Each Department Director will designate an employee who shall be responsible for creating, and sending information or messages for posting on the different media platforms. C) The most appropriate uses of social media tools are as informational channels to increase the Town's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience. D) The Town's website will remain the Town's primary and predominant internet presence. Wherever possible, content posted to the Town's social media sites will link back to the Town's website. E) Social media will not be the primary tool used for disseminating emergency information but will be used to supplement established emergency communication channels. F) The Town's social media sites must comply with all appropriate Town of Suffield policies and procedures. G) The Town's social media sites are subject to the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to Town business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication is a public record. H) Any Town employee who violates this Policy shall be denied access to all agency social media sites, and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. I) The Town reserves the right to terminate Town social media sites at any time without notice. J) The First Selectman may direct the deletion of a social media account that is not being utilized, or is underutilized.
- V. A. The Town's social media site articles, posts and comments containing any of the following forms of content will not be allowed and shall be immediately removed by the Town Director

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of Information Technology or other designated employee: 1. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic language and/or content; 2. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, covered medical condition, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law; 3. Sexual content or links to sexual content; 4. Solicitations of commerce not related to agency business, including but not limited to, advertising of a business or product for sale and other pure commercial speech; 5. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity; 6. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or referendums; 7. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems or employees; 8. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party; 9. Defamatory or personal attacks; 10. Threats of violence or any other harmful act directed to any person, or persons, group, or organization; 11. Personal matters; 12) Content that does not pertain to Town business; and 13. Conduct that is in violation of any federal, state, or local law.

B. Any content removed based on these guidelines as set forth in the policy must be retained, including the time, date, and identity of the poster (when available) in accordance with the Connecticut State Library's policy on the retention of such information. C. The Town reserves the right to deny access to Town social media sites for any employee who violates this Policy, at any time and without prior notice.

D. Any violation of this policy by a Town Employee may lead to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination, consistent with State and Federal Law.

Policy Established Date: Adopted by the Board of Selectmen on August 16, 2023.