

Borough of Dunellen Social Media Policy

Purpose:

The Borough of Dunellen (hereinafter “Borough”) has developed this social media policy to set forth guidelines for Borough officials, employees and other representatives of the Borough or any Borough entities. The Borough believes the use of social media can be a direct forum in which the municipal government may be transparent with residents, taxpayers, and the general public, informing them of Borough business, events, and public notices. The purpose of this social media policy is to establish enforceable rules for the use of social media by Borough officials, employees and other representatives of any Borough entities when engaging in Borough business. Rules are necessary to assure that communications made on behalf of the Borough are properly authorized and in correct form; that communications to or from the municipality by means of social media which can be viewed by the public are appropriate and pertinent; that all communications to or from the municipality are related to the posted municipal information; and that the sender of social media to the Borough is clearly and fully informed that a message received by means of social media is not a substitute for required reporting procedures.

Definitions:

Social Media – any form of electronic communication which enables users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Some current examples of social media include, but are not limited to Facebook, Blogs, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus, Instagram and Pinterest.

Social Media Committee – A committee consisting of three (3) members appointed by the Mayor on an annual basis, consisting of two council members and the Borough Administrator, which shall perform all functions as assigned to it in this policy, make recommendations, and report to the Mayor and Council consistent with the terms and intentions of this social media policy.

Borough-related information –Borough created social media sites such as Nixle and Reverse 911, which may only be posted by duly authorized personnel.

Borough Entities – refers to boards, commissions, committees, departments and any group organized or created by the Borough or reporting to it.

Scope:

This Social Media Policy applies to all elected and appointed officials, employees, volunteers, members or other representatives of the Borough of Dunellen or any Borough entity. This policy does not apply to individuals who post as individuals and not on behalf of the Borough or a Borough entity. However, any individual who links their profile to the Borough and is a Borough official, employee or other representative of any Borough entity shall be subject to this policy if it appears that said individual or entity is posting on behalf of the Borough or Borough entity.

General Policy:

Social Media forum may be created and/or used by Borough entities so long as its creation and/or use follows the requirements herein:

1. The creation and use of the social media sites by Borough entities are subject to prior approval by the governing body of the Borough;
2. The approval process will require each such entity to complete and submit to the Social Media Committee a form prepared by the Borough. The Social Media Committee shall review the completed form and make a recommendation to the governing body of the Borough as to whether to approve said application. The governing body shall then make a determination as to whether to issue an approval;
3. Borough entities, officials, employees or volunteers that receive approval from the governing body of the Borough to create or use social media shall clearly state that it or they are authorized to do so by the Borough and that it or they are following this Social Media Policy;
4. The social media forums will only be used to convey information about the entity posting it, and only for business purposes. No personal information or personal opinions will be posted by the entity, official, employee, or volunteer;
5. Borough entities who create or use social media shall designate a member(s) of that entity to post and monitor the site and provide the name of that member to the Borough Administrator;
6. When a Borough official, employee or other representative responds to a comment, in his/her capacity as a Borough employee, the employee's name and title should be made available, and the Borough official, employee or other representative shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Borough officials, employees or representatives.
7. No "friending" or other special relationship between a Borough official, employee or other representative and a third person is permitted.
8. Sub-committees underneath the auspices of boards, commissions or committees shall not maintain their own separate social media forums;

9. This Social Media policy shall be available on the Borough's official website, www.Dunellen-nj.gov;
10. All social media sites created and maintained by Borough entities authorized to do so shall have a hyperlink to this Social Media Policy on the Borough website;
11. Whenever possible, Borough entities will link back to the official Borough website for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business within the Borough;
12. The use of social media by Borough entities may be monitored by the Social Media Committee or other individual(s) so designated by the Committee to ensure adherence to both this Social Media Policy and the interests and goals of the Borough;
13. The Borough Administrator shall be named as an administrator on all social media sites or pages created and maintained by Borough entities authorized to do so;
14. The Borough has the right to and will restrict or remove any content that it deems in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable laws, ordinances, statutes, regulations or other policies;
15. All Borough entities, employees and volunteers creating/using social media sites are subject to all applicable federal and New Jersey laws and regulations as well as applicable record retention requirements;
16. All Borough entities and their members as well as elected officials representing the Borough's government via its/their social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Borough and in accordance with all of its policies;
17. All Borough representatives who post to authorized social media sites are encouraged to observe proper rules of grammar, spelling and punctuation;
18. Any social media site created by a Borough employee, Borough volunteer, Borough official and/or Borough entity remains the property of the Borough, and may be deleted by the Borough if it deems it appropriate to do so;
19. The process for deletion will be a review conducted by the Social Media Committee, with any recommendations and the reasons therefor provided by the Social Media Committee in writing to the governing body. Should the governing body adopt said recommendation, the Administrator shall delete said account and provide an account closure letter to the creator of said social media site;
20. The Borough has created an alias account. Each Borough entity that retains its own Social Media site shall grant the alias Administrator access;
21. In the event of the removal of content as set forth herein, or the discontinuation of a social media site, the content shall be archived and

documentation related to the site will be maintained in accordance with records retention guidelines set forth by the Government Records Council or other appropriate government agency;

22. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Mayor and Council of the Borough;

23. The Borough's website, www.Dunellen-nj.gov will remain the Borough's primary and predominant internet presence.

Comment Policy:

1. Social media sites are not to be used for making any official communications to the Borough, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, giving notice required by any statute, ordinance or regulation (e.g. notice of claim). Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Borough social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting such a communication.
2. All comments, articles and the like posted on social media by Borough entities and their members must be civil and unbiased;
3. The following are prohibited and postings containing any of the following are subject to removal by the Borough:
 1. Profane, obscene, violent, sexually suggestive or pornographic content and/or language or links to such materials.
 2. Images or links containing minors or suspected minors in sexual and/or provocative situations. These will be reported to law enforcement.
 3. Photographs or images of children without permission of their parents or guardians.
 4. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability or the receipt of public assistance.
 5. Defamatory, racist and anti-Semitic remarks.
 6. Threats to any person or organization.
 7. Solicitation of commerce including, but not limited to, advertising of any business or product for sale with the exception of Borough-sponsored events and/or items.
 8. Solicitation of political support or political contributions.
 9. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law or ordinance.
 10. Encouragement of illegal activity.

11. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
 12. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright or other infringement on intellectual property rights.
 13. Private contact information such as names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.
 14. Personal information about a person without that person's permission.
 15. Confidential information or other personally identifying information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), the Open Public Records Act, Freedom of Information Act, and other similar laws.
 16. Spamming or repetitive content.
 17. Comments from and participation of children under 18 in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.
 18. Any other content which is deemed harassing, offensive or otherwise inappropriate for Borough social media.
4. A comment posted by a member of the public on any entity-created social media site is the opinion of the commenter or poster only and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of or agreement by the Borough nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Borough. Such a comment or post may be removed, however, if it contains any content in violation of any portion of Comment Policy No. 3 herein.
 5. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the Borough's Internet or social media sites will be reported to law enforcement and the perpetrators will be denied access to the sites.
 6. The Borough reserves the right to deny access to any social media sites created/used by Borough entities to any individual who violates the Borough's Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.
 7. Borough entities shall monitor the comments on their social media sites for violations of this policy.
 8. In the event a Borough official, employee or other representative responds to a comment in his/her capacity as a Borough official, employee or other representative, the individual's name and title shall be included in the response.
 9. No Borough official, employee or other representative shall share personal information about him/herself or other Borough officials, employees or other representatives. No Borough entity shall share personal information about any member of the entity.
 10. In the event that the Borough creates its own Facebook page, all comments posted are bound by Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.

The Borough reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.

11. All Borough policies are applicable to interactions and postings on social media sites when a Borough official, employee or other representative acts in an official capacity as a representative of the Borough.

Breach of Policy:

Internet postings on Borough social media sites that are deemed to constitute a breach of this Policy as determined by the Borough Administrator shall be removed subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements. If a social media site is repeatedly in violation of this Policy or any part thereof, it shall be permanently deleted.

Any entity found by the governing body of the Borough to have violated any aspect of this Policy shall be banned from having a presence on social media for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Borough.

Any Borough official, employee or other representative found by the governing body of the Borough to have violated any aspect of this Policy shall be banned from having a presence on Borough social media sites for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Borough.

Any Borough official, employee or other representative deemed by the Borough Administrator to have violated the Borough's personnel policies, rules of conduct or any other municipal policies in connection with any social media posting may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the violation is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether the Borough's equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the violation.

Any illegal activity shall be reported to the appropriate authorities, and violations of this policy or other related policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or removal from position.