



Town of Chester Social Media Policy

Last Updated: 11/14/2025

Approved: 12/1/2025

Introduction

Purpose

This Policy is intended to provide employees with guidelines for appropriate online activity. Although this policy cannot address every instance of inappropriate social media use, it is intended to offer guidelines to employees, thereby helping employees to avoid potential missteps online. Remember, the nature of the internet is such that what you post online will be captured forever and can be transmitted endlessly without your consent or knowledge. Employees should remember that any information that is shared online instantly becomes permanent and public.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees' use of the internet, including participation in and use of social media; regardless of whether such use occurs in the workplace and regardless of whether such use involves the Town of Chester's electronic equipment or other property.

Social Media Defined

The speed at which technology evolves makes it difficult to identify all types of social media. By way of example, social media includes: (1) social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn); (2) blogs and micro-blogs (i.e. Twitter); (3) content-sharing sites (i.e. SlideShare; and (4) image-sharing sites (i.e. YouTube, Instagram). This policy is meant to govern all online activity.

Need for Policy

These social media guidelines are not to discourage you from utilizing social media, nor are they meant to interfere with any rights protected under federal and state law. Rather, these guidelines are meant to protect the Town of Chester's interests, privacy and confidentiality, as well as those of our employees and citizens. The Town of Chester does not want to control what is said on personal social media sites; however, we want to remind you that all of the Town of Chester's policies, including our anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, confidentiality and conflict of interest policies extend to all forms of communication. The Town of Chester expects employees who maintain or contribute to social media on the internet will abide by certain guidelines. Nothing in this policy is meant to or will be applied in a manner that limits employees' rights to engage in protected concerted activity as prescribed by the National Labor Relations Act.

Association with the Town of Chester

Employees who identify online as being associated with the Town of Chester must comply with the rules set forth in this section.

Federal law requires that, when endorsing or promoting his or her employer's products or services, an employee must disclose his or her affiliation with the employer. Thus, although we appreciate your loyalty and enthusiasm, you must disclose your employment with the Town of Chester if you endorse us online.

If you do endorse the Town, for example, in your online profile, you must use an appropriate disclaimer to make it clear that you are speaking only on behalf of yourself, and not on behalf of the Town.

If you do identify yourself online as an employee of the Town of Chester, do not engage in name calling or behavior that will reflect negatively on the Town of Chester's reputation. The Town of Chester encourages you to write knowledgeably, accurately and use appropriate professionalism.

Guidelines

Unless specifically instructed or otherwise authorized by the Town of Chester in writing you may NOT:

- Speak on behalf of the Town of Chester.
- Make any false or misleading statements about the town, its citizens, its vendors or its employees.
- Link any blog, webpage, website, etc. to the Town of Chester website.
- Link your E-mail or Outlook account to any social media site.
- Use Town time and equipment, including information and electronic systems (e.g. computers, Internet, pagers, smart phones or cell phones) for blogging or social networking, including updating or checking your personal site.
- Disclose at any time proprietary or confidential information belonging to the Town, or obtained during the course of your employment, about the Town, its services, its citizens or its employees.
- Use the Town's name, logo or letterhead or promotional materials in a manner that implies that you represent the Town.
- State or imply that the views you express are that of the Town, its citizens or any employee.
- Make or post disparaging, libelous, discriminatory, defamatory, proprietary, confidential, threatening, obscene or slanderous comments or information directed at or implicating the company, its clients, its competitors, or its employees. This includes activity that evidences a reckless/gross disregard for the Town of Chester's business interest.

You are personally liable for your own commentary. You can be sued by employees, citizens, vendors and any other individual or company that views your online content as defamatory, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment.

When blogging or networking about your work on your own time and using your own equipment, you must abide at all times with all legal requirements (including copyright or trademark infringement, defamation, etc.) as well as the Town of Chester policies, including those regarding non-harassment, disparagement and confidentiality.

We ask that you honor the privacy rights of our employees by seeking their permission before writing about happenings that might be considered to be a breach of their privacy and confidentiality or before posting their pictures. Posting information about other employees without their permission has the potential of disrupting the workplace.

Violations of this policy can result in corrective action, up to and including termination from employment. In addition, the Town of Chester reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in prohibited and/or unlawful conduct. Social media changes rapidly and there will likely be events or issues that are not addressed in this policy. If you have any questions about these guidelines, contact your supervisor or the Selectboard. When in doubt, employees should seek the guidance of the appropriate person before posting or otherwise engaging in online activity.

Print Name:

Signature:

Position:

Date: