

- 1.) Purpose:** The methods by which people communicate continue to evolve through various social media applications, smart phones, web-based options, and other technology. The Town of Uxbridge recognizes the many opportunities for communication through these tools to the public. The Town encourages the responsible use of these communication tools by its employees, agents, elected and appointed officials, consultants, volunteers and any person conducting business with or on behalf of the Town of Uxbridge. The use of these tools creates new responsibilities for Town employees, volunteers, officials, and members of Boards, and Commissions and Committees. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance as to these new responsibilities and to clarify the boundaries between the appropriate and inappropriate use of official Town of Uxbridge and private social media accounts and services. The Town's image as a professional organization comprised of professionals is critical to maintaining the respect of its constituents. Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict an individual's right to discuss, as a private citizen, matters of public concern on private social media sites. Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict an individual's right to engage in concerted activity with co-workers in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws.
- 2.) Applicability:** This policy applies to all Town employees, agents, officials, consultants, volunteers and any person conducting business on behalf of the Town of Uxbridge. This policy also applies to members of the Board of Selectmen, appointed members of Boards, and Commissions and Committees, as well as those elected members of Boards, and Commissions and Committees, whose Board Commissions and Committees have also adopted this policy.
- 3.) Definitions:**
- A. "Social Media" is:**
1. Any website
 2. Any Social Networking website (e.g. Twitter, Myspace, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest)
 3. Multimedia sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Picassa)
 4. Blogs (e.g. Wikipedia, Wikispaces)
 5. Forums and discussion boards (e.g. Google Groups, Yahoo! Groups, Yammer)
 6. Personally managed websites, blogs, etc.
 7. On-line polls and surveys (e.g. Survey Monkey, Doodle)
 8. Any other web or application accessible site on which an individual user can post texts, media, etc.
- B. "Official Social Media" is:**
- Any Social Media and affiliated accounts which were established by and through the Town of Uxbridge or any of its departments, agencies, Boards, Committees, or Commissions as authorized by the Town and which are maintained by the Town of Uxbridge, its employees, volunteers, officials, or Board, Committee or Commission members.
- 4.) Guidance:**
- A.** Official Social Media sites will be used for communicating information to constituents of the Town. Examples include Town/Department announcements, official Town news, Emergency notifications, Town events and activities, or Board, Committee or Commission meeting notices or agendas. Town employees, volunteers, appointed officials, Board, Committee or Commission

members may not engage in private messaging over official Social Media sites or accounts. Official Social Media cannot be used to post political viewpoints, religious viewpoints, proprietary commercial information, information pertaining to an employee's personal activities, matters, or interests, information which consists of content which is sexual, pornographic, or adult in character, or information which advocates or promotes the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.

- B. An employee, volunteer, official, Board, Committee or Commission member may not misrepresent any non-Official Social Media site as a Town of Uxbridge Official Social Media site. The use of the Town Seal is prohibited unless approved by the Town Clerk or his/her designee. Misuse of the Town Seal is a criminal act punishable pursuant to M.G.L c. 268, 3.35. Employees, volunteers, officials, Board, Committee and Commission members posting on non-official social media sites should make clear that they are not representing the town, and understand that they bear full responsibility for the content of such posts. The use of the Town's official name, or holding out a posting as an official communication of the Town government, is prohibited unless approved by the Town Manager or his/her designee.
- C. An employee, volunteer, official, Board, Committee, Commission member may not use Social Media to post material which is illegal, which is in violation of federal or state laws regarding discrimination, or which constitutes criminal conduct. An employee, volunteer, official, Board, Committee, Commission member may not use Social Media to post material which constitutes an unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or confidential information of the Town, information protected by the Town's attorney-client privilege, information constituting the Town's internal development of a policy, personnel records or information regarding Town employees, or non-public information regarding Town labor relations.
- D. Any reference requests received through any Social Media site for current or former employees' must be directed to the Town Manager.
- E. Any posted content on Official Social Media sites that include pictures, photographs, likenesses, or images of a person under 18 years of age requires consent of a parent or legal guardian. Other images taken with consent can be used for non-commercial purposes as long as it meets the standards of the social media platform and this policy. If requested by any person whose image is used on an Official Social Media post, that image will be removed from that Official Social Media site.
- F. Employees, volunteers, officials, Board, Committee, Commission members should keep in mind that content posted to Official Social Media sites may constitute public records within the meaning of the Massachusetts Public Records Law and may be obtained by members of the public upon request.
- G. Employees, volunteers, officials, Board, Committee, Commission members must avoid communications in any posts or online communications which could create a hostile work environment.
- H. When posting to Social Media sites, employees, volunteers, officials and members of Boards, Committees and Commissions, while representing themselves as Town employees, volunteers, officials, or members of a Board, Commission or Committee, should do so in a way that maintains the Town's image as a professional organization, ensuring that the content maintains a

reasonable degree of civility and respect. If an employee, volunteer, official, or member of a Board, Committee, or Commission, while representing themselves as Town employees, volunteers, officials, or members of a Board, Commission or Committee, disagrees with others, they should do so with civility, respecting his/her audience.

- I. When posting to Social Media sites, Town employees, volunteers, officials, and members of Boards, and Commissions and Committees should indicate that their views do not represent those of the Town.
- J. Members of Boards, and Commissions and Committees may not post material to Social Media in violation of the Open Meeting Law.

4.) Official Social Media Accounts:

- A. Official Social Media accounts of any type may only be initiated, established, and/or authorized by the Town Manager, who will seek the advice of the Information Technology Director or his/her designee before approving any such account.
- B. Once authorized, any and all Town Departments, Divisions, Boards, Committees, and Commissions may establish an Official Social Media account. The accounts should be used to promote the department, Board, Committee, Commission and its functions and, in a manner, which complies with the applicable requirements of this policy. All Official Social Media account login information must be compiled and maintained by the Information Systems Manager.

5.) Monitoring: The Town reserves the right to monitor content on all Official Social Media Sites and to modify or remove any messages, posting, or images made by an employee, that it deems in its sole discretion and judgment to be abusive, defamatory, violation of copyright or trademark, or other intellectual property rights, or otherwise in violation.

Any post, comment, or remark that contains obscene or sexual language, personal attacks, insults, profane language, racist or discriminating language, or personal or private information will also be removed.

5.) Discipline or Removal: The Town reserves the right to take appropriate action for any violation of this policy which comes to its attention. Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action which may include, but is not necessarily limited to, a directive to cease the misrepresentation of official town policy or business, verbal or written warning, suspension (with or without pay), termination and/or removal or recall from a Board, Committee or Commission.

6.) Severability: If any provisions of this Agreement, or application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the remaining provisions of this Agreement and the application of such provisions to other persons or circumstances, other than those to which it is held invalid, shall not be affected thereby.

Adopted by Steven Sette, Town Manager
December 16, 2019

I, _____ have read the Town of Uxbridge's Social Media Policy for employees, volunteers, officials, members of Boards, Committees and Commissions, and contractors and agree to comply with all of its terms and conditions.

I understand that violation of this Policy may subject me to discipline, up to and including termination of employment by my employer and/or removal from a Board, Committee, or Commission.

Employee/Member Name

____/____/_____
Date

Employee/Member Signature

Dept/Volunteer/Board/Committee/Commission