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Social Media Policy

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1. Executive summary

Social media is made up of a mix of online communications channels designed to factor in two-way communication. This Policy seeks to help staff navigate the complexities of social media and details how they can interact in a safe, meaningful and professional manner.

2. Scope

The City of Ryde is committed to delivering quality customer service and to communicating effectively with our community. We recognise that social media represents an opportunity to participate in meaningful two-way dialogue with our residents, ratepayers and customers.

3. Purpose

This Policy outlines appropriate uses of social media by staff during and outside of work hours for both professional and personal purposes.

4. Definitions

Social Media	<p>Where the term Social Media is used in this Policy it will refer to digital and online spaces where content can be added, posted or uploaded by people. These may include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - blogs and vlogs - bulletin boards - forums and discussion boards - instant messaging applications - microblogging platforms - online encyclopedias - platforms which allow public comment - podcasts - social networking sites - text and picture messaging
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5. Access to social media at work

City of Ryde will provide access to specific social media sites for staff on the City of Ryde network. These sites are:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

Staff should endeavour to use such tools in a manner that:

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- enhances their professional knowledge or standing;
- improves their understanding of the community or customers that they provide services for; and / or
- improves their practical ability to use social media as a professional tool.

Staff may also, during work hours, use social media channels for personal purposes. In such cases staff should do so on the basis that such access:

- does not interfere with their work;
- does not excessively burden the City of Ryde Information Management System;
- is not in conflict with any relevant law or City of Ryde policy; and
- does not incur additional cost to City of Ryde.

Staff should always bear in mind that access to these tools, whether for personal or professional purposes, needs to be ‘reasonable’ in relation to their role. Staff who have any questions about what is reasonable should speak to their manager. As a general rule where it is not required as part of the position, the use of Social Media should be limited to use within designated meal breaks and outside of work time.

At all times when using social media, for personal or professional purposes, it is important to follow these guidelines:

- be mindful of all Council policies and practices;
- do not disclose any information that is not publicly available;
- ensure that all information posted about, or in relation to, your work is accurate;
- be respectful, courteous and always aim to add value to any discussion;
- do not make comments that are rude, offensive or derogatory to any colleague, customer or any other person that you have come into contact with during the course of your duties;
- be aware of the risk of malicious and viral software and be cautious in managing such risk to secure your personal information; and
- where you are identified as an employee of the City of Ryde always take reasonable steps to state that comments made represent your own opinions and not the opinions of Council.

6. Implications of using social media outside of work

Staff should be aware that although this Policy does not seek to limit or control their use of social media outside of work, they should still exercise care in their personal use of such tools. In some circumstances, your conduct outside of work may still be bound by relevant law or City of Ryde Policy.

Staff should be mindful of the following issues when using Social Media outside of work:

- privacy;
- confidentiality;
- discrimination, bullying and harassment;
- misrepresentation of City of Ryde;
- improper interactions with Councillors; and
- seeking or obtaining advantage or preferential treatment because of your position or role.

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Remember that comments or views expressed via Social Media should be considered as permanent as they cannot be recalled or removed. As a general rule, if you wouldn't want your Manager or your customers to see it, then don't post it.

Staff are reminded that as employees of the City of Ryde they remain bound by the City of Ryde's policies, in particular the Code of Conduct, Code of Behaviour and Anti-Discrimination Bullying and Harassment Policy. Failure of any staff member to comply with the City of Ryde's policies in relation to social media usage may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the Local Government State Award as varied from time to time, up to and including termination of employment.

7. Representing City of Ryde through social media

In some cases, it may be appropriate for staff to use social media to relay information and engage with customers and the community.

When using social media, staff should bear in mind that along with opportunity comes risk. Many factors need to be considered before using social media to represent the City of Ryde and this should not be undertaken without specific approval from the Manager Communications and Engagement and the relevant Director. For more information on this approval process please see *Procedure - Representing City of Ryde through Social Media*.

Before any staff member requests the authority to represent City of Ryde on social media they should give due consideration to the following issues:

- how the use of social media will fit into a broader communications strategy relating to their project or ongoing work;
- the boundaries of their area of expertise;
- their intent in using social media;
- how they will resource the content creation, monitoring and responses to public comments;
- what value their use of social media will add to the City of Ryde and the community;
- their intended audience.

Once these issues have been considered they should consult the *Procedure - Representing City of Ryde through Social Media* to apply for authorisation to represent City of Ryde on social media. No staff member, volunteer, contractor or other representative of the City of Ryde should represent City of Ryde through social media without specific approval from the Manager Communications and Engagement and their relevant Director.

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Compliance

Failure by a member of staff to comply with the City of Ryde's Social Media policy may give rise to disciplinary action as outlined in the Local Government (State) Award, up to and including termination of employment.

8. References and legislation

City of Ryde – Code of Conduct

City of Ryde – IT Email and Internet Use Policy

City of Ryde – Media Policy

City of Ryde – Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy

Local Government (State) Award

Local Government Act

9. Review process and endorsement

- This policy is to be endorsed by the Executive Team and adopted by Council.
- This policy should be reviewed annually
- Edits to this policy such as titles, departments or directorate names, updates to legislation or branding updates are considered minor in nature and not required to be formally endorsed
- Substantial changes to this policy are to be endorsed by the Executive Team and adopted by Council.

10. Attachments

Title	CM Reference
Procedure – Representing the City of Ryde through Social Media	D13/48828

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