

Social Media Policy

Date adopted by Council: July 14, 2026



1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Lunenburg uses social media as an official communication tool to share timely and accurate information with the public. The Town is committed to maintaining a professional and responsible presence online in alignment with applicable legislation and municipal policies.

2. PURPOSE

The Town of Lunenburg uses social media as an official communication tool to share timely and accurate information with the public, including, but not limited to:

- Town programs, services, and operational updates
- Council information, including agendas, meetings, decisions, and public notices
- Emergency notifications and public safety information
- Public service announcements
- Opportunities for community engagement and participation

Content is intended to inform residents and will be provided in clear, plain language. The Town will make reasonable efforts to ensure information is accessible to a broad range of users, including the use of accessible formats where possible.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all official social media accounts operated by the Town of Lunenburg and to employees and Council members.

It does not apply to personal social media use, except where individuals are representing or could reasonably be perceived as representing the Town.

4. ACCOUNT GOVERNANCE

4.1 Ownership and Authority

The Town will determine which social media platforms are used for official communications and may adopt or discontinue platforms as needed to support effective communication.

All official social media accounts are the property of the Town of Lunenburg. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), or designate, has authority over the creation and management of official accounts.

Official social media accounts are those established, authorized, or managed by the Town for the purpose of conducting municipal communications.

The Town may maintain a list of active official social media platforms and accounts through its website or other internal records.

Platform functionality, features, and controls are determined by third-party providers and may change over time without notice. The Town will make reasonable efforts to manage its social media channels in alignment with this Policy; however, certain features, settings, moderation tools, accessibility functions, or interaction controls may not always be available or may change due to platform limitations or updates. Where platform functionality limits the Town's ability to fully implement this Policy, the Town may implement alternative measures or adapt its practices as appropriate.

4.2 Transparency and Identification

The Town will clearly identify its official social media accounts and maintain a clear and identifiable presence online. Where appropriate, accounts will link to the Town's official website and relevant policies and procedures.

4.3 Corporate Communications

The Town's social media presence is an extension of its corporate communications and is governed by this Policy and supporting administrative procedures.

5. CONTENT STANDARDS

5.1 Town Content Standards

The Town will make reasonable efforts to ensure that content shared on its social media channels is:

- Accurate and based on reliable information
- Clear and written in plain language
- Relevant to municipal services, programs, and priorities
- Respectful and appropriate for a public audience
- Accessible, where possible, in alignment with applicable accessibility practices. Accessibility practices will be applied to the extent feasible, recognizing platform limitations and available resources

Where errors are identified, the Town will make reasonable efforts to correct information in a timely manner.

5.2 Third-Party and Community Content

The Town may, at its discretion, share or repost content from third parties where it aligns with municipal priorities and provides value to the community. Requests for promotion from external organizations, businesses, or individuals may be considered.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Community events or initiatives open to the public
- Information from partner organizations, government agencies, or local institutions
- Public safety messaging or regional updates
- Initiatives that support community wellbeing, culture, recreation, tourism, or economic development
- Information related to community events, programs, or initiatives involving local businesses where there is a broader community benefit

Sharing third-party content does not constitute endorsement by the Town.

Unless otherwise approved, the Town does not create content on behalf of third parties.

The Town is unable to share all requests for promotion and prioritizes content based on relevance, community benefit, timing, and available capacity.

5.3 What the Town Will Not Post

The Town will not post or share content that:

- Is political in nature, including comments on election candidates, campaigns, or platforms
- Promotes or advertises private businesses, products, or services, except where sharing information supports a broader community, economic development, tourism, or public interest objective
- Contains confidential or personal information
- Is misleading, unverified, or contributes to misinformation or disinformation
- Creates security or privacy risks
- Is defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful
- Violates any applicable laws, Town policies, or by-laws

The Town will ensure that references to individuals, businesses, or organizations are appropriate, accurate, and made for a legitimate municipal purpose.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND PUBLIC INTERACTION

6.1 Comment Availability and Platform Use

The Town's social media channels are primarily intended to provide timely and accurate information to residents and visitors.

Where platform functionality allows, comments and public reply features on official Town social media channels will generally be disabled by default.

Comments or public interaction features may be enabled on specific posts, campaigns, platforms, or initiatives where the Town determines they support communication objectives, public education, engagement activities, or operational needs.

Where comments or public interaction features are enabled, public comments do not reflect the views or positions of the Town of Lunenburg.

6.2 Public Participation and Communication Channels

The Town recognizes the importance of meaningful public participation and provides multiple ways for residents to engage outside of social media platforms.

Residents are encouraged to connect with the Town through established communication channels, including:

- Contacting Town staff through established service and inquiry processes
- Contacting Council members directly
- Attending Council, Committee, and public meetings
- Participating in public engagement opportunities, surveys, open houses, workshops, or information sessions when offered
- Using formal feedback or application processes where applicable
- Requesting meetings with staff, where appropriate

Where the Town is seeking public input on specific projects, policies, plans, or initiatives, engagement opportunities and participation methods will be communicated through appropriate channels.

6.3 Moderation of Comments

Where comments are enabled on specific posts or platforms, the Town may remove, hide, restrict, or otherwise moderate content that, in the Town's opinion:

- Violates applicable laws or Town policies;
- Contains hate speech, threats, intimidation, harassment, bullying, discrimination, or incites violence;

- Contains defamatory, abusive, derogatory, or discriminatory comments directed toward an individual or identifiable group;
- Contains personal attacks, insults, or language intended to demean, ridicule, or harass another person;
- Includes profanity, obscene, vulgar, or sexually explicit content;
- Contains confidential, personal, or sensitive information;
- Contains spam, commercial advertising, repetitive posts, or malicious links;
- Is clearly unrelated to the topic of the post or is intended to disrupt constructive discussion;
- Encourages unlawful activity or behaviour that may create safety, privacy, or security risks; or
- Otherwise interferes with the Town's ability to maintain a respectful and constructive online environment.

The Town recognizes that members of the public may disagree with municipal decisions, policies, services, or actions. Comments will not be moderated solely because they express criticism or disagreement with the Town, Council, or staff, provided they otherwise comply with this Policy.

Users who repeatedly violate these standards may be restricted from participating where comments or public interaction features are enabled.

6.4 Use of Social Media and Formal Input

Social media channels are intended to share information and are not considered formal channels for submitting requests, applications, service requests, or feedback requiring official consideration, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Content posted on the Town's social media channels, including comments where enabled, is not considered a formal submission to the Town for Council decisions, public participation processes, or other official matters unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Social media channels are not intended to serve as the Town's primary customer service or service request channel and should not be relied upon for time-sensitive matters.

Members of the public wishing to provide formal input are encouraged to use established communication channels and participation opportunities outlined in this Policy.

6.5 Town Responses and Engagement

The Town may use social media channels to provide information, clarification, or direct residents to appropriate resources, staff, or processes.

The Town may respond to inquiries or interactions received through social media at its discretion; however, responses are not guaranteed, and social media should not be relied upon for urgent matters.

The Town does not engage in ongoing debates or discussions through its social media channels.

6.6 Monitoring and Administration

Town social media channels are not monitored continuously. Channels are generally monitored during normal business hours.

Where comments or public interaction features are enabled, the Town may monitor and manage activity in accordance with this Policy.

Content or activity raising safety, legal, privacy, or reputational concerns may be referred to appropriate authorities or internal processes for further review.

7. PRIVACY, RECORDS, AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

7.1 Privacy and Confidentiality

The Town of Lunenburg is committed to protecting personal privacy. Social media content posted by the Town will not include personal or confidential information unless authorized or required for official purposes.

Members of the public should be aware that social media platforms are public spaces. Individuals are responsible for the information they choose to share through social media platforms and should avoid posting or sharing personal or sensitive information, as content may be visible to others and subject to applicable legislation.

The Town does not actively monitor all user activity or content shared through social media platforms. Where comments or public interaction features are enabled, moderation activities will be conducted in accordance with this Policy.

7.2 Records and Information Management

Content published or shared through the Town's social media channels may be subject to applicable access to information and records management legislation.

The Town does not routinely archive or retain all social media content outside of the platform on which it is posted. However, where appropriate or required, content may be captured and

retained in accordance with Town records management practices for operational, legal, or investigative purposes.

7.3 Copyright and Intellectual Property

The Town will use only content that is owned, licensed, or otherwise permitted for use, and will provide attribution where required.

7.4 Compliance with Applicable Laws

The Town's use of social media will comply with applicable federal and provincial legislation, including those related to privacy, accessibility, elections, and human rights.

8. EMPLOYEE AND COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 General Expectations

Employees and Council/Committee members are expected to use social media in a manner that reflects the Town's values and complies with applicable Town policies, including those related to conduct, confidentiality, and privacy.

Individuals must not disclose confidential information or present personal opinions as the official position of the Town.

8.2 Employees

Employees are expected to comply with all applicable Town policies when using social media, including those related to workplace conduct and acceptable use of technology.

8.3 Council and Committee Members

Council and Committee Members engaging on personal accounts must clearly distinguish between personal views and official Town positions.

8.4 Professional Conduct

When engaging in discussions related to Town business, individuals are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and avoid online interactions that are unprofessional, confrontational, or could damage the Town's reputation.

These expectations apply to both official and personal social media use where individuals are discussing Town business or could reasonably be perceived as representing the Town.

9. AUTHORITY AND REPRESENTATION

Only the CAO, or designated employees authorized by the CAO, are permitted to post or communicate on behalf of the Town through official social media channels.

Employees and Council/Committee Members must not represent themselves as speaking on behalf of the Town, or commit the Town to any position, action, or decision outside of their authority.

10. TRAINING AND CAPACITY

The Town of Lunenburg is committed to supporting employees and Council/Committee Members in the effective and responsible use of social media.

Training and guidance may be provided on topics such as accessibility, privacy, records management, digital communication practices, and other matters relevant to the implementation of this Policy.

Employees may request guidance or additional training through their supervisor, as needed.

Council may request that the CAO arrange training or provide guidance for Council and Committee Members on matters related to this Policy.

11. ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

The Town may take action to enforce this Policy, including the removal of content, restriction of participation or interaction features on its social media channels, or other measures as appropriate.

Failure to comply with this Policy by employees, Council, or Committee Members will be addressed in accordance with applicable Town policies and procedures, including personnel policies and the Council Code of Conduct.

Where online conduct creates safety concerns for staff, elected officials, or members of the public, the Town may take appropriate steps, including escalation through internal processes or referral to external authorities where required.

12. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner in response to changes in legislation, platform functionality, or municipal needs.

The Town may also review its use of social media on an ongoing basis to support effective communication and alignment with best practices.



1. ACCOUNT CREATION

New social media accounts require approval from the CAO (or designate).

All accounts must be created using Town-issued email addresses.

2. ACCESS AND SECURITY

Account credentials must be stored securely and only shared with authorized staff.

A minimum of two Town employees must have administrative access to each account, where the platform allows.

The CAO (or designate) must have access to all account credentials.

3. ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

Designated staff responsible for account management must maintain continuity of access to official social media accounts.

Access must be removed, updated, or transferred promptly when staff roles change, responsibilities shift, or employment ends.

4. ACCOUNT DEACTIVATION AND PLATFORM CHANGES

Official social media accounts may be discontinued, archived, or deactivated where they no longer support operational needs, communication objectives, available resources, or where platform functionality no longer aligns with the Town's requirements.

Prior to deactivating or discontinuing an account, the Town should, where feasible:

- Consider records retention, legal, operational, or business requirements
- Remove or transfer administrative access
- Update account information or profile details to redirect users to active Town communication channels
- Notify users of significant changes to official communication channels, where appropriate
- Secure or remove accounts to reduce cybersecurity and reputational risks

The Town may modify, suspend, discontinue, or migrate its use of social media platforms at its discretion in response to changing technology, platform functionality, community needs, or operational considerations.

5. BRANDING AND SETUP

Accounts must clearly identify the Town of Lunenburg.

Profiles should include links to the Town's official website and applicable policies

6. CONTENT APPROVAL AND POSTING

All content must be reviewed and approved by the CAO or designate prior to posting, unless otherwise authorized.

The CAO, or designate, may approve categories of routine or recurring content in advance and delegate authority to designated staff to post this content without individual review.

Only authorized staff may create, edit, publish, or respond through official accounts.

Staff must not post or respond on official accounts without authorization.

7. ACCESSIBLE CONTENT PRACTICES

The Town will make reasonable efforts to ensure that social media content is accessible to a broad range of users. Where possible, staff should:

- Use clear, plain language in post text
- Use a mix of upper and lower case letters; avoid using all capital letters, as they are more difficult to read
- Use emojis sparingly and in a way that supports understanding; avoid using emojis as bullet points or within sentences, and avoid long strings of emojis
- Use camel case for hashtags to improve readability (e.g., #TownOfLunenburg)
- Avoid placing large amounts of essential information within images
- Ensure key information included in images is also provided in the post text
- Add alternative text (alt text) to images where possible
- Consider including image descriptions within the post text to provide additional context or interpretation for users
- Include captions for videos where available
- Use simple, high-contrast visuals that are easy to read
- Provide links to accessible webpages or documents where appropriate

8. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

In emergency situations, designated staff may post time-sensitive information without standard approval where necessary. Information should be verified to the extent possible and updated as new information becomes available.

Social media is intended to supplement, not replace, official emergency communications systems, emergency alerts, or direct communication channels.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

Where the Town is conducting public engagement activities, designated staff should make reasonable efforts to communicate participation opportunities through appropriate channels.

Where feasible, communications regarding engagement opportunities should include:

- The purpose of the engagement activity
- Participation methods and timelines
- Relevant contact information or links
- Alternative methods for participation, where available
- Information on how feedback will be used, where appropriate

Where inquiries are received through social media channels, staff may redirect residents to appropriate staff, departments, or formal processes.

Where feasible, engagement opportunities should be communicated through channels appropriate to the intended audience and purpose of the engagement activity.

10. THIRD-PARTY CONTENT REQUESTS

10.1 Requests for Promotion

Requests from external organizations, businesses, or individuals to share content on the Town's social media channels may be considered at the Town's discretion.

9.2 Assessment Criteria

When reviewing requests, staff may consider:

- Alignment with municipal services, programs, or priorities
- Relevance to the broader community
- Whether the event or initiative is open to the public
- Timeliness of the request
- Available capacity and scheduling

9.3 Submission Expectations

Requests should:

- Include clear and accurate information
- Be submitted with reasonable notice
- Include any relevant links or supporting materials

9.4 Decision-Making

Final decisions on whether to share third-party content will be made by the CAO or designate. The CAO, or designate, may delegate authority or pre-approve categories of third-party content to designated staff for routine or low-risk content.

11. MONITORING AND MODERATION

Town social media channels will be monitored during regular business hours.

Where comments or public interaction features are enabled, staff may monitor activity and take action consistent with the Social Media Policy, including hiding, removing, restricting, or documenting content where appropriate.

Staff are not expected to continuously monitor social media interactions.

12. COMMENT CONTROLS

The CAO or designate may determine when comments or public interaction features will be enabled or disabled based on operational requirements, engagement objectives, safety concerns, platform functionality, or resource capacity.

13. RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

Content may be captured (such as screenshots) where required for:

- Complaints
- Investigations
- Legal matters
- Safety concerns
- Records retention requirements
- Operational purposes where appropriate

Routine archiving of all content is not required.

14. ESCALATION

Content raising safety, legal, privacy, or reputational concerns will be escalated to the CAO or designate as soon as practicable. Where appropriate, matters may be referred to:

- legal counsel
- law enforcement
- internal HR processes

15. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The CAO, or designate, will assign responsibility for the management of the Town's social media accounts.

Designated staff are responsible for:

- Content drafting
- Posting
- Monitoring activity where comments or public interaction features are enabled
- Reporting issues or concerns