



Town of Plaistow

Technology/Social Media Policy

THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE PLACED IN YOUR PERSONNEL FILE

This policy applies to all employees and Town Officials who are employed by the Town.

The Town of Plaistow understands that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log, or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the Town, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in this code and guide apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects members, clients, vendors, people who work on behalf of the Town's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Carefully read this policy, and the Town's Handbook, to ensure that your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence of similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct, such as release of confidential client information, will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, vendors and people in the community. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-

related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our grievance process than by posting complaints to a social media outlet.

Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating, that disparage individuals in the community or employees or that might constitute harassment. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, genetic information or any other status protected by law. This policy is not written to interfere with an employee's right to disclose activities or information that the employee reasonably believes violates the state's whistleblower law (RSA 275-E:2); represents a gross mismanagement or waste of public funds, property, or manpower; or evidences an abuse of authority or a danger to the public health and safety.

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the Town, co-employees, vendors, or individuals in the community.

Maintain the confidentiality of Town private or confidential information. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal Town or residents confidential communication. Do not create a link from your social media site to the Town website without identifying yourself as an employee of the Town. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the Town, unless you are expressly directed to do so by the Town Manager or designee.

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by a supervisor or consistent with the Town's computer use policy. Do not use Town email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools for personal use.

Additionally, improper use of computerized information includes the following non-exhaustive list of activities:

- 1. Obtaining information or using any Department resource in violation of law, regulation, policy, procedure, or other rule.*
- 2. Release or use of records for personal or financial gain, or to benefit or cause injury to a third party.*

- 3. Use of any department resource for access to or distribution of indecent or obscene material, including pornography.*
- 4. Harassing other users, or tampering with any computing systems, and/or damaging or altering the software components or web based content.*
- 5. Use of Town technology resources and social media for unapproved fundraising, commercial or political purposes, benevolent association activities, or any other activities not specifically approved or related to a business necessity of the Town of Plaistow.*
- 6. Any unauthorized activity which adversely affects the availability, confidentiality, or integrity of any system resource and/or related data.*
- 7. Engaging in acts that are deliberately wasteful of computing resources or which unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others. These acts include, but are not limited to, broadcasting unsolicited mailings or other messages unrelated to the business necessity of the Town of Plaistow.*

Unauthorized Access: Unauthorized access of Town technology is prohibited. Employees are not permitted to use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless authorized to do so or unless they have received prior clearance from an authorized Town representative. Town computers and information technology is for business use by Town personnel. Non-employees may not use Town technology without permission from a Department Supervisor.

Use of another employee's account, user name, or password, or accessing another's files without their consent (by anyone other than authorized representatives of the Town) is strictly prohibited. Obtaining, or trying to obtain, other users' passwords, or using programs that compromise security in any way is prohibited.

Town-owned computers, including laptops and smart phones shall not be used for personal or private social networking except upon written authorization by the employee's immediate supervisor. Social networking shall be defined as communicating and sharing information between two or more individuals in an online or internet community, such as the use of Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, AOL, and similar websites. (These guidelines do not apply to private email accounts or the exchange of private text messages as may otherwise be allowed at appropriate times during the workday.)

Use of privately-owned computers or hand-held devices using the Town's internet connection services during the work day shall be allowed during authorized break periods only.

Employees are prohibited from using any social media websites to publicly display Town-owned badges, uniforms, logos, insignia, tools, equipment, vehicles or other images of Town-owned property in a manner that is not consistent with existing departmental rules, regulations, guidelines, or standard operating procedures. (These guidelines do not apply in the event that a department has no such rules, regulations or procedures.)

Employees shall not identify themselves or refer to other Town employees by job title, rank, classification or position when engaged in social networking, except as otherwise permitted by law, or when specifically authorized in writing by the employee's immediate supervisor for the exercise of official duties.

Employees shall not post, transmit or distribute any images obtained from a work place or while on-duty, to include scenes of accidents, crimes, fires, training sites or any other municipal activity except upon written authorization from the employee's immediate supervisor. (This guideline does not apply to images made during a public meeting as otherwise allowed under RSA 91-A:2.) The unauthorized release or distribution of any photograph or video recording of an incident victim will be cause for immediate discharge as a Town employee.

Employees who participate in social networking while off-duty shall maintain an appropriate level of professionalism and decorum when making reference to municipal operations or other Town employees, agents or officials.

The Town recognizes all employees have constitutionally protected rights pertaining to freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and protections afforded under the Whistle Blower's Protection Act. In addition, employees have a right to discuss their wages, hours and working conditions with co-workers and others. However, any social media displays of willful or deliberate malicious acts that result in the disruption of workplace relationships will be treated as though the behavior took place while in the employment of the Town. The following social media situations by employees are likely to result in the imposition of disciplinary action, up to and including discharge:

(i) Behavior that is directed towards a Town official using language that is defamatory, slanderous or unlawful;

(ii) Conduct that interferes with the maintenance of essential work-place discipline;

(iii) Actions of an obscene or derogatory nature that damage or impair the reputation and/or efficiency of municipal operations;

(iv) Cyber-bullying directed towards any Town employee.

The Town reserves the right to require employees and candidates for employment to provide access to their personal social media website(s) as part of a background examination or an official investigation that is specifically related to their job responsibilities or in the event of a credible allegation that the Town's policies on use of technology, (including these guidelines) have been violated.

The use of private or personal social media shall not be considered part of the scope of an employee's duties except when authorized in writing by an employee's immediate supervisor. Accordingly, in most cases the Town shall not indemnify employees from personal financial loss and/or expense, including reasonable attorney fees, for any claims, demands, suits, or judgments resulting in damages arising from any matters that are published, posted, transmitted, broadcasted, displayed or disseminated on a private or personal social media website.

All social media communications by Town officials about governmental proceedings or the publication of governmental records shall be subject to the New Hampshire Right To Know Law and public access pursuant to the provisions of RSA 91-A, including, but not limited to (a) the obligation to preserve such records for specific time periods (usually measured in number of years); and (b) the remedies (and possibly penalties) as set forth in RSA 91-A:8.

Improper use of Town technology devices may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Unacceptable uses of Town technology shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- *The unauthorized transmission of highly confidential or sensitive customer or proprietary material outside of the office;*

- *The unauthorized use for any business or commercial purposes other than the delivery of municipal services;*
- *Misrepresentation or non-disclosure of an employee's actual identity or affiliation with the Town of Plaistow;*
- *The unauthorized transmission of harassing, intimidating, abusive or offensive material;*
- *The unauthorized disclosure, interception, disruption or alteration of electronic messages or data, including confidential, sensitive and non-public materials;*
- *Soliciting, receiving or transmitting sexually explicit material of any type;*
- *Posting unauthorized newsgroup or bulletin board messages on behalf of the Town;*
- *Causing, directly or indirectly, excessive strain on any computing facilities or resources, or unwarranted or unsolicited interference with others' use of technology devices such as chain letters, viruses, spam, etc.;*
- *Using technology devices for any purpose that violates federal or state laws, including but not limited to gambling, copyright violations or software licensing infringement;*
- *The introduction or installation of any unauthorized software, hardware, discs, files, downloads, cookies, surveys, scans or other technology devices;*
- *The incurring of any expenses or fees that are not specifically authorized by a Supervisor, or conduct which results in such expenses to the Town;*
- *Having or using passwords on the employee's computer which are not known to the Town.*

The Town prohibits retaliating against any co-employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

These guidelines are to be construed as the Town's exercise of its management rights in the determination of the methods and means by which information, documentation, photographs, video, audio, data, electronic files, passwords, communications, and messages related to official government functions are to be publicly conveyed (or withheld from distribution) by Town employees through social media websites.

Any violation of these guidelines shall be subject to disciplinary action as otherwise set forth herein; to be consistent with the provisions of the Town's Personnel Policies and/or collective bargaining agreements as may be applicable hereto.

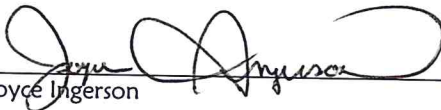
If you have any questions or need further guidance, please contact the Town Manager.

Approved and Adopted by the Board of Selectmen on:


Date


Steve Ranlett, Chairman


John Sherman, Vice Chairman


Joyce Ingerson

Tammy Bergeron


Julian Kiszka

By signing below, I agree to abide by this Town policy.

Employee Name

(please print)

Title:

Signature:

Date: