

Social Media Policy

Purpose

The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) uses select social media tools and platforms as a way:

- to engage with MHLS staff, member libraries, and public library stakeholders, community partners, and residents, within the system's service area
- to exchange information on system and member library services and activities
- to promote the value and importance of libraries in general
- to advocate for public libraries and the public's right to free and open information

This policy applies to personnel designated as social media account managers and the MHLS social media audience. It provides a framework for the proper management of the MHLS social media accounts, including best practices for content creation and security, and addresses acceptable behavior by the public through MHLS social media accounts. For the organization's policy on personal use of social media please see the MHLS Employee Handbook.

Definitions

Social media is defined as any online platform or service that allows users to create, share, or exchange information, ideas, and content with others, such as, but not limited to, Facebook, X, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

The MHLS social media audience is defined as anyone residing in the MHLS service area within Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam, and Ulster counties in New York State.

Operational Guidelines for Administration:

- Social media accounts may be established with the approval of the Executive Director and must use internal procedures for email address and password management.
- Social media accounts must have the designated staff member and their supervisor named as an Administrator.
- All accounts should incorporate MHLS branding.
- Posts represent MHLS and the content created and shared is a reflection of the organization. Social media posts should be respectful, professional, and in compliance with MHLS's policies, procedures, and values. The tone should be consistent with the communication and marketing strategy of our organization.
- Content should be written from the point of view of the "We," which represents the System as a whole.
- MHLS's social media accounts should be used for official business purposes only.
- All social media posts should be relevant to MHLS's mission, goals, and services.
- All social media posts should be current, accurate, and relevant to the intended audience.

- Posts and comments should be friendly yet professional and should not include the expression of personal, political, or religious views.
- The System does not provide non-System related advice to library patrons or community members.
- Employees and representatives should avoid engaging in personal attacks, discriminatory comments, or any other behavior that could be considered offensive or inappropriate.
- Employees and representatives should be aware of their online presence and the potential impact of their posts on MHLS's reputation and image.
- Employees and representatives should not disclose any confidential or proprietary information about MHLS, its member libraries or their patrons.
- Employees and representatives should report any concerns or issues related to MHLS's social media accounts to their supervisor or the designated account manager.
- All other System policies apply equally to the use of social media.

Intellectual Property:

Employees and representatives should not use any copyrighted, trademarked, or proprietary materials on the cooperative library system's social media accounts without obtaining proper permission or licensing.

Monitoring Accounts

Posts and comments are moderated by System staff. MHLS reserves the right, within its sole discretion, to remove submissions or comments that are unlawful or violate this policy. While comments will not be edited by MHLS personnel, a comment may be deleted if it violates the comment policy described here.

- Comments should be related to the posted topic for MHLS's social media page or post.
- Social media accounts will be monitored for content that violates acceptable behavior including, but not limited to:
 - Selling, Solicitation, commercial interests, and spam
 - Obscene, threatening, or harassing language
 - Personal attacks of any kind or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, age, or religious group, gender, sexual orientation, or disability status.
 - Comments advocating illegal activity or posting of material that violates copyrights or trademarks of others .
 - Imminent or true threats against the System, its member libraries, its staff, its Board of Trustees, or community members.
- Content cannot be removed on the basis of disagreement with a viewpoint.
- Content can be removed with the agreement of the designated social media account manager's supervisor and the Executive Director.
- If content created by a community member is removed, it should be printed and filed for one year.
- Repeat violations of this policy by a community member may result in temporary or permanent removal from the System's social media page(s).

- A Blocked User may appeal their blocked status by sending a written request by certified mail to the Library System Director. This must include the user's full name, mailing address, platform id, email, the date content was posted, on which of the MHLS social media platform the content appears, and a list of the reasons for appeal. The Executive Director or their representative will review the appeal and notify the User of their decision by mail. If the individual is not satisfied with the decision, a written appeal may be submitted within 10 business days to the Board of Trustees by certified mail. If the Board plans to address the appeal at their meeting, the individual will be notified of when and where the meeting will be held. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of public comments. The decision of the Board is final.
- You are subject to the Terms of Service (TOS) of the host site. Information (photos, videos, etc.) you share with or post to official MHLS pages is also subject to the TOS of the host site and may be used by the owners of the host site for their own purposes. For more information, consult the host website's TOS.

Reconsideration of Social Media Post

Individuals wishing to express complaints or concerns about the content of MHLS created social media posts, or public comments posted on the MHLS social media platforms should use the MHLS *Reconsideration Form* found at midhudson.org

Privacy

MHLS social media accounts will not be used to collect information about library patrons or community members. However, social media is a public forum, and users should have no expectation of privacy when posting, commenting, or interacting on social media sites.

Disclaimer

MHLS is not responsible or liable for the content of postings by third parties on any of the System social media accounts, and such postings do not reflect the opinions or positions of the System, its staff, or its Board of Trustees. Social media users should exercise their own judgment about the quality and accuracy of any information presented through social media.

Ongoing Evaluation

The role of social media in relation to the mission of MHLS will be evaluated periodically by the Executive Director, and System staff, and may be changed or terminated at any time at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Questions or concerns regarding MHLS social media accounts or this policy should be directed to the Executive Director.