

**RESOLUTION APPROVING A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF
READINGTON, COUNTY OF HUNTERDON AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Readington ("Township") wishes to adopt a social media policy to establish enforceable rules and guidelines for the use of social media sites such as Facebook, Youtube and Twitter, and any other communication media that disseminate information to the public; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee believes that a social media policy is necessary to expand and facilitate the dissemination of information from the Township to its residents, taxpayers, and to the general public, while at the same time, assuring that communications made on behalf of the Township are properly authorized and in correct form.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The preambles recited in the above "whereas" clauses are incorporated as if set forth herein in full.
2. The Township hereby establishes and adopts the Social Media Policy in the form attached hereto.
3. This social media Policy shall apply to all municipal departments, committees, commissions, boards, advisory committees, employees, and volunteers, as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency, official, or organization permitted by the Township to post on the Township's social media sites.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution shall be provided to:

1. All departments of the Township;
2. Affiliated government organizations of the Township, including, but not limited to committees, commissions, advisory committees, and boards.
3. Township attorney.

CERTIFICATION

I, **KARIN M PARKER**, Clerk of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Township Committee on the 3rd day of April, 2023.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of this Township this 4th day of April, 2023.



Karin M Parker, RMC
Municipal Clerk

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON, NEW JERSEY**

PURPOSE

This policy sets forth guidelines for the establishment and use by the Township of Readington ("The Township") of its social media sites as a means of conveying strategic Township-related information to its residents and visitors. The purpose and the scope of this social media policy is to address and regulate official use of the Township's social media platforms. This policy does not address Township employees' personal social networking. The Township has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is posted on behalf of the Township on its social media sites.

The purpose of this social media policy is to establish enforceable rules for the use of social media by Township officers and employees when engaged in Township business in their official capacity. Rules are necessary to assure that communications made on behalf of the Township are properly authorized and in correct form; that communications to the municipality by means of social media which can be viewed by the public are appropriate and pertinent; that all communications to the municipality are related to posted municipal information; and that the sender is clearly and fully informed that a message received by means of social media is not a substitute for required reporting procedures.

For purposes of this policy, "social media" is understood to be content, open to response and comment, created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet to facilitate the easy sharing of information, pictures, videos, and news articles. Examples of social media include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. For purposes of this policy, "comments" include responses to posts, as well as related information, articles, and pictures. It also includes other communication mediums created by the Township, including but not limited to Nixle.

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all Township agencies and departments, including officials, employees, and volunteers, as well as any affiliated governmental or non-governmental agency or official and/or board, committee, commission, advisory committee, or sub-committee permitted by the Township to post on Township social media sites.

GENERAL POLICY

The objective of the use of social media by the Township or its departments is to expand and facilitate the dissemination of information from the Township to its residents, businesses, and the general public.

1. No Township social media site shall be established without prior approval by Ordinance or Resolution of the Township Committee. The following social media sites are approved under the direction of the Township Committee:

- a. "Readington Township, NJ" Facebook page — Open to comments from the public.
2. The Township social media site, named "Readington Township, NJ" Facebook page, shall be administered by the Township Administrator or his/her designee(s).
3. The Township social media platforms shall clearly set forth that they are maintained by the Township, that they follow this Social Media Policy, and shall clearly post a link back to the official Township website.
4. The Township social media platforms shall not be used for making any official communications or notifications whatsoever to the Township, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, requesting an inspection, or giving notice required by any statute, ordinance, or regulation, such as but not limited to notices of claim. Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Township social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting official communications.
5. This social media policy shall be placed on the Township Website and on all Readington Township social media pages listed above in section 1 of the General Policies above.
6. The Administrator's designee(s) shall monitor the Readington social media pages to ensure adherence to both this Social Media Policy. The Township has the right and will restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law as determined by the Township Attorney. Any content removed based on these guidelines will be retained by the Administrator's designee pursuant to the applicable Township retention policy, including the time, date, and identity of the poster, when available.
7. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
8. The Township website at <https://www.readingtontwpnj.gov/> will remain the Township's primary internet presence.
9. The Township social media sites, their use, and this Policy are subject to all applicable federal and New Jersey state laws and regulations, including, but not limited to the Open Public Records Act ("OPRA"), and archiving/records retention regulations, policies and procedures. All Township social media sites shall state that material posted and commented thereon is subject to OPRA and New Jersey law and regulations governing same.
10. Employees and Volunteers representing the Township's government via its social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Township and in accordance with all its policies for employee behavior in the Township of Readington.

11. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time with formal action by Ordinance or Resolution by the Township Committee.
12. This policy governs all social media use by or on behalf of the Township and/or its departments.
13. No Township employee may use a Township social media site(s) either to "friend" or otherwise establish social networking relationship between the employee and a third person.
14. Social media platforms are operated by a third party separate from the Township, and social media sites occasionally become inoperable. The Township reserves the right to disable its social media accounts either temporarily or permanently at any time. There is no guarantee of a specific period of time the social media accounts will be active. The disabling of the site or platform can be done by the authorized designee of that site.

COMMENT POLICY

1. As a public entity, the Township must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
2. The intended purpose behind establishing the Township social media sites is to disseminate information from the Township.
3. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Township social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Township, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Township.
4. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the Township's internet or social media sites will be reported to law enforcement, and the suspected perpetrator will be denied access to the sites pending investigation.
5. The Township reserves the right to block or deny access to its social media sites for any individual, business, or organization that violates the Township of Readington policies at any time and without prior notice. The Township will attempt to notify the individual of the denial of access.
6. All comments posted to any Township sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, located at <http://www.facebook.com>. The Township reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsible action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township as authorized.

7. Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on Township social media.
8. Comments which are related to the topic at hand shall be permitted to remain, regardless of whether they are favorable or unfavorable.

PROHIBITED CONTENT

Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on the Township's social media sites and are subject to deletion and/or restriction by the appointed designee(s):

1. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language, or sexually suggestive or explicit content links to such materials. Any image or link containing minors or suspected minors in sexual and/or provocative situations will be reported to law enforcement;
2. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity;
3. Comments containing vulgar, offensive, threatening, or harassing language, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations such that they could be given a defamatory meaning;
4. Threats to any person or organization;
5. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale. This prohibition does not apply to advertising Township's activities.
6. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
7. Encouragement of illegal activity or illegal activity;
8. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
9. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party. The Township does not permit or allow copyright infringing activities and/or infringement of intellectual property rights on its website or social media sites and will remove any and all content and submissions if properly notified that such content and/or submission infringes on another's intellectual property rights;

10. Private contact information such as addresses and phone numbers, no matter how easily obtained elsewhere, as well as personal information of a person other than the poster, although this limitation shall not be limited to tagging an individual in a post;
11. Spamming or repetitive content;
12. Comments from children under 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. By posting on a Township media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old. Parents are responsible for any minor child's posting or comments;
13. Content that incites violence;
14. Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on Township social media.
15. The Township and/or its designees controlling its social media accounts reserve the right to hide comments that do not pertain to the specific subject matter of the initial post.
16. A "designee" or a person appointed by the Township Committee is never to be allowed to transfer their social media account information or allow someone access to their account on their behalf without prior written authorization from the Township Council.
17. Content that solicits political support or political contributions.

BREACH OF POLICY

1. The Township Administrator, or their designee(s) shall be required to remove internet postings on Township social media sites which are deemed to constitute a breach of Policy, as determined by the Administrator or their designee(s) subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements. The Township's social media records will be preserved pursuant to all relevant records schedules and for the required retention period pursuant to applicable law. The records will be preserved in an authentic format along with metadata. Social media records will be indexed based on criteria such as date, content and keywords, to facilitate their easy retrieval. The Township of Readington will use an automated archiving solution to comply with applicable public records law and fulfill its retention requirements.
2. Any social media site created by the Township remains the property of the Township, including all the followers and friends generated by the site. If the person who created the site leaves the employment of the Township, they must relinquish everything related to the site including user names, passwords and/or access codes or information.

TERMS OF USE DISCLOSURE

1. **Information Disclaimer -** The Township of Readington, and its officers, employees, or agents shall not be liable for damages or losses of any kind arising out of or in connection with the use or performance of information, including but not limited to, damages or losses caused by reliance upon the accuracy or timeliness of any such information, or damages incurred from the viewing, distributing, or copying of those materials.
2. **Linking Policy - Links to External Sites -** The Township of Readington social media sites may contain links to outside websites and may not be controlled or maintained by the Township. These websites are not owned, operated, controlled or reviewed by the Township of Readington. These links are provided solely as a courtesy and convenience to the visitor. The Township of Readington, its officers or employees, exercise no control over the organizations, views, accuracy, copyright or trademark, compliance or the legality of the material contained in these outside websites. The Township of Readington, its officers or employees, do not sponsor, endorse, or approve the information, content, proceeds, materials, opinions or services contained on such outside websites. The visitor proceeds to these outside websites at his/her own risk. The Township of Readington specifically disclaims any and all liability from damages, which may result from the accessing of a third-party site, which is linked to the Township of Readington website or from reliance upon only such information.
3. **Endorsement Disclaimer -** Reference in this website to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by Township of Readington or its officers, employees or agents.
4. **Copyright and Trademark Limitations -** The Township of Readington makes no warrant that materials contained herein are free of copyright or trademark claims or other restrictions or limitations on free use or display. Making a copy of such material may be subject to copyright or trademark laws.
5. **Use of material from this site -** The Township of Readington has made the content of these pages available to the public and anyone may view, copy or distribute information found here without obligation for non-commercial, personal use only, unless otherwise stated on particular material or information to which a restriction on free use may apply. The design of this site, original graphics, and original content are all copyrighted by the Township of Readington and may not be re-engineered, distributed, modified, transmitted, re-used, reposted, or duplicated without the express written permission of the Township of Readington in each instance. All requests to use any part of the original design, code, graphics or content of this site should be made via e-mail to the Township Administrator or Township Clerk.

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- 6. Unauthorized Modifications - Unauthorized attempts to modify or otherwise alter any information or image stored on any Township of Readington website may result in criminal prosecution.**