

Social Media Policy and Guidelines

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Policy statement

Banyule City Council ('Council') is committed to the effective management of social media and the opportunities it provides for dynamic and interactive two-way communications and community engagement while ensuring Council's corporate brand and reputation is protected and promoted.

Guiding principles

We see social media as a way to:

- Increase accessibility, community engagement, consultation and civic participation.
- Keep the community informed of Council activities.
- Enhance the reputation of Council and demonstrate trusted, responsive leadership.

Our social media spaces should align to the Banyule Community Vision 2041:

"We in Banyule are a thriving, sustainable, inclusive and connected community. We are engaged, we belong and we value and protect our environment."

Be respectful of Traditional Custodians.

Banyule City Council is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as Traditional Custodians of the land and we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's history.

And reflect our Diversity Statement:

Our community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. We are committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone; principles which empower, foster harmony and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community.

Council is committed to providing and maintaining a safe work environment, and protecting the health, safety and welfare of all staff and visitors. We believe our social media should operate as other written and verbal communication methods; people should show one another respect, and encourage diversity, inclusivity and connection.

Purpose, scope and application

The purpose of this Policy is to provide an understanding and guidance for the appropriate use of social media and applies to all employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of Banyule City Council when acting in an

official capacity and/or representing Banyule City Council on its corporate social media platforms and digital spaces (defined below).

Term	Definition
Social Media	A wide and evolving range of online interactions and behaviours on many different platforms. Platforms include social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, or Reddit; professional networking sites like LinkedIn; video sharing sites and apps like YouTube and TikTok; blogs; online forums and communities; comments sections on news articles; and, in some cases, more seemingly private tools like email.
Social Media Behaviours	Posting content, uploading pictures (including themed 'frames' or captions for these on some sites); participating in online petitions and fundraisers; commenting on posts, blogs, Instagram photos or YouTube videos; sharing memes; 'liking' other people's content; and sending direct or private messages on networking platforms.
Employee	For the purpose of this policy, an employee includes persons either paid or unpaid (i.e. volunteers, students on work-placement), contractors and agency staff whilst engaged to conduct work on behalf of and for Banyule City Council.
Workplace	Workplace is defined to extend beyond the physical boundaries of the workplace to require Banyule City Council to ensure the safety of all employees in all aspects of the conduct of Council's business, even if that conduct occurs outside the place at which Council business is conducted.

Scope and application

This Policy applies to and must be complied with by all employees (including permanent and part time, casuals, fixed term contractors, agency staff, volunteers and students on work-placement).

Councillor use of social media is covered within the **Councillor Code of Conduct**.

This Policy will also apply to agencies and individuals who provide services to Banyule City Council and will be included in all relevant external supplier contracts.

The Policy applies to those digital spaces where people may comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload and share content, including, but not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Blogs, forums and discussion boards
- Citizen journalism and news sites
- Instant messaging facilities
- Online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Podcasts and vodcasts
- Video and photo sharing sites (e.g. YouTube)
- Streaming platforms
- Google reviews
- Any other relevant digital platforms.

Organisational standards and expectations

Staff will have access to corporate social media platforms for business purposes with approval from the Communications Unit.

When using social media, ensure that you:

- Adhere to Council's codes of conduct, policies and procedures.
- Behave with courtesy, honesty and respect.
- Comply with relevant laws and regulations.
- Reinforce the integrity, reputation and values of Banyule City Council.
- Ensure communications are professional, accessible and compliant with Banyule's corporate identity.

Staff are expected to demonstrate a standard of conduct and behaviour that is consistent with Council's Code of Conduct and Values and Behaviours, and relevant legislation, regulations and policies.

The **Personal Use of Social Media Policy** outlines organisational expectations of staff using personal social media accounts.

The **Councillor Code of Conduct** sets standards and guidelines for the appropriate use of media and personal social media accounts for Banyule councillors.

Failure to comply with this Policy will be managed in accordance with Council's Managing Conduct and Performance Policy. Any action taken will include consideration of the circumstances, frequency of the occurrence and the role and impact of the breach on the duties carried out by the position.

Guidelines for content

All employees in the course of their employment have a responsibility to adhere to the following guidelines for posting content:

Keep a respectful tone

Always be courteous, patient and respectful of others' opinions, including detractors.

Be responsive and informative

Try to respond within 2-4 hours during weekdays or the next business day after a weekend or public holiday. If you can't supply an answer with the necessary information, clearly communicate a target response time. If possible, make it easy for audiences to reach the appropriate Council department by publishing relevant contact details. Do not comment outside your area of expertise or commit Council to actions or undertakings.

Be accurate and helpful

Be accurate, constructive, helpful and informative. Correct any errors as soon as practicable. Do not publish information or make statements which you know to be false or may reasonably be taken to be misleading or deceptive.

Be transparent

Be clear about professional identity. Do not use fictitious names or identities or participate anonymously or covertly via a third party or agency. Do not seek to buy or recompense favourable social media commentary. Encourage all online publishers to be open and transparent in how they engage on Council sites.

Show personality but not strong opinions

Post with your real first name and be personable. Always be mindful of Council's Staff Code of Conduct when discussing or commenting on Council matters. In general, don't express personal opinions. Distance Council from comments made by public and other outside interests that may be considered contentious.

Never discriminate or defame

Be mindful of anti-discrimination laws and do not publish statements or information which may be discriminatory. Do not comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload or share content that is malicious, discriminatory or defamatory. This includes statements which may negatively impact the reputation of Council, another organisation, group or person.

Keep content accessible

Be mindful of the requisite government web standards for accessibility. Information made available via non-compliant platforms should be made accessible in another form where practical.

Respect people's privacy

Be sensitive to the privacy of others. Seek permission from anyone who appears in any photographs, video or other footage before sharing these via any form of social media. If asked to remove materials, do so as soon as practicable.

Adhere to copyright

Seek permission from the creator or copyright owner to use or reproduce copyright material, including applications, audio tracks (speeches, songs), footage (video), graphics (graphs, charts and logos), images, artwork, photographs, publications or music. Also seek permission before publishing or uploading material in which the intellectual property rights, such as trademarks, are owned by a third party, such as company logos.

No political bias

Do not endorse any political affinity or allegiance.

Keep private information private

Only discuss publicly available information. Do not disclose confidential information, internal discussions or decisions of Council, employees or third parties. This includes publishing confidential, personal or private information where there is sufficient detail for potential identification of councillors, Council staff or third parties.

Dealing with the media on socials

Refer all media enquiries to the Communications team as per Council's Media Policy.

Moderation of content

Council ensures that any social media sites created or contributed to can be readily edited, improved or removed and appropriately moderated.

Staff should moderate content only during work hours in line with Council's customer service centres.

The following content is not permitted under any circumstances:

- Material that would offend contemporary standards of taste and decency.
- Discriminatory or disparaging material in relation to a person or group.
- Statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment.
- Abusive, profane or sexual language.
- Content which is false or misleading.
- Content not relating to the subject matter of that blog, board, forum or site, and/or disrupting a conversation.
- Material which would bring the Council into disrepute.
- Personal details or references to councillors, Council staff or third parties, which may breach privacy laws.
- Confidential information about Council or third parties.
- Copyright or trade mark protected materials.
- Illegal material or materials designed to encourage law breaking.
- Materials that could compromise Council, employee or system safety.
- Materials which would breach applicable laws (defamation, privacy, trade practices, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks).
- Spam, meaning the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages.
- Links to non-vetted websites to protect against phishing and spamming.
- Posts that violate the terms of use of social media platforms.

Note: Posts in languages other than English may be removed if the message cannot be translated effectively.

Roles and responsibilities

The following table outlines the main roles and responsibilities relating to social media across Council teams.

Role	Responsibilities
Communications Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the creation of any new social media channels. Decommission social media channels at the request of staff or when they are no longer deemed 'live' or useful. • Communications team has authority to act immediately in responding to social media communications and to make decisions on issues management and when to escalate to the Manager – Governance and Communications. This may apply to issues relating to the personal safety and wellbeing of both staff and the public. • Manage users for all Banyule social media channels, including adding new users and removing users who no longer work for Banyule. • Provide advice and assist with the development of communication plans that use social media. • Manage the main corporate social media accounts/tools/sites channels at Banyule, including monitoring and moderating, deleting of comments and banning users. • Provide social media leadership, guidance and training to the rest of the organisation, especially anyone outside of Communications who is managing or creating content for a social media channel. • Educate councillors, staff and contractors about this policy and their responsibilities when using social media. • Seek legal advice as appropriate where an issue is likely to be contentious or may create legal risk for Council. • Provide support and guidance to all employees in relation to their rights and obligations under this Policy. • Ensure clear processes are in place for parties to raise questions and/or concerns and clearly communicate and promote the policy to all employees.

Role	Responsibilities
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice from Communications on using social media and developing a communications plan to support business strategy. • Request permission from Communications for the creation of any new social media channels. • Seek training and development for using social media. Communications can assist. • Understand and comply with the provisions in this policy. • Ensure contractors are provided with a copy of this policy. • Familiarise self with the End User Licence Agreements of any external social media tools being used. • Inform Communications about any users who need to be added/removed from social media account management. • Have a plan for decommissioning any social media accounts that are no longer required – and ask Communications to close the channel.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers have a responsibility to model positive behaviours and ensure all Employees and contractors under their supervision are aware of the terms of this Policy. • Ensure staff consult with Communications on their planned use of social media. • Ensure contractors are provided with a copy of the social media policy. • Offer advice and training for staff using social media.
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to support delivery of council business via social media.
People & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support and guidance to all employees in relation to their rights and obligations under this Policy. • Manage any notification/advice from Employees in accordance with the Procedures. • Manage any breaches of the Policy in accordance with Council's Managing Conduct and Performance Policy.

Review of Policy

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this Policy. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be made through consultation with staff, the relevant unions and with the approval of the Executive Management Team ('EMT').

Disputes

Any dispute raised should be addressed in accordance with the Dispute Prevention & Settlement Procedure provisions of the Enterprise Agreement.

Support and advice

Additional support is available via Council's Employee Assistance Program, Access EAP. This is a complimentary confidential service and can be contacted on 1800 818 728.

Related Council documents

- Social Media Community Guidelines
- Personal Use of Social Media Policy
- Social Media Response Flowchart
- Gender Impact Assessment – Social Media Policy and Guidelines
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Banyule Community Vision 2041
- Corporate Communications Plan
- Photography Release Form
- Media Comment and Press Release Guidelines
- Corporate Brand Guidelines
- Corporate Identity Style Manual Design and Writing Guide
- Managing Conduct and Performance Policy
- Information Security Policy
- General User IT Guidelines
- Banyule Information Privacy Guidelines
- Records Information Management Policy
- Banyule Management Manual

Relevant legislation

Includes the following:

- Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Defamation Act 2005 (Vic)
- Model Defamation Amendment Provisions 2020
- Fair Trading Act 1999 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)
- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Spam Act 2003 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic).