

Hamilton County Board of Elections

16.

Social Media Policy

The Hamilton County Board of Elections ("Board") hereby adopts the following amended Social Media Policy:

The Board recognizes the importance that social media has attained as a tool to communicate to constituents and expand access to public information. The following policy is meant to properly govern the Board's participation on various social media platforms.

A. Goals and Objectives

1. To increase access to election information through additional outlets.
2. To reach the public with important election information.
3. To educate the public about important elections dates and deadlines.

B. Social Media Accounts

Creation and deletion of accounts will be at the discretion of the Board. The current platforms held by the Hamilton County Board of Elections are as follows: Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Nextdoor, and LinkedIn.

C. Branding

The Board will use the Hamilton County BOE seal at all times as the avatar on all social media platforms unless otherwise directed by the Director and Deputy Director.

D. Employee Use and Access

1. Publishing and Access
 - a. Maintenance of Board social media accounts will be managed by employees designated by the Director and Deputy Director.
 - b. The Director and Deputy Director shall authorize designated employees to have posting privileges.
 - c. Authorized employees may publish information to the account only upon receiving permission from both the Director and Deputy Director or their designee.
 - d. Use must be limited to the express purpose authorized.
 - e. Postings and responses to direct messages are limited to the official office, utilizing only Board devices.
2. Accountability Policy

Adopted October 7, 2014

Revised August 5, 2019

Revised March 2, 2021

Revised October 11, 2022

Revised December 18, 2023

- a. Perceived misuse by an employee should be reported directly to the Director or Deputy Director.
- b. Perceived misuse by the Director or Deputy Director should be reported directly to the Board.

E. Content and Records Retention

1. Posts on Social Media accounts will use proper grammar and will avoid the use of jargon and abbreviations.
2. Content will be updated, and messages checked on an as needed basis.
3. Content may include meeting notices, meeting minutes, polling location change notices, emergency notices, official registration and absentee information, UOCAVA voting information, links to election results, poll worker recruiting messages, seasonal election workers, cross-links to information from the Ohio Secretary of State's official account regarding elections, and other content deemed appropriate by the Director and Deputy Director relating to election administration.
4. All published content, including private messages, will be individually documented by the Communications and Compliance Officers and their Administrator, and stored electronically consistent with the Board's records retention policy on transitory electronic records.

F. Security and Monitoring

1. A disclaimer stating the official nature of the account will be posted to the account description.
2. Contact information and a link to the website will be posted to the account description.
3. Passwords on the account will be maintained and updated by the Communications and Compliance Officers and their Administrator
4. The Director and Deputy Director will have administrative access to all of the Board's Social Media accounts at all times.
5. Direct messages will be responded to as timely as possible. The Communication and Compliance Officers shall respond to Direct Messages which are routine and informational in nature. For all other inquiries, the response must be approved prior to each reply by the Director and Deputy Director or their designee.

G. Public Use and Conduct

1. The Board, at the discretion of the Director and Deputy Director, reserves the right to block social media users who attempt to use BOE social media accounts for spamming, phishing, or commercial purposes.
2. The Board encourages civic discourse on its Social Media platforms and the exercise of constituents' rights under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Posts and comments containing any of the following forms of

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content shall not be allowed and shall be removed as soon as possible with approval of the Director and Deputy Director or their designee:

- a. vulgar, obscene or abusive language or images;
 - b. personal attacks, defamation or threats of any kind;
 - c. offensive terms targeted at groups or persons of a specific race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin ancestry, age, or disability;
 - d. advertisements or language focused primarily on promoting commercial interests or services;
 - e. spam or subject matter that is far off topic;
 - f. campaign materials promoting or opposing an individual in an election for political office;
 - g. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - h. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - i. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - j. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
3. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster when available.
 4. The Board reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
 5. The Board will approach the moderation of social media comments as consistently as possible.

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