

BOROUGH OF [INSERT BOROUGH NAME]
ONLINE COMMUNICATION POLICY
MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA, WEBSITES, AND ONLINE DATA

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Online Communication Policy ("Policy") is to outline the standards, responsibilities, and procedures for the creation, use, and oversight of the Borough of [INSERT BOROUGH NAME]'s digital platforms. This includes the Borough's official website, social media accounts, and any other online systems used to share information or manage data. The Borough recognizes the importance of maintaining a consistent, accurate, and professional online presence. Through this Policy, the Borough seeks to ensure that all online communications support transparency, public engagement, and the Borough's mission to serve its residents effectively.

II. DEFINITIONS

"Borough" - means [BOROUGH NAME].

"Policy" - refers to this Online Communication Policy and the terms therein.

"Sites" - refers to all electronic online content that is accessible, expandable and editable by Borough employees and its officials. This includes, but is not limited to, the Borough's various social medial platforms on websites like Facebook or Instagram.

III. APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all official Borough online platforms and to any staff members responsible for their management and oversight. The Borough's primary online presence shall remain its official website, [INSERT URL], which serves as the central source for accurate and authoritative Borough information. In addition, the Borough currently maintains official [SOCIAL MEDIA] accounts to enhance communication and community engagement. The Borough reserves the right to revise, update, or replace this Policy at any time as needed.

IV. CREATION OF SITES AND CONTENT

a. Authority

- i. All official Borough websites, social media pages, or other online platforms must be approved by Borough Council or a designated representative prior to creation. No department, committee, or individual employee may establish an online presence that represents the Borough without such authorization.
- ii. The Borough's Communication Director or his/her designee will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any Sites.
- iii. All Borough Sites shall comply with all appropriate Borough policies and standards, including this Policy.

b. Information Sharing

- i. Whenever possible, website and social media content should be coordinated to ensure consistent messaging, branding, and tone across all Borough communications: [URL]
- ii. Wherever possible, content posted to the Borough's Sites should contain links directing users back to the Borough's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the Borough.
- iii. All content published on Borough-managed digital platforms shall reflect professionalism, accuracy, and transparency, and must support the Borough's mission of serving residents and promoting community engagement. Information shared should be factual, current, and relevant to Borough operations, services, programs, and events.

- iv. Content must comply with all applicable Borough policies, state and federal laws, including those governing public records, copyright, and privacy. Personal opinions, political statements, or commercial endorsements are not permitted on official Borough platforms.

V. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS

- a. All Borough websites, social media accounts, and digital communications shall operate in compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, the Right-to-Know Law, and the Municipal Records Act, as well as any requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Borough officials and employees are further expected to adhere to the Pennsylvania Ethics Act, ensuring that public platforms are not used for political purposes or personal gain.
- b. Content shared or managed through Borough digital platforms must also comply with applicable privacy, copyright, and data protection laws. All information posted online should maintain the Borough's commitment to transparency, accessibility, and responsible stewardship of public records and data.
- c. All applicable Pennsylvania laws and the Borough's official records retention schedules govern how online content is stored and preserved. Digital records identified for retention under these schedules must be maintained in accordance with established procedures.
- d. These policies shall be made available on the Borough's primary website.

VI. TERMS OF USE

- a. Purpose and Scope
 - i. The Borough's digital platforms, including its website and social media accounts, are intended to provide information about Borough services, programs, and community initiatives, and to foster transparent communication between the Borough and the public. All

participation on these platforms must remain respectful, relevant, and appropriate for a public forum.

- ii. By accessing or engaging with any Borough-managed website or social media page, users agree to follow the terms of this Policy and all applicable laws. Content shared on these platforms may be subject to public disclosure under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law. The Borough reserves the right to remove, restrict, or block users or content that violates these terms or disrupts the intended purpose of the platform.
- b. The Borough Sommmunication Director or designee(s) will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any Sites. The following types of content are not permitted on any Borough digital platform:
- i. Comments not topically related to the particular Borough social media article being commented upon;
 - ii. Comments or posts that include vulgar, obscene, or profane language;
 - iii. Personal attacks, threats, or defamatory statements against any individual or organization; including comments that promote, foster, or perpetuation discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
 - iv. Content that promotes, endorses, or opposes political candidates, campaigns, or ballot measures;
 - v. Commercial advertising, solicitations, or spam;
 - vi. Material that promotes or incites illegal activity;
 - vii. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - viii. Content that discloses personal, private, or confidential information about any individual;
 - ix. Material that infringes on copyrights or trademarks;
 - x. Comments unrelated to the posted topic or that otherwise disrupt constructive discussion;
 - xi. Content that could compromise the security or integrity of Borough systems or personnel;
 - xii. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
 - xiii. Any content that violates local, state, or federal law.

- c. The Borough reserves the right to remove any prohibited content without notice and to document removed materials as required under public record laws. Repeated violations may result in the user being blocked or restricted from further participation.

VII. DISCLAIMER AND LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

- a. The Borough of [INSERT BOROUGH NAME] provides its website and social media platforms as a public service to share information and engage with the community. While the Borough strives to ensure that all posted information is accurate and current, it makes no guarantees regarding the completeness, accuracy, or timeliness of the content. The Borough's online platforms are not monitored on a continuous, 24-hour basis, and responses to public inquiries or comments may not be immediate. Information provided through Borough digital platforms is for general informational purposes only and should not be interpreted as official notice or legal advice.
- b. The Borough is not responsible for the content posted by third parties or for any external websites linked from Borough-managed platforms. The inclusion of external links or shared content does not constitute an endorsement or verification of the information contained therein.
- c. The Borough does not control or endorse any advertisements, promotions, or external content that may appear on its social media pages or other hosted platforms. Such materials are managed solely by the platform providers. For example, Facebook is operated by Meta Platforms, Inc. and maintains its own independent policies governing user conduct and content. Users are encouraged to review Facebook's Community Standards, available at www.facebook.com/communitystandards, for more information about those guidelines.
- d. By accessing or using the Borough's digital platforms, users agree that the Borough, its officials, employees, and agents shall not be held liable for any loss, damage, or injury resulting from reliance on the information provided, technical issues, or unauthorized use of Borough platforms.
- e. The Borough reserves the right to remove or modify content, links, or functionality on its digital platforms at any time and without prior notice.

VIII. Borough Communication Director Designee(s)

- a. Any employee or Borough official that has permission and rights to post on the Borough's Sites shall never express personal views, concerns or opinions in any post. All posts should only reflect the views of the Borough.
- b. All posts from the Borough shall contain information that is freely available and public and never contain confidential information regarding the Borough. Posts may not contain any personal information except employee names. If unsure of the appropriateness or legality of a post, consult with the Borough Manager.
- c. Deletion of posts that violate this Policy shall be approved by the Borough Manager. The Designee(s) shall document the post by taking a screen shot and writing a small synopsis of why the post was removed prior to deleting it. Posts that contain criticism of the Borough do not fall under the deletion policy. iv. Borough Designee may block users the have repeated violations of the Terms of Use.