



# SANDYSTON TOWNSHIP

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## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY – TOWNSHIP OF SANDYSTON, NEW JERSEY**

### **PURPOSE**

This policy sets forth guidelines for the establishment and use by the Township of Sandyston (hereinafter “the Township”) of its social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) as a means of conveying Township-related information to its residents, employees and visitors. The Township has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” 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 the Township employees and officers when engaged in Township business. Social media at this time refers to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, and any other communication that is open to response or comment. 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 is related to the 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 purposes.

For the purposes of this policy, “social media” is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter. For purposes of this policy, “comment” includes information, articles, and pictures.

### **SCOPE**

This policy shall apply to all municipal agencies and departments as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency or official and/or commission or council 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, taxpayers and the general public.

1. The following social media sites are approved by the Township Committee under the direction of the Municipal Clerk and/or his/her designee:

#### **Facebook:**

- ❖ Sandyston Township

**Twitter:**

- ❖ To be determined, as needed

**Instagram:**

- ❖ To be determined, as needed

**YouTube:**

- ❖ To be determined, as needed

The following social media sites are approved by the Township Committee under the direction of the Recreation President and/or his/her designee:

**Facebook:**

- ❖ Sandyston Township Recreation

**Twitter:**

- ❖ To be determined, as needed

**Instagram**

- ❖ To be determined, as needed

**YouTube:**

- ❖ To be determined, as needed

2. The Township social media sites shall clearly set forth that they are maintained by the Township and that they follow this Social Media Policy.
3. The Sandyston Township Recreation sites shall clearly set forth that they are maintained by Sandyston Township Recreation and that they follow this Social Media Policy.
4. Wherever possible, the Township social media sites should link back to the official Township website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the Township.
5. The Township social media sites are not to be used for making any official communications to the Township, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, requesting an inspection, giving notice required by any statute, by ordinance or regulations 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 appropriate contact information for submitting official communications.

6. The social media policy shall be placed on the Township Website, the Sandyston Township Recreation website, if applicable, and all Township social media sites. Knowing that space is limited on social media sites, these guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by a hyperlink.
7. The Municipal Clerk and/or his/her designee shall monitor Township social media sites to ensure adherence to both this Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Township. 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. Any content removed based on these guidelines will be retained by the Municipal Clerk and/or his/her designee pursuant to the applicable Township retention policy, including time, date and identity of the poster, when available.
8. The Township will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, Township-wide.
9. The Township website at [www.sandystontownship.com](http://www.sandystontownship.com) will remain the Township's primary and predominant internet presence.

The Sandyston Township Recreation website at <https://sandystonrec.weebly.com/> will remain as Receptions primary and predominant internet presence, unless otherwise changed.

10. The Township social media sites and this Policy are subject to all applicable federal and NJ laws and regulations, as well as applicable record retention requirements.
11. 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.
12. The Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Township Committee.
13. This policy governs all social media use by or on behalf of the Township and/or its departments.
14. The Township shall only establish and operate the social media sites indicated in item #1 and shall be approved for use by the Township Committee. No other social media sites are authorized.
15. All Township presence and activity on social media are an integral part of the Township's information networks and must comply with all rules and policies governing the Township's computers and electronic media.
16. All Township use of social media is responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies

regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Open Public Records Act (OPRA), First Amendment, privacy laws, sunshine laws, and information security policies (if applicable) established by the Municipality.

17. All Municipal policies are applicable to interactions on social media when acting in an official capacity and representing the Municipality.
18. No “friending” or other special relationship between the Township employee and a third person is permitted on, or working on, a Township social media site(s).
19. Social media is run 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 “uptime”.

### **COMMENT POLICY**

1. As a public entity the Township must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased matter.
2. The intended purpose behind establishing the Township social media sites is to disseminate information from the Township about the Township to its residents, employees and visitors.
3. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Township social media 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 of the Township.
4. A comment posted by a member of the public may be removed by the member of the public who posted the comment at any time. The Township of Sandyston does not control comments removed by a person who posted the comment.
5. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the Township’s internet or social media sites will be reported to law enforcement and the perpetrator will be denied access to the site.
6. The Township reserves the right to deny access to its social media sites for any individual who violates the Township of Sandyston Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.
7. 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/ters.php>, and 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 action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.

8. All comments posted to any Township sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of Twitter's Terms of Service, located at <http://www.twitter.com/tos> and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of Twitter's Terms of Service to Twitter with the intent of Twitter taking appropriate and reasonable action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
9. All comments posted to any Township sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of YouTube's Terms of Service, located at <http://www.youtube.com/t/terms> and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of YouTube's Terms of Service to YouTube with the intent of YouTube taking appropriate and reasonable action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
10. 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/terms.php>, and 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 action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
11. All comments posted to any Township sites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of Instagram Terms of Service, located at <http://www.instagram.com/tos> and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of Instagram's Terms of Service to Instagram with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.
12. Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on Township social media.

### **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 removal and/or restriction by the Municipal Clerk and/or his/her designee.

- a. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language, or sexually suggestive or explicit content links to such material. Any image or link containing minors or suspected minors in sexually and/or provocative situations will be reported to law enforcement;
- b. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, physical or mental condition or sexual orientation;
- c. Defamatory attacks;
- d. Threats to any person or organization;

- e. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
- f. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
- g. Encouragement of illegal activity or illegal conduct;
- h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as 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.
- j. Private contact information such as names, addresses and phone numbers no matter how easily obtained elsewhere; Personal information of a person other than the posting party;
- k. Spamming or repetitive content;
- l. 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.
- m. Content that incites violence;
- n. Photographs or videos posted by a person other than the poster.
- o. Comments unrelated to the particular post being commented upon;
- p. Comments containing vulgar, offensive, threatening, or harassing language, personal attacks, or unsupportive accusations; and,
- q. Persons posting prohibited content are subject from being barred from posting comments on Township social media.
- r. Only content approved by the Municipal Clerk and/or his/her designee for public release are allowed to be posted. Content of a sensitive nature shall not be allowed to be posted.
- s. A "designee" or a person appointed by the Municipal Clerk shall receive the consent of the Township Committee.
- t. A "designee" or a person appointed by the Municipal Clerk is never allowed to transfer their social media account information or allow someone to access their account on their behalf without prior written authorization from the Municipal Clerk.

### **BREACH OF POLICY**

1. The Municipal Clerk and/or his/her designee may be required to remove internet postings on Township social media sites which are deemed to constitute a breach of Policy, as determined by the Municipal Clerk subject to applicable archiving and 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** (to be posted on all Township Social Media Sites)

**A. INFORMATION DISCLAIMER**

By visiting this site, you understand and agree that the Township of Sandyston local government site is provided "AS IS". The Township of Sandyston local government makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information on this website. The information contained herein is not official nor in any way shall it be deemed to constitute legal notice when such legal notice is required by law. The information contained in this site is provided as a service and convenience to people needing information about Township of Sandyston local government. Portions of the information on this site may be incorrect or not current. Township of Sandyston local government, 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 viewing, distributing, or copying of those materials.

**B. Linking Policy – Links to External Sites**

The Township of Sandyston local government site contains links to outside websites. These websites are not owned, operated, controlled or reviewed by Township of Sandyston local government. These links are provided solely as a courtesy and convenience to you, the visitor.

The Township of Sandyston local government, 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 Sandyston local government, 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 Sandyston local government 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 Sandyston local government website or from reliance upon any such information.

**C. 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 Sandyston local government or its officers, employees or agents.

**D. Copyright and Trademark Limitations**

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**E. Use of material from this site**

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**F. Unauthorized Modifications**

Unauthorized attempts to modify or otherwise alter any information or image stored on any Township of Sandyston local government website may result in criminal prosecution.