

# Social Media Policy

Valley City Barnes County Public Library  
Adopted and approved by the board March 18, 2021,  
Revised and approved May 15, 2025

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for Valley City Barnes County Public Library (VCBCPL). To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, the VCBCPL may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The VCBCPL encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the library and its mission.

## Concerning Patrons and Community Members

Valley City Barnes County Public Library (VCBCPL) staff and community members interact through internet communication using social media applications. Social media applications allow members of the community access to virtual resources of the library without mandating a visit to the physical library. VCBCPL regards social media applications in the same way as its other information resources in accordance with its mission of serving patron needs for informational, educational, cultural and recreational pursuits. Social media is defined as any website or application which allows users to share information. Social media can include, but is not limited to, blogs, instant messaging tools, social networking sites, and wikis. Many social media sites allow users of those sites to become a “friend”, “fan”, or otherwise associate their own “profiles” or virtual presences with the library’s profile on these sites. As with more traditional resources, the library does not act in place of or in the absence of a parent and is not responsible for enforcing any restrictions which a parent or guardian may place on a minor’s use of these resources.

The library does not collect, maintain or otherwise use the personal information stored on any third party social media site in any way other than to communicate with users on that site, unless granted permission by users for library contact outside the site. The purpose for contact outside the site may include program promotion, volunteer opportunities, reference help, or other similar activities. Users may remove themselves at any time from the library’s “friend” or “fan” lists or request that the library remove them. Users should be aware that third party websites have their own privacy policies and should proceed accordingly. Comments, posts, and messages are welcome on Valley City Barnes County Public Library social media sites. While the library recognizes and respects differences in opinion, all such interactions will be regularly monitored and reviewed for content and relevancy (before publishing when possible). All postings which contain any of the following will be removed, and the poster will be banned from posting any subsequent messages to library social media sites:

- Obscene or racist content

- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libelous statements
- Plagiarized or copy-written material
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Comments totally unrelated to the content of the forum
- Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Organized political or religious activity or proselytizing
- Photos or other images that fall in any of the above categories

In addition, VCBCPL reserves the right to edit or modify any postings or comments for space or content, while retaining the intent of the original post. VCBCPL reserves the right to reproduce comments, posts, and messages in other public venues. For example, the library may reproduce a response to a YouTube book review in a newspaper article or on the library website. Identifying information, other than first name, will be removed unless prior approval is granted by the user. Valley City Barnes County Public Library assumes no liability regarding any event or interaction that takes place by any participant in any library-sponsored social media service. The library does not endorse or review content outside the "pages" created by Valley City Barnes County Public Library staff. Participation in VCBCPL social media services implies agreement with all library policies, including its Social Media Policy and Internet Access Policy. If a user does not agree to the terms of the library's policies, they are not to interact on library-sponsored social media services.

The role and utility of social media sites will be evaluated periodically by library staff and may be terminated at any time without notice to subscribers.

## Public Records Law

VCBCPL social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to VCBCPL business, including communication posted by the VCBCPL and communication received from citizens, is a public record. The VCBCPL is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for social media content.

# Concerning Library staff

## Acceptable Use

All VCBCPL employees may have personal social networking and social media sites.

These sites should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or nonwork related information. Following this principle helps ensure a distinction between sharing personal and library views.

VCBCPL employees should not use their VCBCPL e-mail account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking or social media site.

VCBCPL employees should be aware that posts on their personal social media sites can still be construed as a negative reflection on the library, especially by those people that know you are an employee of the library.

## Professional Use

All official library-related communication through social media and social networking outlets should remain professional in nature. Employees should not use official VCBCPL social media or social networking sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities. Library employees should be mindful that inappropriate usage of official agency social media and social networking sites can be grounds for disciplinary action. If social media and social networking sites are used for official VCBCPL business, the entire site, regardless of any personal views, is subject to best practices guidelines, and standards. Only individuals authorized by the VCBCPL may publish content to any official social media platform.

## Approval and Registration

All Agency social media sites shall be (1) approved by library director; (2) published using approved social networking platform and tools; and (3) administered by the contact or their designee.

## Oversight and Enforcement

Employees representing the VCBCPL through social media outlets or participating in social media features on VCBCPL websites must maintain a high level of ethical conduct and professional decorum. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in agency social media sites, blogs, or other social media features, or other disciplinary actions up to and including termination. VCBCPL employees recognize that the content and messages they post on social media websites are public and may be cited as official Library statements. VCBCPL employees may not publish information on Library social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information
- Copyright violations
- Profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM

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