

John C. Hart Memorial Library Social Media Policy

The John C. Hart Memorial Library (“the Library”) welcomes community participation and comments on its social media. While the First Amendment and related laws and court decisions protect a broad spectrum of online speech, they also clearly provide that when one’s online posts or other communications disrupt the Library’s operations, the conduct may lose its protection.

With this in mind, the Library has developed this policy and the accompanying regulations to provide direction for the public when participating in online and social media activities. In addition, all online and social media activities must comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct.

This policy supplements and does not replace other Library policies.

PURPOSE

The Library is committed to providing a welcoming online environment to facilitate the sharing of ideas, opinions, and information about Library-related subjects for educational and recreational purposes. Our social sites are intended to encourage community involvement and to create dialog between the Library and its users regarding Library services, resources, events, and programs. Library posts will support our mission.

SAFETY

Social media participants of all ages should be aware of recommended practices for personal safety in the virtual world. As with all other resources provided by the Library, parents or guardians are responsible for use by their children. The Library does not act in place of a parent or guardian and is not responsible for enforcing any restrictions upon minors that a parent or guardian has placed, including, but not limited to, when minors engage in social media use on the Library’s premises or using the Library’s devices and services.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND POSTS

While we do not discriminate against any viewpoints, the Library may monitor any user-generated content as it chooses and reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to remove posts or comments that are unlawful or violate Library Policy.

Please be aware of the following when engaging with the Library using social media:

- Comments need to be related to the posted topic. The Library reserves the right to remove content that is clearly off-topic, regardless of the viewpoints expressed in it.
- Gratuitous links to sites and repeat submissions of the same (or very similar) contributions that constitute spam or trolling may result in the content being removed.
- Please safeguard personal information and DO NOT post any email address, home address, phone number or other personal information.
- Users should be aware that third party sites have their own privacy policies and proceed accordingly.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The Library does not condone, and will take necessary action, when social media and online posts and other communications violate the law, Library policies or other Library rules and regulations including, but not limited to, instances in which online posts/communications:

- Are harassing, discriminate against others, or otherwise violate New York State or federal law;
- Create a hostile environment for staff;
- Contain information about an individual that is protected from disclosure by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPAA”) or other law;
- Significantly disrupt Library operations;
- Contain sexual content;
- Are libelous/defamatory;
- Encourage illegal activity;
- Are threatening or abusive;
- Contain information that may compromise the health and safety of Library employees or the Library Board or its agents; or
- Contain information or graphics that are subject to a copyright or trademark without first securing prior permission to post the material.
- Contain hate speech or encourage negativity

Violations of the Library’s policy concerning the use of social media may lead to legal or disciplinary action, consistent with applicable state and federal law.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Social media communications are not acceptable for purposes of any official or unofficial advanced notice required by law or contract. The Library does not and will not accept FOIL requests, legal documentation or other confidential information via social media, even if done through a “private message.”

DISCLAIMER/HOLD HARMLESS

By participating in the Library’s social media services, each user agrees to abide by the Library’s policies and all applicable federal, state and local laws. By participating in these services, each user agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Library and its officers, agents and employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages, and costs, including, but not limited to, attorney’s fees, that arise out of or are related to the social media activity.

The Library is not responsible for and does not endorse content other than the official “pages” and “posts” created by Library and its staff on its social media services. Any views expressed by a user of the Library’s social media services are those of the individual author and do not represent the official views of the Library. A disclaimer referencing this, and all Library policies will be posted on every social network site and service associated with the Library, to the extent practicable.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees at their regular meeting on April 9, 2025

