

Social Media Policy

The Rutland Free Library uses social media to increase awareness of and accessibility to its programs, resources and services in order to serve its mission. The purpose of this policy is to address use of social media activities including, but not limited to, blogs, social networks, public-facing communications, online catalogs, websites, and mobile applications by Rutland Free Library (also referred to below as RFL and “the library”), its affiliates (Affiliates includes employees, volunteers, trustees, programming partners, interns, and other service providers), and library patrons.

Library Generated Social Media

Content: Rutland Free Library’s social media sites are not intended to be traditional public forums for the general exchange of ideas and viewpoints, but a limited public forum for discussing library programs, events, services, and materials. The purpose of the library’s social media is to inform users about library programs, events (including those co-sponsored with other organizations) and materials; also to encourage dialogue and exchange of information between users and library staff about these programs, events and materials. Images and other identifying information of staff or patrons will not be featured on social media without that individual’s verbal or written consent.

Responsibility: The Library Director and their designated staff are responsible for the library’s social media communications. While this is typically the Administrative team (Director, Assistant Director, and Circulation Manager), librarians may be asked to utilize social media venues to promote programs and services to the target population of their collections. Only designated staff can comment or create content; employees may like, share, or promote content. All employees who contribute to the library’s social media should present content in a professional manner, check facts, cite sources, avoid copyright infringement, present balanced views without personal bias, correct errors, and check grammar and spelling before posting. The Director-approved poster on any specific social media channel will monitor the public’s interaction and reply as needed in as timely a manner as possible.

Public Participation on Library Social Media

The library permits patrons to comment on library posts and patrons are invited to share opinions about library-related subjects, resources, and programs. Public postings do not indicate library endorsement of the ideas, issues, or opinions expressed. While the library encourages dialogue, it respectfully requests that commenters be mindful that its social media sites are open to the public and to be courteous and civil toward one another.

Content and comments on the library’s social media accounts containing any of the following shall not be allowed:

- A. Obscenity or pornography
- B. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, age, gender, marital status, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, ancestry or any other protected category
- C. Slanderous, libelous, threatening or defamatory statements
- D. Copyrighted or trademarked material
- E. Spam

- F. Content not related to Rutland Free Library business, programs, events, resources and materials
- G. Advertising or sale of merchandise or services from external groups
- H. Charitable solicitations from external groups
- I. Political campaigning
- J. Any other content the Director deems professionally inappropriate for RFL social media

Rutland Free Library reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed to be in violation of this policy or any applicable law. Patrons should be aware that they may be held personally liable for commentary that is defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous by any offended party, not just the library. Comments deemed inappropriate to the dialogue may be deleted, and the poster may be banned from posting for a length of time specified by the Director. In such instances, the poster will be notified about the reason for removal of the post and, if blocked, the length of the block. Any person wishing to contest the decision should first contact the Director. Should the issue remain unsettled, the poster may contact the Board by mail or by attending the next Board Meeting.

Rutland Free Library, its employees, agents and officials assume no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from participation in library-sponsored social media. By utilizing the library's social media sites, the user agrees to comply with this policy.

Library Affiliate Use of Personal Social Media

Rutland Free Library affiliates generally have the same right to self-expression enjoyed by members of the community as a whole when discussing matters of public concern. However, as public-facing representatives, Rutland Free Library affiliates are cautioned that certain speech may result in consequences not prohibited by the First Amendment. All affiliates should keep in mind the following rules of conduct when posting content on personal social media:

- A. The library does not endorse or monitor the content of personal social media activity of its affiliates, but may review problematic content should it come to attention.
- B. Affiliates will not post content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, age, gender, marital status, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, ancestry or any other protected category.
- C. An affiliate must clarify in personal posts regarding RFL that the views expressed are theirs alone and do not represent the views of the library or any part of the library beyond themselves (ie., "the staff", "the Board", etc.)
- D. An affiliate will respect the library's confidential and proprietary information, and not post information that is still in draft form or is confidential.
- E. An affiliate will not comment on the library's social media channels unless in an official capacity.
- F. Under no circumstances may library affiliates post misinformation, such as fake blogs, false positive or negative reviews of the library, affiliates, policies, services, staff, or Board; nor may affiliates impersonate someone associated with or speaking about the library.