

ST. CHARLES PARISH SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

I. PURPOSE

St. Charles Parish uses social media tools to provide official and rapid communication directly with citizens, the general public, stakeholders and media as part of online communications. These tools are simply another way to deliver public information and customer service to our residents. To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, the parish may use social media formats to reach a broader audience.

II. DEFINITIONS

Social media sites refer to a collection of online services such as, but not limited to Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, Flickr and LinkedIn. Social media provides opportunities to engage residents through information sharing, customer service and community building.

III. POLICY

All official St. Charles Parish presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the parish's information networks and are governed by related policies, such as the 'St. Charles Parish Employee Use of Computers / Internet / E-mail Acceptable Use Policy' as adopted by the parish president and council.

It is the intention of the parish to maintain a singular and clear voice online in order to make the social media experience easier for residents. Therefore, parish agencies and/or departments operating under parish government are prohibited from opening social media accounts for their respective agencies. Rather, they are required to submit any pertinent information to the St. Charles Parish Public Information Office for posting on the parish's official sites.

If a department / agencies desires to open a separate social media account, a request must be submitted in writing to the Public Information Office with details on the account's intended screen name and nature of content to be posted. The request's approval lies solely at the discretion of the Public Information Officer and/or Parish President.

It is important to ensure the public's trust of St. Charles Parish's presence on social media sites. Visual elements of social media sites should be designed, as much as possible, to reflect the public website brand of stcharlesparish-la.gov to ensure visual consistency and credibility. The Public Information Office reserves the right to develop standards for visual consistency as social media sites evolve.

The Public Information Office is responsible for establishing, publishing and updating pages on social media sites. An emphasis is to be placed on re-posting existing information (news and events) from the official parish website as well as highlighting information from local media sites pertaining to parish government activities.

The Public Information Office will monitor the content on the pages to ensure a consistent parishwide message is being conveyed and adherence to the Social

Media Policy.

IV. PUBLIC INTERACTION

Comments from the public are allowed on some social media websites and will be monitored daily during working hours to ensure the comments meet certain criteria. The ability of visitors to post comments will be determined solely by the Public Information Office.

Parish-created social media forums must be structured narrowly to focus discussions on a particular interest of St. Charles Parish rather than creating a "public forum."

The parish is allowed to remove postings that do not meet the narrow focus of a parish media forum. All sections of social media websites that allow comments must include either a link to the following comments policy published on the public website or the complete text published on the social media site:

"The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in St. Charles Parish. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments and concerns, but please note, this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum. Once posted, the parish reserves the right to delete submissions that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial or religious group. Further, the parish also reserves the right to delete comments that are: spam, or include links to other sites; clearly off-topic; advocate illegal activity; promote particular services, products or political organizations; or infringe on copyrights or trademarks. Due to the nature of social media sites, the parish from time to time will inadvertently delete comments attached to a particular item if that item needs to be removed from the site, such as out-of-date news information. For more information on the parish's social media policy, please contact publicinfo@stcharlesgov.net or call (985) 783-5183."

The Office of Public Information, as social media site administrators, may choose to reply to comments to engage residents much as we do with phone and e-mail inquires, but business decorum must prevail and factual responses, not opinions, must be shared. Wherever possible, links should direct users back to the parish's official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with St. Charles Parish.

The parish YouTube channel must contain the following disclaimer on the home page:

"St. Charles Parish does not promote or endorse any non-Government or commercial content appearing on this channel or its pages. St. Charles Parish is not responsible for the content provided on 'related' and 'promoted' videos that are accessible from this channel. All viewers should note that these related videos and comments expressed on them do not reflect the opinions and position of St. Charles Parish government or its officials and employees."

The parish is responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and parish laws, regulations and policies with regard to social media. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Louisiana

Freedom of Information Act, First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by St. Charles Parish.

Approved by:
Date: