

SARA HIGHTOWER REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

*Adopted by the Sara Hightower Regional Library System Board of Trustees
November 18, 2021*

Purpose for Participation in Social Media

Sara Hightower Regional Library System (SHRLS) recognizes that patrons use social media platforms and services to connect and share with others and to discover local businesses and organizations. By participating in social media where appropriate and practical, SHRLS seeks to promote its websites, resources, programs, and services, to share information about services with patrons, and to provide an informal online space for patrons and staff to communicate with each other.

Selecting Social Media Networks

SHRLS staff will evaluate social networks and services as they emerge or disband and make recommendations to the SHRLS Director on participation according to the following criteria:

- The social network and the formats for presenting content (e.g., text, photos, videos, sound recordings) are appropriate and relevant to patrons.
- SHRLS has sufficient resources (e.g., staff, training, equipment, access, subject material) to participate in a meaningful way.
- Participation in the social network advances the positive image of SHRLS libraries as perceived by stakeholders (e.g., patrons, staff, the Library Board of Trustees, the Board of Commissioners, taxpayers).
- Participation in one social network would not unnecessarily duplicate content or participation in a social network already in use.
- Participation in a current social network could be discontinued as circumstances change (such as to accommodate resource allocation to a different social network or to another project entirely, in response to changes in formats for presenting content given as options by the network, or in response to patron or network user feedback).
- Library staff will make recommendations to the SHRLS Director regarding participating in or discontinuing participation in a given social network. The Director will make the final decision regarding participation in social media.

Managing Social Media Networks

Social media accounts may be created only by designated staff, and these individuals will also be responsible for managing participation in social media. The names of pages, profiles, or accounts should clearly represent SHRLS, including the official logo, web address, and contact information.

Content Creation and Moderation

Only designated SHRLS staff trained in appropriate use of social media may access accounts and publish content. Such employees are bound by relevant policies in the SHRLS Personnel Policy Manual, as well as other established procedures for communicating with patrons, the news media, and the general public. Staff will follow management directives, industry best practices, and conventions of the social networks themselves to determine the type and frequency of content to be published.

Employees participating in social media on behalf of SHRLS will also be responsible for moderating comments. Questions or comments from the public should be responded to in an appropriate and timely manner by staff.

SHRLS employees may “tag” or mention other organizations (such as community partners, local government and nonprofit organizations, other libraries, and professional organizations) as appropriate.

Public Use of the Library’s Social Media Sites

SHRLS expects users to be mindful that social media sites are accessible to the public and to be courteous and civil toward one another.

The libraries of the SHRLS are public places, and all library programs take place in public venues. Photographs or video may be taken during library programs. These photographs and video may be posted on the Library’s social media sites.

A public library is an integral part of the community and in the interest of promoting community relations, SHRLS staff will announce that photographs and videos will be taken at events and that the images may be published by the library. To avoid any disharmony between SHRLS and patrons, SHRLS will provide consent forms to the parent(s) or legal guardians of minors participating in or viewing library programs to give permission to use photographs. Parent(s) and legal guardians will also be given an opportunity to express their child/minor not be photographed.

Users should have no expectation of privacy in postings on SHRLS sponsored social media sites. Every comment or posting made on social media sites is a public record and may be disseminated, reproduced, or copied without any further action and without notice. By posting on SHRLS social media sites, users are agreeing that they have no expectation of privacy in any submissions.

SHRLS reserves the right to remove postings (in whole or in part) which it considers to be inappropriate, including comments or posts containing: abusive, vulgar, offensive, threatening, harassing, or discriminatory language; personal attacks of any kind; potentially libelous or defamatory comments; confidential information; copyright violations; commercial promotions or spam; or off-topic content. SHRLS also reserves the right to ban, block, or revoke posting privileges of commenters or posters who repeatedly post comments that violate this policy.

Public users should keep in mind that social media sites are internet pages on third party social media sites which own and operate the sites, and which maintain their own policies and standards on what may or may not be posted and the actions they may take concerning violation of their standards.

SHRLS is not responsible for, and neither endorses nor opposes, comments placed on the site by visitors to the site. Commenters/posters are personally responsible for their own comments, usernames, and/or any information placed on the page.

Personal Social Media

Employees may use personal social media on their own time and using their own equipment. The following types of personal social media postings are not allowed by SHRLS employees:

- Sensitive or proprietary information about SHRLS
- Confidential information about patrons or fellow employees
- Posts which violate SHRLS policies covering harassing, demeaning, or creating a hostile work environment for other SHRLS employees.
- Employees should not post content on social media that violates SHRLS anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, or that is threatening or obscene.
- In personal social media usage, employees should not represent that SHRLS has given authorization to speak on its behalf or that SHRLS has approved the message, unless prior written authorization to do so is given by the SHRLS Director.
- Employees should not display or post video or other images of, or material about, other employees that are libelous, proprietary, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, retaliatory, or that can create a hostile work environment. Such conduct that would not be permissible in the workplace is not permissible between or among employees online, even if done during non-work hours and away from the workplace on personal devices.
- Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with employee rights under federal and state laws, including the National Labor Relations Act.
- Posts on personal social media are the legal liability of the poster, not the library.