



# LIBRARY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Approved by Vista Grande Library Board of Directors 16-Apr-20-2019, 27-Sep-2023

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to address the use of social media by Vista Grande Public Library (“VGPL”) employees, Board, volunteers, and patrons. VGPL offers social media to increase awareness of its programs, resources, and services in order to better serve its mission. VGPL uses various social media platforms to supplement its website, newsletter, and in-library communications in informing the public of Library events or those relating to the library, or resources, services, and information of interest to the library community.

VGPL reserves the right, within its sole discretion, not to post and to remove submissions or comments that are unlawful or violate this policy.

## **DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

“Social Media” is any web application, site, or account offered by VGPL that facilitates the sharing of opinions and information about VGPL related subjects and issues. Social Media includes such formats as websites, Twitter, Facebook, Nextdoor and Blogs.

### **STAFF POSTING**

Posting authority on VGPL accounts is limited to the Library Director or designee, the President of the Board or designee, and the Library Assistant. Other persons may be designated posting authority by the Director on a case-by-case basis.

Only those responsible for VGPL's social media sites should be actively participating on those sites. Staff is responsible for checking facts, citing sources and avoiding copyright infringement. All VGPL's postings are to be presented in a professional manner and positive tone, reflecting the views of the Library rather than personal opinions.

Violations of this policy by employees may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

### **PATRON POSTING**

Public posts by VGPL patrons do not reflect the positions of VGPL or its employees. VGPL is not responsible for the content of posts made by VGPL patrons, including customers, reviewers, advertisers, etc. VGPL reserves the right to delete public posts or comments if they include copyright infringement, spam, or advertisements, hateful or harassing speech, obscenity, personal disparagement or defamation, revealing of personal information without consent, political advocacy or any other comment that violates the library's code of conduct.

By posting on VGPL sites, the user gives VGPL permission to use their name or username, profile picture, and the content of any posting they make without compensation or liability on the part of the Library. This permission ends when the posting is deleted.

Patrons are personally responsible for their commentary. 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.

### **PRIVACY**

VGPL will not share, sell, or collect data from persons visiting our sites. Users of all ages have the responsibility to protect their privacy and should not post personally identifying information, such as last name, school, age, phone number or address.

## **COMPLIANCE**

All authorized VGPL users (Library Director or designee, the President of the Board or designee, and the Library Assistant) must comply with this policy.

By using the Library's social media sites, patrons agree to comply with this Policy, and the Library's Policy on Internet and Computer Use, as applicable. This Policy applies whether or not a patron chooses to post comments using a computer at the Library or when posting from any other computer to any Library social media site.

By posting on VGPL sites, the user gives VGPL permission to use their name or username, profile picture, and the content of any posting they make without compensation or liability on the part of the Library. This permission ends when the posting is deleted.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Designated public forum**

Libraries are under no legal obligation to participate in social media, nor are they required to host public conversations. A library could choose, for instance, to solely participate in one-way communication, that is, to make announcements and not seek or respond to questions or comments. But once a public library or publicly funded academic library does invite conversation, it may be considered to have established a designated public forum. As of 2018, the courts are just beginning to consider and decide cases raising the claim that the hosting of public conversations in social media by government entities creates a designated public forum subject to the strictures of the First Amendment. Lower court cases considering the issue have held that a designated public forum is created when social media is opened for public comment by a governmental entity. Those cases, however, are still winding their way through the court appeals process and currently there is no definitive ruling from the United States Supreme Court. Nonetheless, there is a strong argument that opening social media for public comment creates a designated public forum as it does in the analogous situation where a governmental entity opens a meeting room or exhibit space for public use. ("Social Media Guidelines for Public and Academic Libraries." Approved by the Intellectual Freedom Committee in June 2018.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/socialmediaguidelines>)