Library Communications Policy

Purpose

Consistent with its mission to foster community connection and lifelong learning, the Brimfield Public Library District maintains a website, social media accounts, a digital sign, and other channels for sharing information with the community. These channels exist primarily to provide information about Library resources, services, and programs.

This policy governs what the Library publishes on its own communication channels, how members of the public may participate, where the Library invites comment, and who is authorized to speak on the Library's behalf.

Scope

This policy applies to the Library's website, social media accounts, digital sign, newsletters, press releases, printed publications, and any other channel the Library operates to communicate with the public.

This policy does not govern:

- The Community Bulletin Board, donation boxes, or display cases and exhibits. (See Community Information and Display Policy)
- Signs, chalking, or other expressive activity on Library grounds. (See Expressive Activity on Library Property Policy)
- Employee use of Library communication systems or of personal social media accounts. (See Personnel Policy Manual)
- Requests for public records, which are governed by the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and the Library's FOIA procedures. (See Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Policy)

General Principles

- Content the Library itself publishes is the Library's own speech. The Library determines what it publishes, when, and on what channel, at its sole discretion.
- The Library's communications support its vision, mission, and strategic goals and are intended to be accurate, timely, and accessible.
- Nothing in this policy prohibits the Library from advocating on issues that affect the Library specifically or the public library sector in general.
- The Library is not liable for advertisements, videos, promoted content, or comments accessible from any third-party platform. The presence of such content does not imply or constitute Library endorsement.

Library Communication Channels

Website

The primary purpose of the Library's website is to provide the community with information about Library-related resources, services and programs.

The Library website contains links to third-party sites not maintained by the Library. The Library is not responsible for the privacy practices or content of any other site.

Social Media

The Library maintains accounts on selected social media platforms as a means of conveying information about the Library's resources, services, and programs; discovering and sharing information related to industry trends and services; and increasing awareness of the Library's brand.

For the purpose of this policy, social media means any web-based interactive platform that allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content, including social networking sites, multimedia-sharing sites, blogs, discussion forums, and business-networking sites.

Only employees designated by the Director may create, post, edit, or delete content on Library social media accounts. Library social media accounts and all content in them are the property of the Library District.

Digital Sign

The Library's full-color digital sign facing Knoxville Avenue will be used only to promote Library-related resources, services, and programs.

Newsletters, Press Releases, and Print Publications

The Library may produce newsletters, press releases, brochures, and similar publications to inform the community about Library resources, services, and programs. These are Library publications, and their content is determined by the Director or designated staff.

Third-Party Content on Library Channels

- The Library may post or share information created by library-related associations, such as ALA, ILA, and PLA, and by other tax-funded entities, if the Library deems the information to be related to Library business or a matter of public interest or safety, if required to do so as part of a contract, or upon written request and review.
- Unless specified in law or a contract, the Library reserves the right to determine whether, when, and where to share third-party information.
- The Library will not post or share information on behalf of individuals, organizations, businesses, or other entities unless the information is directly related to Library-sponsored resources, services, or programs.

Public Comment on Library Social Media

Default Setting

The Library's practice is to disable public commenting on its social media posts. Some platforms do not allow comments to be disabled in advance of a post going live, and on those platforms a comment may appear before staff are able to turn commenting off. This section governs any comments that become visible, whether because a platform does not support disabling comments in advance, because comments have been intentionally enabled for a specific post on purpose, or because a setting was not applied in time.

Forum Status

Where a comment becomes visible on a Library social media account, that comment area is a limited public forum for the period the comment remains visible. The Library may adopt reasonable rules about the subject matter and manner of comments and will apply those rules without regard to the viewpoint expressed.

Disabling comments, where the platform allows it, applies to an entire post or account rather than to a particular user, and is not itself a form of viewpoint discrimination.

Terms of Participation

By commenting on a Library social media account, a person agrees to the terms in this section.

Comments are reviewed by designated Library employees. Because staffing is limited, moderators may not see a comment promptly. A comment remaining visible does not mean the Library has reviewed it or agrees with it.

Comments are the views of the person who posted them and do not represent the views of the Library, its Board of Trustees, or its staff.

Grounds for Removal

The Library may hide or remove a comment that:

- Is obscene as defined by law, or depicts sexual conduct involving a minor
- Constitutes a true threat of violence, or incites imminent lawless action
- Harasses, intimidates, or targets a specific individual
- Discloses another person's private information, including home address, telephone number, or library card number without that person's consent
- Is defamatory
- Infringes a copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property right, including the Library's
- Advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or is spam
- Solicits votes, signatures, or contributions for a candidate for public office, a ballot question, or a political committee
- Is not related to the subject matter of the Library post to which it responds

- Is posted repeatedly, or duplicates content already posted by the same account, so as to disrupt the comment area
- Discloses information the Library is required by law to keep confidential, including library records protected by the Illinois Library Records Confidentiality Act (75 ILCS 70)
- Falsely represents the commenter as speaking for the Library

The Library does not remove comments because they criticize the Library, its Board of Trustees, its employees, its collection, or its programs, or because they express a point of view that is unpopular or that the Library staff or Board find disagreeable.

How Removal Works

- Before hiding or removing a comment, staff will record the date, the account name, the content of the comment, and the ground for removal relied on.
- When the platform permits, the Library will hide a comment rather than delete it.
- Where the platform permits and the account is identifiable, the Library will notify the commenter that the comment was removed and on what ground.

Restricting an Account

- The Library will restrict or block an account after the second time the same account has posted content that violates this policy.
- A restriction on a social media account does not limit a person's ability to contact the Library by email, telephone, mail, or in person, to use Library services, or to address the Board during the public comment portion of a Board meeting.

Appeals

A person whose comment has been removed or whose account has been restricted may appeal in writing to the Library Director within 10 days of the removal or restriction. Appeals may be emailed to director@brimfieldlibrary.org or left with Circulation Desk staff. The Director will provide a written response within 30 days. The Director's decision is final.

Records and Privacy

- Comments posted to Library social media accounts may be public records under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and the Local Records Act, and may be subject to disclosure and to records retention requirements. Removing a comment from public view does not remove it from the Library's records obligations.
- Commenters should protect their own privacy and should not post personally identifying information, including age, telephone number, address, library card number, or Social Security number

Authorized Spokespersons and Media Relations

- The Library Director, or a person designated by the Director, is authorized to speak on behalf of the Library. The President of the Board of Trustees, or a Trustee designated by the Board, may speak on behalf of the Board.
- Employees will refer inquires from the news media to the Director.
- An individual Trustee or employee who comments publicly on Library matters outside these channels speaks only for themselves and will not represent themselves as speaking for the Library.
- Inquiries regarding a court order or law enforcement request for Library records are referred to the Director in accordance with the Library's Confidentiality Policy.

Digital Accessibility

The Brimfield Public Library District is committed to providing accessible facilities, services, programs, and resources, including digital resources, to all members of the public. The Library's goal for its digital platforms, including its website and social media accounts, is to meet the Level AA conformance criteria in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.1.

Ongoing Review

The Library's website is regularly scanned for accessibility issues, and content found to be inaccessible is corrected in a timely manner. Documents hosted on the website are provided in an accessible format, or an accessible alternative is made available upon request.

Third-Party and Linked Content

The Library's website may link to third-party websites, or include documents provided by third parties, that are not fully accessible. The Library does not control the accessibility of third-party content but will assist any member of the public in reading or accessing it.

Requesting Assistance

A person who has questions or comments, or who encounters an accessibility barrier while using any of the Library's digital resources may contact the Director by phone at 309-446-9575, by email at director@brimfieldibrary.org, or through the contact form on the Library's website.

Records Retention

Content published by the Library and comments posted by the public on Library channels may be public records. The Library will retain and dispose of these records in accordance with the Local Records Act and the retention schedule approved by the Local Records Commission. Staff will not delete content from a Library channel in a manner inconsistent with that schedule.

Employee and Trustee Use

Employee use of Library communication systems, employee use of Library social media accounts, and employee use of personal social media are governed by the Personnel Policy Manual. Employees are prohibited from discussing confidential, work-related matters on social

media and are subject to the Library's Confidentiality, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Bullying policies when using any communication channel.

Non-Endorsement

The Library's publication of information, or its permitting comment on its social media accounts, does not constitute or imply endorsement of any group, organization, individual, idea, belief, cause, product, service, activity, or event.

Relationship to Law

Nothing in this policy is intended to override or conflict with applicable federal, state or local law. In the event of any inconsistency, the law shall govern.

Referenced Policies

Community Information and Display Policy; Expressive Activity on Library Property Policy; Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Policy; Personnel Policy Manual (Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Confidentiality Policy, Social Media Policy; Use of Library Communication Systems)

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees on October 19, 2026