

**Bucks County Free Library Policy**  
**ING 9: Social Media**  
**FINAL DRAFT 16 APRIL 2024**

## **Policy Statement**

The Bucks County Free Library (BCFL) maintains a social media presence, using various platforms, to share information about library events, services, collections, and resources.

For the purpose of this policy, social media is defined as any website, application or account offered by BCFL that allows virtual visitors to share their ideas and opinions when responding to the library's posts, selected and offered by BCFL for discussion about specific library-related matters.

Each BCFL social media platform is a limited public forum for discussing library-related services, resources, and events. Library staff exercise editorial control in order to maintain welcoming environments for a diverse community of virtual visitors of all ages for discussion of the topics posted by BCFL. BCFL moderates usage and reserves the right to remove content that is "off-topic," unlawful, unprotected under the law, or otherwise does not comply with BCFL's expectations for online behavior and content. "Off topic" means content that deviates from the main subject or theme of the discussion opened by BCFL in its posting and does not contribute to the intended purpose and goals for BCFL's social media presence, as outlined in this policy.

Comments and direct messages posted on BCFL's social media sites may be archived by BCFL staff, even if the messages are deleted by the writer.

Comments expressed and posted on any of BCFL's social media platforms do not reflect the views or position of BCFL or its employees, nor is BCFL responsible for any content posted by any participant in BCFL's social media forums who is not a BCFL employee. Further, should BCFL "follow," "friend," or otherwise link to other online entities, it does not imply, nor intend to imply, endorsement of or guarantee of accuracy by those entities.

All postings on our social media accounts are public record and subject to public disclosure.

## **Expectations for Online Behavior and Content**

By choosing to comment on topics posted by BCFL on its social media platforms, virtual visitors agree to the expectations and requirements of BCFL for online behavior and content. In addition, users are expected to abide by the terms and conditions set by third party social media platforms as well as follow appropriate federal and state Law.

While violations may result in warnings, BCFL reserves the right to ban or block users who have posted in violation of this policy. Repeated violations of this policy by a user may culminate in the user being blocked. Any threatening comments or messages may be forwarded to local authorities.

## **Expectations for Online Behavior**

- Stay on topic.
- Be mindful that the library's virtual spaces, like its physical spaces, are designed to be inclusive and family friendly.
- We request that each user be considerate and treat others with respect.
- Follow the acceptable use policies for social media platforms where BCFL is represented.

## **Unacceptable Behavior and Content**

Comments or direct messages that are unlawful, contain unprotected speech, or are unduly disruptive to the purpose for BCFL's social media presence will be removed, including but not limited to:

- Off-topic comments and material, including random or unintelligible comments
- Duplicated or repetitious posts from the same individual
- Threats or threatening language against the library, library employees, library users, or other social media participants
- Potentially defamatory or libelous comments
- Harassing or hateful speech
- Commercial information, advertising, spam, or solicitation of funds
- Copyright and trademark or other intellectual property violation
- Obscene or profane language, images, and material

- Disclosure of personal information about another person, including but not limited to name, address, and library account numbers or records
- Sexually explicit language, images, and material
- Child pornography
- False or misleading information, and any statement by a user under a false name or any falsification of identity
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public
- Any language that constitutes a criminal offence under federal, state, or local law
- Any images, links, or other content that falls into the above categories

### **Reporting Potential Violations**

Virtual visitors may report concerns to BCFL about potential violations by using the internal messaging system within the applicable social media platform or by using BCFL’s “Contact Us” account.

### **Procedures for Removal of Content and Blocking Users from Posting**

#### Removal of Content

When BCFL identifies that a post is potentially in violation of this policy:

- The post will be reviewed by the CEO or a designated BCFL staff member, to determine if there has been a violation.
- If there is no violation, the post will remain.
- If there has been a violation, BCFL will remove the post.
- Using the personal messaging system within the applicable social media platform, BCFL will notify users when their posts have been removed and the reasons for the removal.
- Violators will be provided with a link to a copy of this policy and warned that repeat violations will result in additional removal of posts and may result in their being blocked from posting.

#### **Blocking Users from Posting**

Repeat violations of this policy will result in the person responsible being blocked from posting. If there is a need to communicate with the library during

the blocking period, they may use the library's "Contact Us" account to communicate.

- Using the personal messaging system within the applicable social media platform, the library will notify the person responsible that they have been blocked from posting and the reasons for being blocked.
- Violators will be provided with a link to a copy of this policy and informed of the length of time they will be blocked as well as the appeal process to challenge the decision to block, if the violator chooses to do so.
- Violators will be provided with a link to the library's "Contact Us" account so they may engage in further communication with the library as applicable.

### **Blocking Periods**

Blocking periods for virtual visitors are consistent with banning periods applied to physical visitors for equivalent behavior violations. For more information see the Library Behavior Banning Guidelines, which are posted on the policy page of the BCFL website.

### **Appeal**

An appeal for a violation of the Social Media Policy or instances of content removal or blocked usage may be made, in writing, to the Board of Directors of the Bucks County Free Library, 150 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA 18901, or e-mailed to [bcflboard@buckslib.org](mailto:bcflboard@buckslib.org). In instances of banning, the library user, including the parents or legal guardian of a minor child, will be notified of the appeal hearing by overnight mail via UPS or Fed-Ex.