

Purpose

The Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System (MMRLS) uses selected social media tools and platforms as an important enhancement to communication, collaboration, and information exchange between library staff, library guests, and the communities we serve.

Definition

Social Media is defined as any online forum that allows users to create and share information. Examples include but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.

General Practices and Guidelines

Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System social media accounts are not intended to be a traditional public forum for the general exchange of ideas and viewpoints, but a limited public forum for discussing library services, programs, events, materials, and other relevant topics. All posts and comments will be monitored by library staff members, and the library reserves the right, within its sole discretion, to remove submissions, comments, posts, or other content that violates this policy, as outlined below.

- All comments, posts, or content should be related to the issue or topic being discussed.
- Comments that contain illegal, abusive, vulgar, offensive, threatening, or harassing language are prohibited and will be immediately removed.
- Duplicate posts from the same individual will be subject to removal.
- Posts which include personal or private information about an individual will be removed.
- Non-library created solicitations for membership, donations, or services will be removed.
- Content that violates copyright or trademark laws will be removed.
- Content deemed to be spam, commercial, political, or religious in nature will be removed.
- Other content deemed inappropriate or irrelevant to library services will be subject to removal.

Public Use

By utilizing or posting on the library's social media sites, users agree to comply with this social media policy. The library reserves the right to block users who have violated the terms of this policy.

- As with all library services and materials, MMRLS does not act in the place of, or in the absence of, a parent/guardian in regard to a minor's use of library social media accounts.
- By posting a comment or content of any kind, users agree to indemnify MMRLS and its officers and employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages, and costs incurred which arise out of or are related to content that has been posted by a user.
- MMRLS does not endorse the advertisements promoted by third parties on social media sites.
- By submitting content to any MMRLS social media site, users are granting permission for MMRLS to use that content without compensation or liability on MMRLS social media accounts and/or marketing materials. This permission may be revoked by the user by submitting a written request for MMRLS to stop use of the content.

Employee Use

Library social media offerings are intended to create a welcoming and inviting online space where library users can easily find useful, entertaining, or educational content about library services. When MMRLS employees post content to library social media accounts, it is a reflection of both the staff member as well as the library, and library system. As such, staff members are expected to conduct themselves at all times as representatives of MMRLS and adhere to all associated standards of conduct as outlined in this and other MMRLS policies, while providing the same level of excellence in customer service, and protecting the reputation of the library system.

Procedures

- Employees must have prior approval from the Executive Director to create a library social media account.
- Once approval is received, accounts will be created by relevant headquarters personnel working with branch staff, while utilizing library branding and guidelines. Use of the library logo on social media sites must be limited to high-quality files obtained directly from the Marketing and Access Coordinator, or online helpdesk, and not copied from another account or webpage.

- Whenever possible, each social media page should clearly indicate that it is maintained by MMRLS, have MMRLS contact information clearly displayed, and link to the MMRLS website and social media policy.
- Content may be posted on library social media accounts by the following staff members utilizing the guidelines defined in this policy: Executive Director, Marketing and Access Coordinator, Youth Services Coordinator, Librarian/Branch Manager.
- Other branch employees who wish to post content must receive prior approval from their Branch Manager, while other headquarters staff members must receive prior approval from the Executive Director. Content posted on all MMRLS social media accounts will be monitored by headquarters staff members to ensure appropriateness and may be removed without notice.
- In general, social media account managers should post at least once per week, but no more than twice per day, with occasional exceptions being permitted.
- All library social media accounts must have a minimum of two account administrators, one of whom will be the Marketing and Access Coordinator or Youth Services Coordinator.
- Employees should only post on MMRLS social media accounts during his/her working hours, unless otherwise instructed by a supervisor.
- On social media sites where “following” or a similar activity is permitted, MMRLS social media accounts may follow relevant accounts such as other library social media accounts, author or publisher accounts, official accounts for local municipalities or officials, etc.
- Employees must always use a professional voice when posting to MMRLS social media accounts, avoiding the use of “slang” language or abbreviations.
- Employees must verify facts, spelling, grammar, etc., before posting.
- Patron privacy should be of the utmost concern when posting to social media sites. A patron’s personal information must be protected at all times, and never shared on MMRLS sites.
- Staff should solicit written permission from library users before posting their image on social media accounts. In the case of minors, written approval must be received from a parent or guardian. Pictures of library users attending MMRLS programming may be used if a public notice is posted before and during the event notifying users that images taken during the event may be used by the library for promotional purposes.
- Pictures taken by library employees during MMRLS programming must not be posted on personal social media accounts, Friends of the Library social media accounts, or other non-library sponsored accounts or sites. Once it is obtained, permission to publish these pictures is given only to MMRLS.
- Direct and personal communication with library patrons, vendors, program presenters, etc., should be primarily conducted using official library email accounts and not social media.
- User concerns or negative comments posted to library social media accounts should be addressed as soon as possible by apologizing as appropriate and encouraging the user to contact a branch or headquarters staff member directly to discuss the issue further. These comments should not be deleted unless they violate the other guidelines defined in this policy, but should be thoroughly addressed in-person, or via email or telephone conversations like any other patron complaint, and never on the social media site.
- Users who request reference or circulation services such as holds or renewals should be instructed to contact his/her local branch or MMRLS headquarters for further assistance.
- MMRLS employees should not be administrators or post to MMRLS Friends of the Library Organization social media sites. Administration of these sites is the sole responsibility of library friends organization members.
- The role and use of social media in relation to the goals and purposes of the library system will be continually evaluated by the Executive Director. Accounts may be terminated at any time at his/her discretion.

Employee Use of Personal Social Media Accounts

MMRLS does not interfere with personal expression of its employees outside of working hours. However, staff members should remain aware that their comments may be viewed by others as representing official library positions, policies, or opinions. Therefore, if employees comment on any aspect of the library on their personal social media accounts, they must clearly identify themselves as library employees, and include a disclaimer stating that their views and opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System. Personal social media accounts may not be used to post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any MMRLS patron information, library information, or policies.