



POLICY TITLE: Social Media Policy

POLICY NUMBER: 2415

2415.1 Purpose:

The policy outlines the protocol and procedures for use of social media to publicize Cambria Community Services District (“District”) services, news, announcements and events. In addition, this policy addresses the responsibilities of District employees and District officials, as well as consultants and contractors performing work on behalf of the District, with regard to social media and the use of District resources (time/equipment), as well as responsibilities related to the public records and open meeting laws.

2415.2 Definitions:

- a) Social Media: Various forms of discussions and information-sharing, including social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums. Technologies include: picture-sharing, wall-postings, fan pages, email, instant messaging and music-sharing. Examples of social media applications include but are not limited to Google and Yahoo Groups, (reference, social networking), Wikipedia (reference), NextDoor (social networking), Facebook (social networking), YouTube (social networking and video sharing), Flickr, (photo sharing), Twitter (social networking and microblogging), LinkedIn (business networking), and news media comment sharing/blogging.
- b) Social Networking: The practice of expanding business and/or social contacts by making connections through web-based applications. This policy focuses on social networking as it relates to the Internet to promote such connections for District business and for employees, elected and appointed officials who are using this medium in the conduct of official District business.
- c) “Posts” or “postings” means information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communication posted on a District social media site.

Policy:

2415.3 No District social media site may be created without the prior written approval of the General Manager or his or her designee. All District social media sites created on behalf of the District, by its employees on District time, or using other District resources are the property of the District and shall be administered and regularly monitored by the General Manager or his/her designee. These social media sites shall be used to help inform the public about District business, services, news and events. Individual departments may have their own pages/sites, subject to General Manager approval. Individual departments wishing to add content to District social media sites shall submit a request to the General Manager. The District’s website, www.cambriacsd.org, will remain the location for content regarding District business, services and events. Whenever possible, links within social media formats should direct users to the District website for more information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the District. District social media sites shall clearly state that such sites are maintained by the District and that the sites comply with this Social Media Policy.

2415.4 District employees and appointed and elected officials shall not disclose information about confidential District business on the District’s social media sites, personal social media sites, or otherwise.

In addition, all use of social media sites by elected and appointed officials shall be in *compliance with California’s Brown Act*, which prohibits serial meetings of a majority of the Board or another legislative body of the District via email or other electronic means. In this regard, reference is made to Government Code section 54952.2, which has been amended and clarifies that a member of a legislative body may communicate on social media platforms to answer questions, provide information to the public or to solicit information from the public regarding a matter within the legislative body’s subject matter jurisdiction. But those communications are only allowed if members of the same legislative body do not use a social media platform to discuss official business among themselves. “Discuss among themselves” means making posts, commenting, and even using digital icons that express reactions to communications (i.e., emojis) made by other members of the legislative body.

Government Code Section 54952.2(b) ¹ (3) also prohibits a member of a legislative body from responding “directly to any communication on an Internet-based social media platform regarding a matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body that is made, posted, or shared by any other member of the legislative body.” Therefore, if one Board or Committee or Commission Member posted a comment in response to another Member’s social media post about a District issue, it would be a Brown Act violation.

Employees and elected or appointed officials’ posts to non-District social media sites are a reflection of their own views and not necessarily those of the District and should not suggest otherwise.

2415.5 Posting/Commenting Guidelines:

¹ (b) (1) A majority of the members of a legislative body shall not, outside a meeting authorized by this chapter, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item of business that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not be construed as preventing an employee or official of a local agency, from engaging in separate conversations or communications outside of a meeting authorized by this chapter with members of a legislative body in order to answer questions or provide information regarding a matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the local agency, if that person does not communicate to members of the legislative body the comments or position of any other member or members of the legislative body.

(3) (A) Paragraph (1) shall not be construed as preventing a member of the legislative body from engaging in separate conversations or communications on an internet-based social media platform to answer questions, provide information to the public, or to solicit information from the public regarding a matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body provided that a majority of the members of the legislative body do not use the internet-based social media platform to discuss among themselves business of a specific nature that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body. A member of the legislative body shall not respond directly to any communication on an internet-based social media platform regarding a matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body that is made, posted, or shared by any other member of the legislative body.

(B) For purposes of this paragraph, all of the following definitions shall apply:

(i) “Discuss among themselves” means communications made, posted, or shared on an internet-based social media platform between members of a legislative body, including comments or use of digital icons that express reactions to communications made by other members of the legislative body.

(ii) “Internet-based social media platform” means an online service that is open and accessible to the public.

(iii) “Open and accessible to the public” means that members of the general public have the ability to access and participate, free of charge, in the social media platform without the approval by the social media platform or a person or entity other than the social media platform, including any forum and chatroom, and cannot be blocked from doing so, except when the internet-based social media platform determines that an individual violated its protocols or rules.

- a) Postings made by the District to social media sites should contain information and content that has already been published or broadcast by the District. The District will not comment on other social media member's sites. All official social media postings by the District will be done solely on the District's social media sites. Officers, employees and agents of the District representing it on District social media sites shall conduct themselves professionally and in accordance with all District policies. All District social media sites shall use authorized District contact information for account set-up, monitoring and access. Personal email accounts or phone numbers may not be used to set up, monitor, or post to a District social media platform.
- b) The District reserves the right to remove from its social media sites content that it finds to violate this policy or applicable law. Any participants on the District's social media sites who are in continual violation of the postings/commenting guidelines may be barred from further use of the District's site. The District will only post photos for which it has copyright or the owner's permission.
- c) District social media platforms are subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained on a District social media site that is related to District business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be considered a public record and subject to public disclosure. All postings on District social media sites shall be sent to a District email account and maintained consistently with the Public Records Act, provided, however, that any material removed from a District social media site consistently with this policy shall be considered a preliminary draft, note or memorandum not retained by the District in the ordinary course of business and shall not constitute a public record of the District required to be retained consistently with the District's records retention schedules.
- d) Chat functions in any social media sites should not be used.
- e) Links to all social media networks to which the District belongs will be listed on the District's website. Interested parties wishing to interact with these sites will be directed to visit the District's website for more information on how to participate.
- f) The District reserves the right to terminate any District social media site without notice or to temporarily or permanently suspend access to District social media as to some or all persons at any time. The District reserves the right to implement or remove any functionality of its social media platforms, in the discretion of the General Manager or his or her designee. This includes, but is not limited to, information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communication that can be posted on a District social media platform
- g) District social media sites may contain content, including but not limited to, advertisements or hyperlinks over which the District has no control. The District does not endorse any hyperlink or advertisement placed on District social media sites by the social media site's owners, vendors, or partners.
- h) Any person authorized to post items on any of the District's social media platforms shall review, be familiar with, and comply with this Policy and each social media platform's terms and conditions of use.
- i) Any person authorized to post items on behalf of the District to any of the District's social media platforms shall not express personal views or concerns through such postings. Instead, postings on any of the District's social media platforms on behalf of the District shall only reflect the views of the District.
- j) Posts must contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential as defined by any District policy or county, state or federal law.
- k) Posts may NOT contain any personal information, except for the names of persons being available for contact by the public as representatives of the District. Posts to District social media sites shall NOT contain any of the following:
 - 1) Comments that are not topically related to the information commented upon;
 - 2) Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates or ballot measures;
 - 3) Profane language or content;

- 4) Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation, or any other category protected by federal, State, or local law;
- 5) Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- 6) Solicitations of commerce;
- 7) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- 8) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- 9) Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
- 10) Comments that are abusive, hateful, or intended to defame anyone or any organization;
- 11) Comments with violent or threatening content; or
- 12) Content advocating for alteration of hours, wages, and terms and conditions of employment (applies to District employees only).

Procedures:

- 2415.6 The General Manager or his designee will be responsible for responding to comments and messages as appropriate. The District will direct users to the District's website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the District.
- 2415.7 The District may invite others to participate in its social media sites. Such invitations will be based upon the best interest of the District as determined by the General Manager or his or her designee.

Responsibilities:

- 2415.8 It is the responsibility of employees and appointed and elected officials to understand the procedures as outlined in this policy.
- 2415.9 Employees who are not designated by the General Manager to access social media sites for District business are prohibited from accessing social media sites utilizing the District computer equipment and/ or the District's web access. While at work, employees who are not granted access via District systems and computing equipment may use personal computing devices and personal web accounts to access social media sites only during non-working hours such as lunch periods and breaks. State law provides that more than occasional or incidental personal use of District resources is a crime.
- 2415.10 The General Manager will determine if a requested use of District social media sites or other District resources is appropriate and complies with this policy.
- 2415.11 All content on District social media sites must comply with District web standards, the rules and regulation of the social media site provider, including privacy policies, and applicable law. Employee or District confidentiality shall be maintained in accordance with all applicable laws and District policies. If a question arises regarding the use or posting of confidential information on a social media site, the matter shall be referred to the General Manager. The information in question shall not be posted, or if already posted, shall be removed until an opinion is rendered by General Manager or, at his or her request, Legal Counsel. Notwithstanding the opinion of the District counsel, the General Manager reserves the right to restrict or remove District information from a District social media site if the General Manager concludes the information does not serve the best interest of the District.

- 2415.12 All social media-based services to be developed, designed, managed by or purchased from any third-party source for District use requires appropriate budget authority and approval from the Board of Directors, in accordance with the District's Purchasing Policy.
- 2415.13 The CCSD Board of Directors reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.