



**Robbinsville Township**  
**Public Relations and Social Media Policy**  
*(Updated: December 21, 2016)*

**Purpose:**

This policy sets forth guidelines for the establishment and use by Robbinsville Township of all social media sites as a means of conveying township-related information to its residents, employees and visitors. The Township has an over-riding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the Township on its social media sites.

For purposes of this policy, “social media” is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, blogs, Instagram, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, LinkedIn, SnapChat, Delicious, Tumblr and Flickr. For purposes of this policy, “comments” include information, articles and pictures. It also includes other communication mediums created by the Township and the Robbinsville Township Office of Emergency Management (OEM), including but not limited to Nixle and reverse 911.

**Scope:**

This policy shall apply to all municipal agencies and departments, as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency, official and/or commission or Council permitted by the Township to post on Robbinsville Township social media sites.

**General Policy:**

1. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
2. The Robbinsville Township website at [www.robbsville-twp.org](http://www.robbsville-twp.org) and/or [www.robbsville.net](http://www.robbsville.net) will remain the primary and official internet presence for information.
3. Township social media sites and this policy are subject to all applicable federal and NJ laws and regulations, as well as applicable record-retention requirements.
4. Employees representing the Township via its social media sites must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Township and in accordance with all of its policies.
5. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by the Township Business Administrator and/or Township Council.

6. Items submitted for use in the Township's weekly Newsfeed must be approved in advance by the Business Administrator and the Office of Communications and Public Information.

### **Public Relations & Information:**

- Although the Township does not copyright its content, proper attribution for any content reproduced in any public forum or news publication must be given to the Township, unless otherwise waived by the Office of Communications and Public Information.
- Following any Grand Opening announcement for a local business, unless there is a change of ownership, location change, a substantial remodeling or restructuring of the business, the Township cannot directly promote that business. This is done to keep a level playing field among all competing businesses. The lone exception to this guideline is if the business or sponsored endeavor is used to promote a non-profit or non-political fundraising/charity event.
- It is the responsibility of the Robbinsville School District to secure all necessary parental permissions before submitting photographs of children for use on any of the Township's media portals. Since the school district and the Township are two separate and distinct entities, the Business Administrator and the Office of Communications and Public Information reserve the right to disqualify any photographs containing unauthorized images of children, district employees, board members or other officials in order to prevent preferential treatment to any one person or group.

### **Social Media:**

The sole purpose of social media sites used by the Township is to present information concerning Robbinsville Township and its government to its residents, businesses and visitors. Please note these are moderated online discussion sites and a limited public forum. The Township's social media sites are not intended for comments that do not relate to the purpose or topic posted. User comments should directly relate to the comments posted or displayed by the Township on this site, and the site is not meant for comments that do not relate directly to the purpose or topic established by the Township. General inquiries, comments, communications and service requests should be submitted directly to the Township. The information on the Township's social media sites does not constitute the official record of any agency or entity within the Township. To request official records, you must contact the Township Clerk at 609-259-3600 ext. 105 or visit [www.robbinsville-twp.org](http://www.robbinsville-twp.org).

Comments, media, or other information posted to or displayed on the sites are subject to monitoring and review at any time. Users of the site(s) should have no expectation of privacy with respect to any such comments, media or other information. Robbinsville Township disclaims all responsibility and/or liability for any materials the Township deems inappropriate that cannot be removed in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner.

Certain categories of speech, including obscenity and direct threats, are not entitled to full protection under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Commercial speech is also subject to different treatment under the law, and can be excluded from a government page. Privacy laws can be invoked to justify the removal or personally identifiable information such as phone numbers, home addresses, and social security numbers.

## **Moderation of Third Party Content:**

Robbinsville Township social media sites serve as a limited public forum and all content published is subject to monitoring. Although Robbinsville Township will not edit or re-write comments or posts in any forum, it reserves the right to reject, block, delete (if possible) or hide user-generated submissions when the content contains:

1. Vulgar, profane, racist, violent or obscene language or rhetoric;
2. Defamatory or disparaging content;
3. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
4. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
5. False, misleading or deceptive information or media;
6. Personal attacks or threatening or harassing activity of any kind;
7. Clearly off-topic comments, and/or comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;
8. Spam or links to other sites or any nature;
9. Comments or content that constitutes, promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, genetics, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or intellectual disability or sexual orientation, or any other classification protected by applicable federal, state, or local law or regulation;
10. Content that will compromise public safety or advocate or encourage illegal activity;
11. Commerce solicitations (ads) that promote particular services, commercial transactions, products, or political organization;
12. Opposition or promotion of any person campaigning for election to a political office;
13. Non-public information concerning securities, or that constitutes insider-trading or forwarding looking statements;
14. Infringement on intellectual property, or legal ownership interest of any other party;
15. Personally identifiable or protected medical (HIPAA) or personal information such as home addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers or driver's license numbers;
16. Information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of the public or public systems, or any criminal or civil investigations;
17. Comments that do not directly relate to the information or comments posted or displayed by Robbinsville Township on its site(s).

The foregoing is an incomplete list and Robbinsville Township reserves the right to ban or block any user in violation of the above rules. Users also must comply with all Terms of Use established by their Internet Service Providers (ISP).

## **Oversight and Enforcement:**

Employees representing Robbinsville Township through social media outlets or participating in social media features on agency websites must maintain a high level of ethical conduct and professional decorum. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in agency social media sites, blogs, or other social media features. Information must be presented following professional standards for good grammar, spelling, brevity, clarity and accuracy, and avoid jargon, obscure terminology, or acronyms. Township employees recognize that the content and messages they post on social media websites are public and may be cited as official Township statements. Social media should not be used to circumvent other agency communication policies, including news media policy requirements.

Township employees may not publish information on agency social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information
- Copyright violations
- Profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM

Any social media site created by a Township employee, Township official and/or Township entity and/or commission, and/or Township official remains the property of the Township, including all followers, 'Likes' and 'Friends' generated by the site. If the person who created the site leaves the employment of the Township, or leaves a Township commission, they must relinquish everything related to the site, including user names, passwords and/or access codes or information.

## **Records Retention:**

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by Robbinsville Township and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to (applicable public records statute). These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (e.g. digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Furthermore, retention of social media records shall fulfill the following requirements:

- Social media records are captured in a continuous, automated fashion throughout the day to minimize a potential loss of data due to deletion and/or changes on the social networking site.
- Social media records are maintained in an authentic format (i.e. ideally the native technical format provided by the social network, such as XML or JSON) along with complete metadata.
- Social media records are archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and rich media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are accessed.
- Social media records are indexed based on specific criteria such as date, content type, and keywords to ensure that records can be quickly located and produced in an appropriate format for distribution (e.g. PDF).

- Each employee who administers one or more social networking sites on behalf of the Township has self-service, read-only access to search and produce relevant social media records to fulfill public information and legal discovery requests as needed. Agency utilizes an automated archiving solution provided by ArchiveSocial to comply with applicable public records law and fulfill the above record retention requirements. The Township archive is available at: [archivesocial.com](http://archivesocial.com).

### **Terms of Use Disclosure:**

Robbinsville Township government makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information on its website. The information contained herein is not official, nor in any way shall it be deemed to constitute legal notice where such legal notice is required by law. The information contained in this site is provided as a service and convenience to people needing information about Robbinsville Township government. Portions of the information on the site may be incorrect or not current. Robbinsville Township government, its officers, employees or agents shall not be liable for damages or losses of any kind arising out of or in connection with the use or performance of information, including but not limited to damages or losses caused by reliance upon the accuracy or timeliness of any such information, or damages incurred from the viewing, distributing, or copying of those materials.

**This policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time.**

**Robbinsville Township  
2298 Route 33  
Robbinsville, NJ 08691  
(609) 259-3600**