



Communications Policy

For: The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry
County Library Board

Policy No.: 2008-01

Policy Type: Operational

Effective Date: May 23, 2024
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Purpose:

The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County Library takes an active role in communicating the value and importance of public library services to the community. This policy provides guidelines for an effective and coordinated way of communicating with the public, including patrons, community groups and partners, and the media.

Scope:

This policy refers to:

- a) External communication about or on behalf of SDG Library;
- b) Communications by SDG Library Board members and SDG Library staff;
- c) All forms of communication, including all online communication platforms such as social media.

Definitions

Communications: the interaction between two or more people or groups where information and other content is provided, sent, or received.

Communications platform: a tool that supports two-way communication such as conversations, information sharing and commentary.

Policy guidelines:

The SDG Library values the role that communications play in:

- a) Engaging and consulting with the community and members of the public;
- b) Sharing information about the Library;
- c) Enhancing the value the library brings to the community;
- d) Providing transparency about how the Library operates.

The Library's communication will:

- a) Reflect the Library's values and its commitment to public service;
- b) Be delivered clearly and effectively in a respectful and positive manner;
- c) Support intellectual freedom while protecting privacy rights;
- d) Represent the diverse nature of the community in a fair and inclusive manner;
- e) Reflect the value of accessibility and comply with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians in Disabilities Act (AODA) and regulations;
- f) Provide information in different formats using various means of communication to efficiently reach audiences;



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- g) Be delivered in a proactive, not reactive manner.

The Library will not condone:

- a) Promotion of discrimination, stereotypes, socially unacceptable behaviour, gratuitous violence, obscene or profane language or unfair representation;
- b) Exploitation or inciting of violence; or directly encourage or exhibit obvious indifference to, unlawful or reprehensive behaviour;
- c) Demean, denigrate, or disparage any identifiable person, group of persons, organization, profession, product or service;
- d) Advertising that is partisan or political in nature;
- e) The promotion of religious beliefs or convictions;
- f) Personal ads and notices, and notices of items for sale or rent.

The Communications and Marketing Coordinator will:

- a) Establish graphics standards and guidelines and ensure adherence to the Library's brand identity;
- b) In consultation with the Director of Library Services, establish guidelines for all public, Board, and staff communications;
- c) Develop and ensure the implementation of a Communications and Marketing Plan that will be reviewed annually by the Library Board.

Media Communication:

SDG Library recognizes the value and impact that local news media offer to SDG Library in helping to share information about Library programs and services to the community. Inquiries from news media are given high priority by SDG Library. Requests for information will be responded to effectively and efficiently and in as timely a manner as possible.

The Communications and Marketing Coordinator, or designate, will respond to media inquiries and, at their discretion, refer any item to the Director of Library Services and/or the Board Chair.

Website:

SDG Library will keep information on its website current and accessible.

Social Media:

The SDG Library will maintain various social media applications to enhance the communication of Library information within the community. These will be in keeping with the Communications Policy outlined above. Use of the Library's social media applications will be a part of the Communications and Marketing Plan, and present meaningful and



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honest ideas that are of interest to Library users and non-users alike, and invite responses from the social media community.

SDG Library staff and board members are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. SDG Library staff are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as SDG Library employees.

Appropriate content for staff to post includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Notices of upcoming meetings, programs and events;
- b) Content of all press releases, policies and procedures, information about library services, collections, trends or technology, reviews and recommendations;
- c) Communication between staff and the library community regarding SDG Library work and/or projects;
- d) Frequently asked questions;
- e) Promotion and outreach;
- f) Information relevant to the community, information from community partners, local employment, training, and continuing education information.

The SDG Library has created risk management protocols and procedures in the event of an online and social media incident. Should an incident or issue occur, SDG Library will respond appropriately in a timely manner. This includes an investigation into the matter and action as deemed appropriate, which may include one or more of the following:

- a) Issuing a response, correction or apology;
- b) Deleting a comment or post;
- c) Investigating similar or related incidents to prevent repeat incidents;
- d) Pursuing legal advice and/or action;
- e) Applying the Rules of Conduct Policy in order to exclude patrons from use of Library facilities, depending on the seriousness of the incident;
- f) Applying human resources procedures, including disciplinary action up to and including dismissal;
- g) Reviewing incidents after the fact to determine if preventive measures or the SDG Library's response could be improved.

Comments, posts, and messages are welcome on SDG Library social media sites provided they do not contain:

- a) Obscene, racist, or otherwise discriminatory content;
- b) Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language;
- c) Plagiarized material or copyrighted material;
- d) Confidential information published without prior consent.

Postings containing any of the above will be removed immediately, and the posting account may be blocked from posting subsequent messages to the Library's social media platform.



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Being followed by SDG Library on any social media platform does not imply affiliation or endorsement.

Crisis and Emergency Communication:

In the event of a crisis or emergency in which the Library is involved, SDG Library will:

- a) Communicate during and after the event in order to prevent injury or loss of life, limit damage to Library assets and property, maintain public services, assist in the process of recovery and maintain or restore public confidence in the Library;
- b) Support the SDG Counties and its Boards and Committees in any crisis or emergency communications, as required;
- c) The Chair of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County Library Board and/or the Director of Library Services assumes the role of spokesperson for crisis or emergency communications. Other board members and staff will not act as spokespersons unless designated by the Chair or Director of Library Services.

Public Bulletin Boards:

For information regarding public bulletin boards, please refer to the Facilities Use policy.

Adapted from Chatham-Kent Public Library, Collingwood Public Library, and Markham Public Library.