

## **Social Media Acceptable Use Policy**

### **Our standards for conduct on social media**

The council has a number of social media profiles. Most social networks and microblogs have their own rules and guidelines, which we, and you should also, always follow. We reserve the right to remove any contributions that break these rules:

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant.
- Do not post messages that are sensitive, unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive.
- Do not swear.
- Do not post content copied from elsewhere, for which you do not own the copyright.
- Do not post the same message, or very similar messages, more than once, also called "spamming".
- Do not publicise your, or anyone else's, personal information, such as contact details.
- Do not advertise products or services.
- Do not impersonate someone else.

### **Political Neutrality**

The council itself, as opposed to its political administration, must be politically neutral in its communications. Therefore, please do not use any of our pages to promote party political messages or other content.

Any comments which the council believes may compromise its obligation to remain politically neutral will be removed.

### **Complaints**

If you have a concern about something posted on a page that the council is responsible for, you should contact us.

### **Council approach to connections on social media**

There is no fixed approach on who the council will have in its network, but as a guide, we share information we think will be of interest to our customers. Therefore, our connections may include the profiles of the following:

- Midlothian councillors or any other politician commenting on matters of interest
- public, private and voluntary sector partner organisations
- community organisations and campaigning groups
- media and journalists

- any other commentators or opinion formers that the council may want to follow.

### **Endorsement**

The council does not endorse any individual or organisation merely by virtue of creating a social media connection, regardless of the terms used by social media providers such as 'follow' or 'like'.

### **Removal**

Once connected, the council will not remove a profile from its network unless there is some over-riding reason to do so; for example, because it poses a significant and material risk to the council's reputation and credibility.

### **Privacy and data protection**

No messages should include private or personal information and we reserve the right to remove posts that breach this rule. However, in the event of any personal information being collected via social media, it will be treated as confidential in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **How we deal with comments via social media**

- We monitor our main social media accounts, currently Facebook and Twitter, during working hours.
- Our responses to replies, comments and direct messages depend on the individual service.
- Even if we do not reply, we are listening and will act on or pass on your comments as appropriate.
- You should not rely on a social media platform itself to raise concerns. In most cases, it will be better to contact the service directly by telephone or via the contact us page on the website at [www.midlothian.gov.uk/contact-us](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/contact-us)
- Our social media platforms are not intended to be used by the media or politicians to contact us. You should contact our media team directly at [communications@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:communications@midlothian.gov.uk).