



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

Schedule "A" to By-law No. 2021-035

POLICY: Website and Social Media Policy	COUNCIL APPROVAL DATE: August 18, 2021
POLICY NUMBER: CO-2021-002	RESOLUTION NUMBER: By-Law 2021-035
SUPERCEDES POLICY NUMBER:	REVISION DATE:

POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the Village of Sundridge supports the use of a Website and Social Media platforms as a method of providing information to the public. Information and communication shared through these channels have a significant and lasting impact on the reputation of the Village Council and Staff, it is therefore vital that clear expectations are in place regarding Website and Social Media use.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- a) Assign responsibility for maintaining the Village Website and Social Media page;
- b) Clearly outline the protocol for communicating Village information;
- c) Clarify how and if the Village will reply to comments and posts;
- d) Establish parameters for deleting posts.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Village employees, including but not limited to regular, temporary and contract employees (collectively called "Employees"), in addition to Council members, volunteers, students and interns and appointed committee representatives.

DEFINITIONS:

"Standard Business Hours" The standard business hours of the Village of Sundridge are Monday to Friday - 8:30a.m. to 4:00p.m.

"Social Media Administrators" Village of Sundridge Staff authorized by the Clerk Administrator, to Operate and Manage the Village website and Social Media Accounts.

"Village" The Corporation of the Village of Sundridge



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

POLICY DETAILS:

Website and Social Media Purpose

The primary purpose of the Village Website and Social Media Page is to convey information to members of the public, including but not limited to:

- a) Publishing Council meetings, agendas, minutes and applicable by-laws/documents to ensure accountability and transparency.
- b) Information about municipal programs, services, activities, amenities, and events;
- c) To promote the Village of Sundridge economic, social, and cultural quality of life;

Communications made through Website and Social Media messaging systems shall, in no way, be deemed to constitute legal notice to the Village or any of its agencies, officers, employees, agents or representatives, with any respect to existing or potential claims or cause of action against the Village or any of its agencies, officers, employees, agents or representatives, where notice to the Village is required by any federal, provincial, or local laws, rules, or regulations.

All content posted to the website and/or social media is to be approved by the Clerk Administrator or designate.

Complaints and/or By-law enforcement matters will not be managed or responded to from Social Media.

Website and Social Media Platforms

The Village of Sundridge operates and maintains the following:

Website: www.sundridge.ca

Facebook Page: Sunny Sundridge

Hyperlink Policy

The purpose of the Village website and social media platforms is to provide information about its government, services, and attractions. The Village website may contain hyperlinks to other websites. The Village is not responsible for, and does not endorse, the information on any hyperlinked website unless specifically stated.

The following criteria will be used by the Village to decide whether to grant requests for hyperlinks from its website and/or social media platforms.



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

The Village website will provide hyperlinks to websites for:

- a) Government and educational institutions;
- b) Organizations with some economic or subject matter relationship to the Village (including but not limited to those contracting with the Village, those sponsoring municipal activities or programs, and those participating in municipal activities or programs);
- c) Generally recognized community or civic organizations;
- d) Organizations providing information about art, cultural, and sporting activities in the Village;
- e) Organizations related to the Village's tourism industry;
- f) Private events.

The Village website will not provide hyperlinks to websites for:

- a) Candidates for elected office;
- b) Political organizations or other organizations advocating a position on a local, provincial, or federal issue;
- c) Corporate or other for-profit organizations unless they fit the criteria stated above;
- d) Individual or personal home pages;

Hyperlinks will not be considered or approved by the Village if the exhibition of the content within the browser would also exhibit one or more of the following categories:

- a) Content which graphically depicts or describes violence, or nudity and/or sexual activities in a way designed to evoke prurient interest;
- b) Content which facilitates or incites crime or is racist;
- c) A hyperlink that directly links to other content that when perceived within a browser is in violation of any of the prohibited content stated above;
- d) Discussion groups, chat rooms, bulletin boards, and other largely unedited content created by individuals who are not owners, operators, or agents of the Village website;
- e) Websites containing information that violates any of the Village's equal opportunity policies;
- f) Any other content that the Clerk Administrator or designate deems inappropriate.

Websites that have been approved and linked from the Village website, but subsequently demonstrate any of the above categories of content, will be unlinked from the Village website without notice.

All Other community events that are open to the public, can be submitted through the website for review and approval on the Village of Sundridge Community Calendar.



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

Privacy Policy

The protection of individual privacy is a concern to the Village, and is governed by local and provincial laws. The Village has created this privacy statement in order to demonstrate its commitment to privacy. The following discloses the Village's information gathering and dissemination practices for its website.

No personally identifiable information is automatically collected about visitors who simply browse the Village's website or who download information from it.

The Village web servers maintain logs of user activity in order to help manage the website. Information stored in these logs does not identify the user personally. The logs store such things as the domain name and IP address from which a user accessed the Village's website; the type of browser and operating system they used; the date and time they accessed the website; the pages they visited; and the country or region of the world from which they accessed the website.

The Village uses this information to learn how many visitors the website has, where they are coming from, which parts of the Village's website are of most interest to visitors, and other facts that will help improve the website and the services offered.

The Village values user feedback. If users participate in a survey, send an email or subscribe to the website, their email address and any other information they have volunteered will be collected. Visitors who request services through this website may be required to furnish additional information in order to provide the service requested. The additional information collected will be no more specific than if the visitor were requesting the service by any other means, including by telephone or an in-person visit to a municipal facility.

While no website can protect itself against all eventualities, every effort is made to protect any sensitive personal information provided by users. The Village will not rent, sell or give away any information identifying users individually (name, address, phone number, etc.) to third parties for marketing or mailing list purposes.

As a governmental agency, the Village is governed by Ontario's Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Disclaimer of Liability

The Village of Sundridge shall not be held liable for any improper or incorrect use of the materials or information contained on the website and/or social media platforms and assumes no responsibility for any user's use of them. In no event shall the Village of Sundridge be liable for any damages, whether direct, indirect, incidental, special, exemplary or consequential (including, but not limited to, business interruption or loss of use, data, or profits) regardless of cause, and on any theory of liability, whether in contract, statute, strict liability, or tort (including



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

negligence or otherwise) arising in any way out of the use of this website, social media accounts or the materials and information contained on this website, even if advised of the possibility of such damage. This disclaimer of liability applies to any damages or injury, including but not limited to those caused by any failure of performance, error, omission, interruption, deletion, defect, delay, computer virus, communication line failure, theft, or destruction of data, whether for breach of contract, tortuous behavior, statutory liability negligence, or under any other cause of action.

Users are encouraged to consult with appropriate and accredited professional advisors for advice concerning specific matters before making any decision, and the Village of Sundridge disclaims any responsibility for positions taken by individuals or corporations in their individual cases or for any misunderstanding and losses, directly or indirectly, on the part of any user.

Disclaimer of Warranties / Accuracy and Use of Information

The materials posted on the Village website and/or social media platforms are provided "as is" and without warranties of any kind expressed or implied. To the fullest extent permissible under applicable law, the Village disclaims all warranties, expressed or implied, including but not limited to, implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and title to any of the materials provided on this website. The Village does not represent or warrant that the functions contained in the materials will be uninterrupted or error-free, that defects will be corrected, or that this website or the server that makes it are free of viruses or other harmful components. The Village does not warrant or make any representations regarding the use or the results of the use of the materials, or through links to other websites, in terms of their correctness, accuracy, reliability or otherwise. The user (and not the Village of Sundridge) assumes the entire cost of all necessary servicing, repair, or correction.

Changes are made periodically to many municipal documents, including municipal bylaws, regulations, guidelines, and schedules, and these changes may or may not be reflected in the materials or information present on the Village of Sundridge website. Additionally, because the website is frequently under development, materials and information may be deleted, modified or moved to a different part of the website and/or social media accounts by the Village without advance notice.

Administration and Permissions

Approval authority for all changes to the Village website and/or social media will rest with the Clerk Administrator or Designate.

The website and social media accounts are monitored only during business hours.

Staff shall not participate in conversations or respond to questions in groups comments.



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

Questions received through private/direct messages will be responded to during business hours.

Social Media Policy

Proposed Social Media Introductory Statement

The information included on our social media sites is for the purpose of sharing municipal-related information only. The Village of Sundridge is not responsible for the comments made by followers or members of this page and reserves the right to remove any content that is inappropriate, as outlined in our rules of conduct.

Proposed Social Media Rules of Conduct

Content, posts, photographs, and comments containing any of the following content will not be allowed and will be removed at the discretion of the Clerk Administrator or designates:

- a) Comments unrelated to the Village;
- b) Profane language or content;
- c) Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination (including but not limited to, race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation);
- d) Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- e) Commercial advertising;
- f) Content encouraging illegal activity;
- g) Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- h) Violation of legal ownership interest of any other party (copyright and intellectual property infringement);
- i) Content for the purposes of promoting a candidate for municipal, provincial, or federal election;
- j) Content that is believed to be inappropriate or without merit in the opinion of the Village of Sundridge Clerk Administrator or Designate.

Guiding Principles for Online Social Media for Employees and Members of Council

Members of Council should refrain from making comments on Village accounts.

These online social media principles are intended to outline how Village values should be demonstrated in the social media space and to guide staff participation in this area, both when staff are acting on behalf of the Corporation or participating personally.

Principles and Values Specific to the Online Social Media Community.



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

Transparency in social media engagement: The Village does not condone manipulating the social media conversation by creating “fake” posts designed to mislead followers and control a conversation. Every website, “fan page,” or other online destination that is ultimately controlled by the Village must make that fact known to users and must be authorized according to applicable internal protocols in order to track and monitor the Village’s online presence.

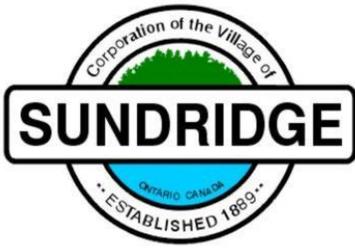
Protection of our citizens’ privacy: We shall be conscientious regarding any personally identifiable information that we collect, including how we collect, store, use, or share that information, all of which should be done pursuant to applicable municipal freedom of information acts and privacy policies.

Respect of copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights in the online social media space, including user-generated content: In our situation, we will control this area by defining the Village’s online social media contributors whose responsibility will lie in speaking/responding on the Village’s behalf. They will work with other departments to make informed and sound responses.

Utilization of best practices: We will listen to the online community, and comply with applicable regulations to ensure that the Online Social Media Policy remains current and reflects the most up-to-date and appropriate standards of behaviour.

The following principles guide how we must represent the Village in an online, official capacity when they are speaking “on behalf” of the Village:

- a) Be recognized as an official social media contributor: All employees who wish to officially represent the Village must be recognized by senior management prior to beginning or continuing these activities.
- b) Follow our corporation’s policies: As a representative of Village, you must act with honesty and integrity in all matters. This commitment is true for all forms of social media.
- c) Be mindful that you are representing the Corporation. As a Village representative, it is important that your posts convey the same positive, informative spirit and tone that the Village instills in all of its communications. Be respectful of all individuals, races, religions and cultures; how you conduct yourself in the online social media space not only reflects on you – it is a direct reflection on the Corporation.
- d) Fully disclose your affiliation with the Village: All employees who are communicating on behalf of the Village should always disclose their name and their affiliation. It is never acceptable to use aliases or otherwise deceive people. Your relationship with the Village must be stated from the outset.



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

- e) **Keep records:** It is critical that we keep records of our interactions in the online social media space and monitor the activities of those with whom we engage. Because online conversations are often fleeting and immediate, it is important for you to keep track of them when you're officially representing the Village. Remember that online statements can be held to the same legal standards as traditional media communications. Keep records of any online dialogue pertaining to the Village.
- f) **When in doubt, do not post:** Employees are personally responsible for their words and actions, wherever they are. As an online contributor, you must ensure that your posts are completely accurate and not misleading, and that they do not reveal non-public information about the Corporation. Exercise sound judgment and common sense, and if there is any doubt, **DO NOT POST IT**. In any circumstance in which you are uncertain about how to respond to a post, discuss with senior management.
- g) **Give credit where credit is due and don't violate others' rights:** **DO NOT** claim authorship of something that is not yours. If you are using another party's content, make certain that they are credited for it in your post and that they approve of you utilizing their content. Do not use the copyrights, trademarks, publicity rights, or other rights of others without the necessary permissions of the rights-holder.
- h) **Remember that even the smallest posts can have large ramifications:** The way that you answer an online question might be accurate but can be misinterpreted or misconstrued. Keep that "comprehensive view" in mind when you are participating in online conversations.
- i) **Know that the Internet is permanent:** Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if you "remove/delete" it later or attempt to make it anonymous. If your complete thought, along with its context, cannot be squeezed into a character-restricted space (such as Twitter), provide a link to an online space where the message can be expressed completely and accurately.

About the Village

The following principles guide how our employees (including the Mayor and Council) must represent the Village in an online, official capacity when they are speaking "about" the Village, including private and personal social media accounts:

- a) **Follow our corporation's policies:** As an employee and a representative of the Village, you must act with honesty and integrity in all matters. This commitment is true for all forms of social media. These principles are to guide your actions at work and are also applicable to your personal activities online.
- b) **You are responsible for your actions:** Anything you post that can potentially tarnish the Village's image will ultimately be your responsibility. We do encourage you to participate in the online social media space, but urge you to do so properly, exercising sound judgment and common sense.



Village of Sundridge Corporate Policy

- c) Be a “scout” for compliments and criticism: Even if you are not an official online spokesperson for the Village, you are one of our most vital assets for monitoring the social media landscape. If you come across positive or negative remarks about the Village or its brands online that you believe are important, consider sharing them by forwarding them to our official online social media contributors.
- d) Let the subject matter experts respond to negative posts. You may come across negative or disparaging posts about the Village or its activities, or see third parties trying to spark negative conversations. Unless you are an official online social media contributor, avoid the temptation to react yourself. Pass the post(s) along to our official online contributors.
- e) Be conscious when mixing your work and personal lives. Online, your personal and business personas are likely to intersect. The Corporation respects the free speech rights of all of its employees, but you must remember that citizens, colleagues, and supervisors often have access to the online content you post. Keep this in mind when publishing information online that can be seen by more than friends and family, and be aware that information originally intended just for friends and family can be forwarded on. Remember: NEVER to disclose non-public information about the Corporation (including confidential information), and be aware that taking public positions online that are counter to the Corporation or political interests might cause conflict.
- f) For Individuals who hold elected positions or who work in politically sensitive areas, a policy of this nature does not by itself exempt them from special responsibility when posting online. By virtue of their position, these individuals should consider whether personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing the positions or opinions of the Village, and/or its staff. For individuals in positions like this, caution is advisable, and it is best to check with the Clerk Administrator when in doubt.

Monitoring

The Clerk Administrator in consultation with the Village Council will maintain the policy.