



## Atherton Social Media Policy

### 1. Purpose

This Social Media Policy (“Policy”) establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by the Town of Atherton (“Town”) of social media sites as a means of conveying information to members of the public.

The intended purpose of Town social media sites is to disseminate information from the Town about the Town’s mission, meetings, activities, and current issues to members of the public.

The Town has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of the information posted on its social media sites and the content that is attributed to the Town and its officials.

### 2. Definitions

A “social media site” is a site on the internet with its content created through and on the Internet. At this time, examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Nixle, Blogs, RSS, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, GooglePlus, Pinterest, Delicious, and Flickr. For the purposes of the application of this Policy, a social media site shall not include the Town’s Official website.

A “Town social media site” means official social media sites which the Town establishes and maintains, and over which it has control over all postings, except for advertisements or hyperlinks by the social media site’s owners, vendors, or partners developed for the purpose of sharing information via the internet. Town social media sites shall supplement, and not replace, the Town’s required notices and standard methods of communication.

“Posts” or “postings” mean information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication posted on a Town social media site.

### 3. General Policy

- a. The Town’s official website at [www.ci.atherton.ca.us](http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us) (or any domain owned by the Town) will remain the Town’s primary means of internet communication.
- b. The establishment and maintenance of Town social media sites is subject to approval by the City Manager or his/her designee. Upon approval, Town social media sites shall bear the name and/or official logo of the Town.
- c. Town social media sites shall clearly state that such sites are maintained by the Town for official use only.
- d. Town maintained social media sites shall have a “no comment” policy and all sites established and maintained by the Town shall be configured to allow only the dissemination of information for official use only.



- e. All established sites shall comply with the Town’s Social Media Policy.
- f. Town social media sites shall link back to the Town’s official website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the Town.
- g. Staff shall monitor content on Town social media sites to ensure adherence to both the Town’s Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Town.
- h. Town social media sites shall be managed consistent with the Brown Act. Members of the Town Council, Commissions and/or Boards shall not respond to, comment on, post, "like", "share", “tweet”, “re-tweet or otherwise participate in any published postings, or use the site or any form of electronic communication to respond to, blog, or engage in serial meetings, or otherwise discuss, deliberate, or express opinions on any issue within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body.
- i. The Town reserves the right to terminate any Town social media site at any time without notice.
- j. Town social media sites shall comply with usage rules and regulations required by the site provider, including privacy policies.
- k. The Town’s Social Media Policy shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
- l. All Town social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
- m. Town social media sites are subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained on a Town social media site that is related to Town 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 Town social media sites shall be sent to an official Town email account and maintained consistent with the Public Records Act.
- n. Employees representing the Town on Town social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as a professional representative of the Town and in accordance with all Town policies.
- o. All Town social media sites shall utilize authorized Town contact information for account set-up, monitoring and access. The use of personal email accounts or phone numbers by any Town employee is not allowed for the purpose of setting-up, monitoring, or accessing a Town social media site.
- p. Town social media sites may contain content, including but not limited to, advertisements or hyperlinks over which the Town has no control. The Town does not endorse any hyperlink or advertisement placed on Town social media sites by the social media site’s owners, vendors, or partners.
- q. The Town reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.

#### **4. Content Guidelines**



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- a. The content of Town social media sites shall only pertain to Town-sponsored or Town-endorsed programs, services, and events. Content includes, but is not limited to, information, photographs, videos, and hyperlinks.
  - b. Content posted to the Town's social media sites must contain hyperlinks directing users back to the Town's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the Town of Atherton, whenever possible.
  - c. The Town shall have full permission or rights to any content posted by the Town, including photographs and videos.
  - d. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the Town's social media sites shall review, be familiar with, and comply with the social media site's use policies and terms and conditions.
  - e. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the Town's social media sites shall not express his or her own personal views or concerns through such postings. Postings on any of the Town's social media sites by an authorized Town employee shall only reflect the views of the Town.
  - f. Postings must contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential as defined by any Town policy or state or federal law.
  - g. Postings may NOT contain any personal information, except for the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public.
  - h. Postings to Town social media sites shall NOT contain any of the following:
    - o Comments that are not topically related to the particular posting being commented upon;
    - o Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates or ballot measures;
    - o Profane language or content;
    - o 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, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws;
    - o Sexual content or links to sexual content;
    - o Solicitations of commerce;
    - o Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
    - o Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
    - o Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
  - i. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.
  - j. The Town reserves the right to implement or remove any functionality of its social media site, when deemed appropriate by the Town Manager or his/her designee. This includes, but is not limited to, information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication that is posted on a Town social media site.



- k. Except as expressly provided in this Policy, accessing any social media site shall comply with all applicable Town policies pertaining to communications and the use of the internet by employees, including email content.

## **5. LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION RELEASE GUIDELINES**

The release of information is subject to restrictions governed by applicable local, state, and federal laws. No employee shall release any information that would hamper the successful conclusion of an investigation or jeopardize the safety of affected persons. Release of information must conform to existing policies and procedures for release, including, but not limited to, review by the City Attorney prior to release.

In general:

(a) Employees may release the following information on crime/criminal activity:

1. Basic information about a crime or incident
2. Basic information about victims, except as excluded below
3. Description of suspects
4. Basic description of weapons and vehicles used
5. Basic description of stolen items
6. Basic description of injuries and condition of victims
7. The name, age, address, and other basic information about arrestees and the charges against them
8. Information contained in arrest affidavits and other applicable crime or incident reports
9. Booking photographs
10. Suspect photographs or sketches necessary to identify an unknown offender

(b) Employees shall not release the following information:

1. Names, addresses, and any other information that would identify the victim of any crime
2. Names, addresses, or identifying information related to juvenile arrestees
3. Active criminal investigative information, active criminal intelligence information, surveillance techniques, or personnel deployment
4. Names of informants and information provided by them
5. Active Internal Affairs investigations, as governed by state law
6. Names of witnesses
7. Information concerning on-going Town of Atherton litigation
8. The identity of critically injured or deceased persons prior to notification of next-of-kin
9. Home address, telephone numbers, and familial information of law enforcement personnel



10. Any other information prohibited by state law from public disclosure

## **6. LAW ENFORCEMENT USE OF NIXLE**

(a) When authorized/directed to send a message via NIXLE, employees will access the Town's authorized NIXLE web page at, example "<https://agency.nixle.com>" and log on using the Town email address and NIXLE password. From the "control panel" on the left side of the page, choose one of three message types: Alert, Advisory, or Community. The following describes each type of message:

### **1. Alert**

- (a) intended for "urgent, must know" and time-sensitive information, including:
  - 1. Missing person (at-risk) alerts
  - 2. Major building or area evacuations
  - 3. Imminent life threatening weather/Natural disaster advisory
  - 4. Shooting just occurred and shooting suspect is at large
  - 5. Shelter in place advisories
- (b) Alert information is sent to every user registered in the jurisdiction or defined geographic area and users cannot opt out of receiving these messages; therefore, Alert messages must be sent prudently.
- (c) Posting Authority: Due to the emergent nature of Alerts, they should only be posted with the approval of a PIO, Watch Commander, or member of the police management team.

### **2. Advisory**

- (a) Intended for less urgent, need to know information, both time-sensitive and non-time-sensitive messages, including:
  - 1. Crime patterns
  - 2. School lock-downs
  - 3. BOLs (Be On the Lookout)
  - 4. Increased terror warnings
  - 5. Suspicious activity
  - 6. Time-sensitive traffic messages, including:
    - a. A traffic collision that will either impact traffic or shut down a route for a specific period of time
    - b. Implications during commute hours, high traffic areas, or during special events
- (b) Posting Authority: Advisory notifications may be posted by the PIO, Sergeant or above, or member of the police management team. Investigative implications should be taken into consideration on advisory postings, and de-conflicted with the Investigations Unit whenever possible.

### **3. Community**

- (a) Non-time—sensitive messages, news, and information including:



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1. Police/Town sponsored Events
  2. Community police meetings
  3. General proactive announcements
- (b) Posting Authority: General community-level notifications may be posted by the PIO, Sergeant or above, member of the police management team, or designee, with posting authority.