

Appendix A

Runnymede Borough Council

Social Media House Rules

July 2023

House Rules for social media users

The Council's social media channels will feature a variety of information from our services and partners, keeping residents and the public informed and up to date with what the authority is doing.

The Communications Team is here to help and inform and provide information about what the Council is doing and we will do so politely and professionally. We expect users to offer us the same level of courtesy that we offer them. We want our social media channels to be a place for healthy, open, and insightful discussion and information sharing, which is why we have a short set of house rules.

All users must comply with the social media platform's terms of use as well as our own terms of use (scroll down to read in full).

We value feedback and constructive criticism about all Council services. Feel free to share your thoughts respectfully but we will remove comments which we see and believe are:

- Abusive or obscene.
- Deceptive or misleading.
- In violation of any intellectual property rights, including copyright.
- In violation of any law or regulation.
- Spam and off-topic content including persistent negative and/or abusive comments.
- Promotional material, including links to external websites and promotion.
- Comments which label an individual or group of people in a derogatory way.
- Comments which are not appropriate under the Equality Act 2010 including the [protected characteristics](#).
- Comments which are political in their nature or which are critical of national political parties and seek to connect these to local politics.

If you want to make a complaint about something that you read on social media, the way to do so is through the Council's formal complaints process. Remember, social media is just the messenger.

This is what we promise we will do:

1. We will confirm it's us - if you see a corporate Runnymede Borough Council account online you can check it's us, we have listed our social media accounts below:
 - Twitter: @RunnymedeBC
 - Facebook: Runnymede Borough Council
 - LinkedIn: Runnymede Borough Council
 - Nextdoor: Runnymede Borough Council
2. We will listen - we will read all messages and look to flag-up problems users identify with the most relevant part of the organisation.
3. We will say when we'll be active on each account - we will not be online 24-hours a day, but we will say when we will be online on each social media account we use.
4. We will be human and polite.

5. We will follow people where we can - but this doesn't mean endorse.
6. We will publish content which is factually accurate and not politically motivated.

Our aim is to create a space that is relevant and valuable to our community. Our social media team will evaluate situations and take appropriate action if necessary if we become aware of them.

We must remain politically neutral at all times which is why Council officers are unable to reply to, endorse or engage with, any content that is of a party-political nature. If you wish to discuss political issues, please contact your local councillor, [details here](#).

Below are our full terms of use, which are the terms you agree to when interacting with the Council on social media.

Breaches of our terms of use may result in users being blocked from our social media platforms.

Terms of use

1. Be respectful: Treat all users with respect and courtesy, regardless of their opinions or beliefs. Differing views on a topic the Council has posted about are acceptable when expressed sensibly.
2. No hate speech: Do not engage in or tolerate any form of hate speech, including discriminatory or offensive comments about race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation or other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010
3. No spamming or posting repetitive content. Engage in meaningful conversations instead.
4. Maintain privacy: Respect the privacy of our staff and residents. Do not share personal information or engage in doxing (publishing personal information with a malicious purpose).
5. Our staff are doing their jobs, usually working to set policies or processes. You may disagree with what they do, but it is not appropriate to photograph or name them without permission and publish these details on social media.
6. No conspiracy theories, misinformation, or speculation: Do not spread or promote conspiracy theories, false information, irrelevant theories, or baseless speculation about our staff, actions, or operations.
7. No comments that don't add value to the discussion: Please refrain from making comments that do not contribute meaningfully to the ongoing discussion.
8. Ensure that your comments are relevant to the content of the post and the topic being discussed.
9. Keep the conversation focused on matters directly related to the council and its work.
10. Avoid discussions or comments that are solely focused on national politics.
11. Use appropriate language: Avoid the use of offensive, vulgar, or inappropriate language in your interactions.

Any accounts repeatedly engaging with us using content or language which falls into the above categories will be blocked and/or reported to the associated social media platform. We also reserve the right to contact the police, and we may keep screenshots of abusive messages on file. We will not tolerate or respond to abusive messages.

Remember, you are wholly responsible for any content you post including content that you choose to share, and you are solely responsible for maintaining the security of your own account. If necessary, the account owner will be held liable for the actions of their account.

If you have any questions about our social media, please email communications@runnymede.gov.uk.

Blocking

Blocking means that a person's social media account will be prevented from viewing or commenting on the Council's posts on the social media platform where they have been blocked.

Other forms of communication remain open to individuals who are blocked, such as other social media platforms, newsletters, the website and news articles.

The Constitution – ANNEX 1 Procedure On Receipt Of A Complaint

We will treat vexatious complaints or comments according to our Constitution, which states:

Residents complaints will not be accepted if the complaint is malicious, trivial, politically motivated or 'tit-for-tat'; or if the Complainant is unreasonably persistent, malicious and/or vexatious. There is no right of appeal against the Monitoring Officer's decision.

For all information contained within this document contact:

Runnymede Borough Council
The Civic Centre
Station Road
Addlestone
Surrey KT15 2AH

Tel 01932 838383

email: communications@runnymede.gov.uk

www.runnymede.gov.uk

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