

Social Media Community Guidelines

An informed and engaged online community, where everyone can be part of constructive conversations about local issues, is an important part of a healthy democracy. These guidelines aim to foster respectful and constructive engagement on our social media platforms while ensuring transparency and safeguarding the community's interests. These guidelines apply to Council's social media platforms and include commenting, sharing and messaging.

To ensure that that Council's social media channels are used appropriately, and all users feel it is a safe space, we expect people to follow these guidelines:

1. We encourage participation and comments and questions relevant to the post or topic, including disagreement.
2. However, we expect clear and respectful communication. Please do not make comments that contain offensive, profane, defamatory or threatening language or which are otherwise inappropriate in a public forum. These comments will be removed in accordance with the [Harmful Digital Communications Act](#).
3. Do not share information you know to be false and/or misleading.
4. Objectionable behaviour. We will not tolerate racist comments, personal attacks, hate speech or trolling.
5. Do not spam us. Making the same point over and over either on the same or different posts is considered spam and will be deleted.
6. Stay on topic. Please only make comments that are relevant to the topic or theme of the post. If you disagree with the Council's view on something and decide to make that point every time we post, your comments will be considered spam. We will also not tolerate comments promoting or opposing any person campaigning for election to political office.
7. Creating a conversation. We sometimes share links to third party websites to encourage thought and discussion. This does not mean we endorse all of the views expressed on those websites. We also don't necessarily endorse the views expressed by others on our social media channels.
8. Give credit where credit is due. When you share an image or video from our page/s, please take the time to tag us or include the handle responsible for the original post.
9. We respect users' privacy and we comply with NZ privacy law. Please protect your own and others' privacy. Never post comments containing personal, identifying or confidential information such as account details or other personal information including address, telephone number, email, password, etc.
10. Do not post advertisements or solicitations in our comments section.
11. Do not use fake accounts or bots to troll our pages.

12. Do not tag us in profane and offensive posts. Such tags will be removed.

We reserve the right to hide or delete comments that do not meet these guidelines and to block users who do not follow them.

What we will do

The reasons for hiding comments and blocking accounts will also include anyone who uses our channels to spread false and/or malicious information or threaten Council, its employees or others.

When our guidelines are breached:

- Named and identifiable accounts will receive one warning about breaching our guidelines. If the behaviour is repeated they will be blocked.
- Accounts set to private or that we deem are falsely representing themselves will be blocked without warning.
- When blocking an account we will send one private direct message telling the account owner about our action.
- If you are blocked and you think we've made a mistake, you can contact us and seek an explanation at mdc@marlborough.govt.nz
- You can also report inappropriate behaviour or content you see by others to the email address above.

Blocked users will still be able to read our content but will be unable to comment. We may report severe breaches such as hate speech or threats to the appropriate authorities.

Finally a social media channel managed by a council is not a 'free for all', public free speech space. There are other places where people can exercise their right to free speech. Council is not obliged to provide a platform for anyone to speak on anything they wish. It also has the right to block those who do not comply with its guidelines.