

Tidewater Council Website Policy 2016

Other Electronic Sites

Background: As long as they observe the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, local councils are free to develop their own applications of Internet and Web technology. Over time, many local councils will decide to publish under the National Council umbrella for hosting, content, and technical support. For those that continue to publish independently, we have set up guidelines to help councils build the Scouting brand and protect employees, volunteers, and members.

There are many laws that govern the use of websites and the sharing information with minors. For this reason, the council shall do everything in its power to safeguard the information of youth members.

While local councils may establish their own policies concerning their use of the Internet, the National Council will only recognize as "official" those sites that have followed the numbered guidelines below. The National Council will not acknowledge or provide links to any council site that does not meet these guidelines. The guidelines may be altered or amended to provide updated information, and councils will be notified when that happens.

1. Council Web sites must be hosted off-site at a hosting facility and may not be connected in any way to the local council's internal network.
2. The council must have direct control over the content of its official Web site.
3. The content of the council site must be appropriate to the Scouting movement.
4. The council site cannot contain links to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to the Scouting movement.
5. The council site cannot contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
6. The council site cannot engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Division merchandise or competing products.
7. The council site cannot replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.
8. Council sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the Internet.
9. Council sites must consider the safety and privacy of their members and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual.

More specifically in addition to including all of the above all websites owned by the Tidewater Council

1. All sites that are a part of the Tidewater Council, Boy Scouts of America must be owned by the Tidewater Council, and the ultimate control over any of its sites are vested in a staff member who shall follow the rules and regulations of the Boy

Scouts of America and any policies enacted by any authority required to operate properly.

2. All sites that seek to perpetuate official Scouting information within the Tidewater Council about any aspect of Tidewater Council Scouting, are hereby reserved and are to be owned by the Tidewater Council.
3. Information on the council websites should come from any of the officially recognized council committees or from one of the districts. This information should be transmitted through the secretary of the committee (a professional Scouter). This includes any of the operations of the lodge.
4. A marketing committee will develop themes and a style guide so that colors, formatting, and how and in what sequence information should be displayed will be displayed. The marketing committee shall be responsible for all council owned websites, mainly for the purpose of providing clear direction.
5. Volunteers can be given roles to help provide assistance in setting up websites and formatting pages, but council employees at all times must give final approval. Volunteers should be provided training on style guides and preferred usage.
6. The web is a great resource and committees should take time to put up the least amount of information that provides the most effective communication.
7. The staff without notice can shut down any portion of any website if it finds any unintended youth protection issues that may not have been caught during pre-screening. It would be better to take the entire website down if necessary than to allow any instance of youth protection issues.
8. The council may hire individuals to support sections of the web that are beyond the reasonable expertise of staff and volunteers available. The council may also purchase programs that are add-in's that may be supportive in the council process.
9. Website information should be written in third person and editorial content should be limited in nature and at all times working towards positive solutions. The council president and Scout executive can at any time reject any first person articles and ask the staff to rewrite them into third person.

To make more effective the information of the Tidewater Council. Information in districts sites shall not be a duplication of the master council site.

To make more effective the information for all websites in the Tidewater Council, the national council website should be referred to for official forms and for a lot of program resource. This is especially noted in any program topics. It shall be a conscious effort not to duplicate national council materials that are already in existence.

All pages should indicate the Tidewater Council in the header or footer. On key pages, the Tidewater Council name and home page should always be reflected.

Other Electronic Sites

The Tidewater Council, Boy Scouts of America administers the program for all of Scouting in the geographical area that is a part of the Tidewater Council. It has a right to own the communication sites for all aspects of it's business including Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, LinkedIn, and other electronic vehicles that may exist now or

in the future. It shall be the policy of the Tidewater Council that any such sites should be owned and controlled by the Tidewater Council.

Tidewater Council "Guidelines" on unit Web sites

We recommend all of the following:

- A. The person operating your Web Site, should be a registered volunteer leader with the Boy Scouts of America. If not, then an employee of the chartering organization. Persons registered with Scouting are given mandatory background checks.
- B. The unit own its domain name...for example: www.tidewaterbsa.com is owned by the Tidewater Council using a service to protect it from being hacked.
- C. A unit web site should contain no links to any site that sells any products or advertises any products. The sole exception is chartering organization, which may be a business. Especially important to note is what happens when you cannot control the advertising content and something that is not conducive to a good Scouting atmosphere is portrayed, therefore a unit site should not allow any advertising even if the site is provided for free.
- D. Doing a web site takes a lot of time and our hope is that if a unit chooses to put a web site up, that the contact information be correct and current. The web site should be checked weekly for correctness. Individuals contacting people at a unit should be able to find people that are currently involved with that unit. When a unit disbands or no longer wishes to maintain a website, it should be removed from the Internet.

Please note that the Tidewater Council is not linking any units in adherence to a national council policy on linking to unit web sites. We thank you for your understanding of this sensitive Youth Protection and Service to all parties in or seeking to do business with Scouting.

These guidelines are adapted from policy established by the BSA Electronics Publishing Division for council Web sites.

The following is our policy for unit's wishing to have a unit web site. Please note that you must still secure permission from your chartered organization before starting an official or unofficial unit web site.

1. The appropriate unit leadership must have control over the content of the unit's official web site (i.e. the unit committee, uniformed leadership and chartered partner representative). If youth members are involved, they must be under the direct supervision of adults who have control of all content.
2. The content of the unit site must be appropriate to the Scouting movement and consistent with the Scout Law.
3. A unit site shall not contain any links directly to any site that contains material that is not appropriate to the Scouting movement. Units should only link to official BSA sites, official state and U.S. government websites, and bona fide non-profit organizations. Quasi Scouting sites that suggest that you should send your youth to sign up for merit badges or get gear cheap must be avoided. There are many private Scouting sites, but none of these should be officially endorsed by a Scouting unit. The control over these sites can never be assured.
4. A unit web site should not contain full names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses or other identifying information about youth members.
5. No unit site should contain bulletin boards or chat rooms that make it possible for youth members to communicate with others through the site.
6. A unit site should consider the safety and privacy of members by obtaining permissions to release information about or identifying images of any specific person.
7. Preferably, a unit site should not contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements, except for the organization providing the site service if it's provided for free or at discount. If a site does contain advertising, care should be taken to make certain that none of the advertising is inconsistent with the purposes of Scouting.
8. A standard money-earning application must be filed with the council before any merchandise is offered for sale on a unit web site. No merchandise can be sold through a unit web site using electronic fund transfers.
9. A unit site must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks and other intellectual property.
10. A unit site must include the name of the unit's chartered partner, contact information for the unit committee and an e-mail contact

address for reaching the person managing the site, so visitors can report any problems or concerns.

11. A unit web site should never be made to appear more official than it is. The page should not represent itself as an official publication of the council or national organization of Boy Scouts of America, not even to casual readers.
12. A unit may place pictures on their web site and identify the youth. If permission is secured, then one can place the full name or abbreviation of the youth with the photo. If a youth member has his picture taken by a newspaper, it will most likely go up on the newspaper's web site, and contain their full name. Pictures of youth have earned unusual awards or high honors comes to mind.

It is important to remember that a unit web site actually belongs to your chartered partner and you should not establish one without their permission, etc. In many cases the chartered organization will not want to get involved with the day to day permission of doing things with your web site. Clearly, the main goal is to agree with your chartered partner about what your web site is going to communicate.