



HARRIS COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER VOLUNTEER SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Harris County Animal Shelter (HCAS) encourages our volunteers to participate in social media and post positive information about their experiences while volunteering at the shelter. We ask that when engaging in social media, volunteers are clear about what they are representing, and take responsibility for ensuring that any references to the shelter or Harris County Public Health (HCPH) are factual, complete, and accurate. We ask that volunteers show respect for the individuals and communities with which they interact and represent.

“Social media” includes blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds or other media *yet to be identified or created* and that are used to connect you with the rest of the world.

Popular forms of social media include:

- Blogs
- Microblogging sites (ex: Twitter, Snap Chat etc.)
- Multimedia/Social networking sites (ex: Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, LinkedIn, Flickr, Instagram, etc.)
- Forums (ex: Yahoo! Groups, Reddit, etc.)
- Bookmarking sites (ex: Pinterest, etc.)
- Wikis
- Virtual Worlds

It's important to remember that HCAS depends on strong community support and goodwill. ***Our reputation is a valuable asset.*** We ask that volunteers please consider whether content shared is potentially damaging our reputation before posting any site, especially if/when the poster is identified as a volunteer. Volunteers who engage in blogging or posting should be mindful that their comments could have an adverse effect on the work we do at HCAS.

Do:

- With prior permission, post links and positive comments about adoptable, foster or potential foster animals, and animals available for rescue
- Celebrate successes, for example an adoption of an animal or great work by staff and volunteers
- Post positive comments about HCAS such as topics about animals, events and news
- Share, Like, React, Comment on HCAS social media posts
- Take responsibility for ensuring that any references to HCAS/HCPH policies are factual, correct, and accurate
- Show respect for the individuals, shelter partners, and communities with which they interact

Do Not:

- Post photos or videos of shelter animals that are not available for adoption, rescue, or transfer
- Voice grievances or make disparaging remarks about HCAS
 - This includes disparaging remarks about HCPH and Harris County Commissioners Court. Both of these entities work to support the great work going on at HCAS
- Sensationalize any animal being euthanized on a specific date or time
 - Animals on the release sheet should be referred to as “at risk,” rather than “going to be killed,” “on the euthanasia list,” “will die tomorrow,” etc.
- Breach the confidentiality of private information about HCAS or any other HCPH department, as defined in the Volunteer/Intern program Confidentiality Statement. No information should be disclosed without the permission of the HCAS Director or designee.
- Disclose personal information of HCAS staff and volunteers, and partners
- Damage the reputation of HCAS or post disparaging, obscene or defamatory information
- Harass, bully, discriminate or post hateful information about HCAS, its staff and volunteers and partners as defined in the HCPH Volunteer/Intern Participation Agreement

If volunteers are uncertain about a potential post, we ask that they please consult the VPH Volunteer Coordinator.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in changes to volunteer opportunities with Harris County Animal Shelter, including prohibition from volunteering.

I acknowledge that I have read this policy and will abide by it. I understand that if I violate the policy, my volunteer opportunities with HCAS may be changed, limited, or prohibited.