**Social Media Policy MCC North London 2024**

**Context:**

Internet-based social networking contains particularly high potential for misunderstandings, disputes and careless comments to escalate and cause problems. This calls for a clear policy regarding their use.

First and foremost, as Christians, members of the church should be aware that, on social media as elsewhere, they are, in the words of St. Paul, ambassadors of Christ. Therefore our behaviour should be consistent with our calling to be Christ’s body in the world.

**Policy for official Church social media**

1. The church communications team are part-time volunteers with many other responsibilities. Responses may not be immediate or even same-day. Expectations will be managed by having a clear time-frame within which responses can be expected posted somewhere on the media, and in the auto-reply.
2. There will be a clear distinction between publicly visible pages / feeds, which anyone can see, and closed or private groups which can only be viewed by group members. This is for the protection of members, especially those living in vulnerable situations. Personal information such as prayer requests should only be shared in the private groups.
3. Adding members to private groups will be by admins only and require verification
4. Photographs and videos will only be shared with the permission of the photographer and anyone identifiable in the photo. We will let people know if photos are being taken for social media purposes, and give people opportunity to leave the area being photographed / videoed.
5. Personal details of members should never be shared on social media
6. Always check for copyright before sharing content. **Always check for and obtain the permission of the creator to share. Always attribute** any content to the creator unless they ask you not to.
7. We will remove derogatory, defamatory, abusive or offensive content as soon as possible. We will explain to the poster of the content why the material is considered inappropriate.
8. If members report material as offensive, the communications team will review the material and determine whether it requires removal.
9. Discussion and respectful disagreement are encouraged. However, conversations and disputes which become abusive or inappropriate will not be allowed to persist on the church media, and it will be explained to those involved why the conversation is not OK. (Example – ‘this group contains minors, this level of discussion about sexual matters isn’t appropriate here, please continue the discussion in a forum where minors are not present’)

**Guidelines for Social Media use:**

**Guidelines for members of the church**

Members of the church should be aware that disputes which take place on social media forums are publicly visible and have the potential to bring the church into disrepute. All discussions should be ‘characterised by prayer, love, kindness, honesty and direct dealing’ as stated in our membership guidelines. **As a basic guideline: do not post in haste or anger.**

Be aware that most social media is publicly viewable – **do not post any information that could put you in personal, financial or legal risk**. Be aware of your ability on different platforms to block other users, report abuse, and delete information. You post at your own risk – so be aware of your risks.

Be aware of your privacy options, and what your settings are. You are entitled to choose who you interact with and who you respond to – use your power to choose, and do not engage if you do not feel comfortable doing so.

Be aware that you do not have control over what other users post on their own media, and that other users have freedom to post opinions with which you disagree.

You can always report material you find offensive, derogatory or abusive to the communications team.