



METHODIST CHURCH

Social Media Guidelines

A healthy Christian community is a safe place of mutual care, where all people feel valued, loved and respected.

These guidelines for engaging on social media reflect those values.

These guidelines apply to all content and comments posted to Methodist Church social media channels.

Methodist churches, circuits and districts, and individuals are encouraged to adopt these guidelines for their own social media channels and personal social media engagement.

Why use social media?

The Methodist Church encourages the use of social media tools as a means of extending our engagement with people inside and outside the church. This includes

- Sharing our stories
- Engaging in conversations 'where people are'
- Sharing, learning and encouraging
- Reaching those who cannot physically attend church
- Forming and deepening relationships locally and globally

Consider the safety of yourself and others

It is important that the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults especially, must be maintained. Please read [the Children and Youth social media and communications guidance for churches](#).

If you have a safeguarding concern, please inform your [district safeguarding officer](#).

Conversation on social media can sometimes develop into heated and pointless argument. Be aware of the effect on yourself, and don't feel you always need to engage. You can always 'sign off' from a heated conversation calmly, with something like 'I think we'll have to agree to disagree. Peace.'

Respect

Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful. Try to think of the effect on



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others who may see what you post.

Be transparent

Don't mislead people about who you are, or use pseudonyms.

Be relevant

Don't add comments to a social media post that are irrelevant to the topic. Engage in the conversation rather than broadcasting opinions.

Disagree with love

If you have a criticism you need to make, consider carefully the tone of what you write. If you are personally attacked, do not respond in kind. Being a Christian means that sometimes we must speak out and challenge injustice. But remember when you need to point out something you think is wrong, that there is a real, and possibly vulnerable, person at the receiving end of what you say.

Be careful when sharing content

Don't share in haste. Read linked content thoroughly, or watch a video to the end so you know exactly what you are sharing, before you judge whether it is suitable to share.

Maintain confidentiality

If telling a story about someone else, ask yourself first '**Is this my story to tell?**' Don't reveal personal details about others without their explicit permission.

Our responsibilities

Our social media channels will feature a variety of information from across the Methodist Church, Connexional Team, Methodist communities and our Partner organisations.

We're here to help in any way that we can, but we expect users to offer us the same level of courtesy that we offer them. We want our social media channels to be safe spaces and a place for healthy, open and insightful discussion, which is why we have a short set of house rules:

- All users must comply with the relevant social media platform's terms of use as well as our own terms of use



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- We will remove, in whole or in part, posts that we feel are inappropriate, or discriminatory against any individual or group
- You are wholly responsible for any content you post including content that you choose to share
- We will remove messages and/or disable comments (where function allows) including reporting and/or blocking users on our social media channels who post messages or leave comments which we 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 posts in which the aim is to provoke a response
 - Promotional material, including links to external websites and promotions that are not relevant to the original post

Anyone 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 will not tolerate or respond to abusive messages.

These guidelines will be reviewed regularly and updated in light of feedback and experience.

Adopted by the Hastings, Bexhill & Rye Circuit Meeting

Date: 21st September, 2023