

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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Introduction

Social media is the fastest-growing form of communication, especially among youth and young adults. It is a critical part of how society interacts, and organisations coordinate and promote events. As a Church, we must engage social media in a manner that is safe, responsible, civil, and purposeful.

Please refer to our Scriptural References for our Safety Policies to understand the foundational principles of our policies.

Purpose

This Policy governs the use of social media, in all its current and future forms, where used for communicating matters relating to the Berwick Church of Christ (the Church), be it by Staff, Leaders or Volunteers.

The Church recognises that social media can be used as an effective and powerful tool for communicating the gospel, as well as disseminating information and encouragement to its members. However, it also recognises that uncontrolled use of social media has the capacity to bring the Church, Staff and Volunteers into disrepute, and in so doing, undermine the message we seek to communicate.

Scope

This policy applies to all Staff and Volunteers of the Church.

This policy applies to the use of current and emerging forms of social media and to the creation, content and use of the Church website.

Definitions

Please refer to the General Definitions document.

In addition to the General Definitions, the following definitions are relevant to this policy:

"Social Media" is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. This includes but is not limited to websites and applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Google+, etc.

"Social Media Representative" means a member of staff, leader or volunteer who has been approved by a Pastor and is responsible for regularly posting information on the Church's behalf or any of its ministries' behalf and for monitoring and responding to posts on these pages.

Policy

All the Church policies, including the Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy apply to the use of social media.

The Church's official social media participation is managed by the Senior Pastor or his delegate.

Pastors/Ministry Leaders will oversee and regularly monitor the Social Media Representatives who post information on behalf of their ministry (e.g. the Youth Pastor will oversee the Social Media Representative who posts FUSE Youth information).

Staff or Volunteers who misuse the Church's social media resources in ways that violate the law or Church policies may be subject to disciplinary action.

Social Media Procedures for Official Church Accounts

1. All Staff and Volunteers interested in representing the Church on social media must be a Partner, have completed and signed a Volunteer Application Form, undergone the Policy Induction, completed the online Safe Ministry Check training, signed the Code of Conduct, and be approved by a Pastor.
2. Any new Social Media Account created for use within any area of Church life must be approved by the Senior Pastor or their approved delegate, and fall under the principles of this policy, and associated procedures.
3. All new graphic designs and artwork must be approved by the Creative Arts Pastor prior to it being posted, unless alternative arrangements have been made (e.g. Youth Pastor will approve posts for FUSE Youth).
4. Any online post, comment, photo, song, video, blog or podcast made by Social Media Representatives on an official ministry site, must be approved the Pastor/Ministry Leader of that ministry prior to it being posted and must reflect the values as documented in the Church's Statement of Faith.
5. Social Media postings should not disclose sensitive or confidential information, unless the person that the information concerns has given consent to share such information. This might include medical information, funeral details or other personal matters.
6. Social Media Representatives may record and use images of people attending or participating in our services or activities and show them on our website and social media accounts, and use them for other promotional purposes, as stated in our Privacy Policy Clause 3. All photos of Minors must have the parent's written consent prior to posting.
7. Social Media Representatives are responsible for disabling the "tagging" of individuals in photos posted on the ministry's page. If the photos include private or personal address location information, this information is to be removed.
8. Social Media Representatives will respect copyright and fair use laws, making sure that they have permission or authority to use content before posting it. Simply giving credit to the author will not protect the Church from a possible copyright infringement claim.
9. Social Media Representatives will monitor the page and have the authority to remove content that is obscene, embarrassing, abusive, or otherwise objectionable. If any posted material appears to be illegal (example: child or elder abuse, etc.), Social Media Representatives should contact the Pastor of the ministry area, the Safety Contact Person and other appropriate authorities.
10. The primary purpose of communications between Church and Minors engaged in any ministry on social media is to provide information related to a ministry, event or to encourage online engagement and evangelising, and not for personal or private interaction between adults and Minors. Parents must have access to everything provided to their Minors and be made aware of how social media is being used to communicate with their Minors as well as how to access the sites.
11. In the event of a major incident in the life of the Church or its ministries, Social Media Representatives must not comment or post anything on social media without first obtaining approval from the Senior Pastor or their approved delegate.
12. If a member of the newspapers/media contacts you about a Church post or requests information of any kind, you must not respond without first contacting the Senior Pastor or his delegate and seeking direction.
13. The Senior Pastor or their approved delegate will have complete ownership of anything posted to social media in line with this policy and may at their discretion and without notice or cause, remove, amend or add any published material.

Guidelines for Personal Social Media Use

14. Staff and Volunteers should keep their professional and personal image in mind. Online conduct and behaviour affect this image. The Church discourages Staff and Volunteers from accepting invitations to "friend" or to "follow" Minors within personal social networking sites. Contacting Minors outside the ministry's official social media sites may create risks for the leaders and volunteers and alter the dynamic between the leader/volunteer and child.
15. As Staff and Volunteers of the Church, remember that your online posts have the potential to affect the Church and its ministries, even those you make on a personal level. For this reason, we ask that you conduct your online interactions in accordance with the Code of Conduct and never voice negative comments publicly, instead apply the biblical model of seeking to sort out any concerns privately, or if still unresolved, with the support of another witness or the help of the Church (Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 6).

16. Staff and Volunteers should not post anything on personal social media networks that purports to represent the Church's views, or any persons associated with the Church (e.g. staff, other volunteers, elders, participants, etc.), or suggest that they are commenting on the Church's behalf, without the express permission of the Senior Pastor or their approved delegate.

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer position.

Other Policies

Staff and Volunteers are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other relevant Church policies, including:

- Code of Conduct
- Statement of Faith
- Child Safety Policy
- Privacy Policy

Raising Concerns

We encourage all staff and volunteers within the Church and our congregation to report any concerns they have about safety and wellbeing. We are committed to handling all concerns seriously, legally and in a child-focused way (if concerning children).

If you have any concerns about the safety of someone at the Church, we strongly encourage you to share your concern with one of our Pastors or the Safety Contact Person and fill in our [Reporting Concerns Form](#).

Policy Review Statement

This policy will be reviewed regularly as a part of the ongoing review and continuous improvement cycle of all the Church's policies and procedures.

If you have any feedback you would like to make about this policy, please email policies@bcoc.com.au.

Safety Contact Person

Name:	Karen Fletcher
Phone number:	0438 886 337
Email:	karenf@bcoc.com.au
Other contact details:	Church Office: 9702 1011 (Tuesdays to Fridays)

Applicable Legislation, References and Other Policies

Item	Description
The Privacy Act 1988	Is the principal piece of Australian legislation protecting the handling of personal information about individuals.
The Online Safety Act 2021	Is new legislation that makes Australia's existing laws for online safety more expansive and much stronger.
BCOC Policies	All Church policies can be obtained from the website link, www.berwickchurch.org.au/policies