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Circuit Social Media Policy

Introduction

1. The printed word has a finality of declaration about it, social media is interactive, conversational and open-ended. It happens in a public, not private, space. The Methodist Church therefore encourages the user to use social tools as a means of engaging in an interactive conversation with people of all faiths and none. As Gospel people, our conversation should be 'seasoned with salt', and these guidelines aim to help us to do so.
2. The principles applied are:
 1. Be credible. Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
 2. Be consistent. Encourage constructive criticism and deliberation.
 3. Be cordial, honest and professional at all times. Be responsive. When you gain insight, share it where appropriate.
 4. Be integrated. Wherever possible, align online participation with other communications.
 5. Be a good representative of the Methodist Church. Remember that you are an ambassador for Christ, the Church and your part of it, a member or officer of the Church, making it clear when speaking personally.
 6. Be respectful: respect confidentiality. Respect the views of others even where you disagree.

Policy

3. You should participate online in the same way as you would with other public forums. You take responsibility for the things you do, say or write.
4. Never share personal details like home address and phone numbers except with someone you know and trust, and if you decide to do so then use a private message. Be aware an address can be disclosed in many ways for example via photos or a GPS position as well as in written form.
5. Always remember that participating online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Once something is posted to a blog or other internet site, it should be assumed to be still available even if it is later deleted from the original site.
6. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that safeguarding, libel, slander, copyright and data protection laws apply. [Constitutional Practice and Discipline \(CPD\)](#) of the Methodist Church.

7. For general guidelines on confidentiality, refer to [With Integrity and Skill](#) - if telling a story about anyone, ask yourself: **Is this my story to tell?**
8. Be aware that this may attract media interest in you as an individual, so proceed with care whether you are participating in an official or a personal capacity. If you have any doubts, take advice, but remember that you are responsible for your online activities.

General Facebook

- No-one under 13 years should be signed onto your account as a friend as it is facebook policy that 13 years is the appropriate age to hold an account.
- In signing young people to your account consider whether you are solely in a leadership role and therefore should not, or whether in a more mixed role, e.g family friend and may proceed with caution.
- Beware of instant chat which has both advantages and disadvantages.

Circuit website

- All content will directed through the Circuit Office who will review the content for suitability, any issues will be dealt with via staff meeting
- Any photographs can only be uploaded with written consent
- Any young people or adults who may be vulnerable will not be identified in any uploaded photographs
- If events are advertised for young people or adults who may be vulnerable only general details and a contact number will be given