

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.

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, be it by Staff, Leaders or Volunteers.

Berwick Church of Christ 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, its Staff, Leaders and Volunteers into disrepute, and in so doing, undermine the message we seek to communicate.

Scope

This policy applies to all Staff, Leaders and Volunteers of Berwick Church of Christ.

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

“**Board**” means the governing body of Berwick Church of Christ comprised of the Elders.

“**Child**” and “**children**” means people under the age of 18.

“**Elder**” means a member of the governing body of the Church, as appointed under rule 11.3 of the Constitution.

“**Children’s Ministry**” means any activity or program where any of the participants are under 18 years and not accompanied by parents or carers authorised by the parents.

“**Leaders**” are those in some level of leadership in our church. This includes not only the Ministers, Pastors, Elders and Ministry Leaders but also those appointed to other leadership roles including those under 18 years.

“**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 the Senior Pastor or their approved delegate 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.

“**Staff**” means all those who are employed by the Church.

“**Volunteers**” are all those who are involved in serving in any role other than in a leadership role, and includes those under the age of 18.

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 their approved delegate.

The Senior Pastor or their approved delegate will oversee and regularly monitor all Social Media Representatives who post information on behalf of any ministry of the Church.

Any staff member, leader or volunteer who misuses the ministry's social media resources in ways that violate the law or other church policies may be subject to disciplinary action.

Social Media Procedures for Official Church Accounts

1. All staff, leaders and volunteers interested in representing the Church on social media must be a Partner, completed and sign a Volunteer Application Form, undergo the Policy Induction and be approved by the Senior Pastor or their approved delegate.
2. Any 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. Any online post, comment, photo, song, video, blog or podcast made by Social Media Representatives on an official ministry site, must reflect the values of our faith.
4. 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.
5. All graphic designs and artwork must be approved by the Senior Pastor or their approved delegate prior to it being posted.
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 children 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 their Pastor, Safety Contact Person and other appropriate authorities.
10. The primary purpose of communications between Church and children engaged in any ministry on social media is to provide information related to a ministry, event or to encourage online engagement and evangelisation, and not for personal or private interaction between adults and children. Parents must have access to everything provided to their children and be made aware of how social media is being used to communicate with their children 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, please refrain from commenting or posting anything on social media without first obtaining approval from the Senior Pastor or Safety Contact Person.
12. If a member of the newspapers/media contact you about a Church post or requests information of any kind, contact the Senior Pastor for direction on how to respond.

Guidelines for Personal Social Media Use

13. Staff, leaders and volunteers should keep their professional and personal image in mind. Online conduct and behaviour affects this image. The Church discourages staff, leaders and volunteers from accepting invitations to "friend" or to "follow" children within personal social networking sites. Contacting children 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.

14. As a staff member, leader and volunteer 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*).

Safety Contact Person

Name:	Karen Fletcher
Phone number:	03 9702 1011
Email:	karenf@bcoc.com.au
Other contact details:	Church Office: 03 9702 1011 (Mondays to Thursdays)

Applicable Legislation, References and Other Policies

Item	Description
Victorian Child Safe Standards	Standards we are required to legally comply with regarding a Child Safe Environment.
Working with Children Act 2005	Legislation which aims to protect children from physical and sexual harm
BCOC Policies	All Church policies can be obtained from the website link, www.berwickchurch.org.au/policies