



Social media guidelines

Social Media Policy

Introduction

1. This applies as policy to Employees and Volunteers of the United Methodist Church UK Mission Area. It is good practice guidance for Ministers and other office holders or those with a representative role within the United Methodist Church UK Mission Area.

2. All new forms of communication provide opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world. They come, however, with new values. Whereas the printed word has a certain finality of declaration about it, social media is interactive, conversational and open-ended. Moreover, it happens in a public, not private, space. The United Methodist Church UK Mission Area 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' (Colossians 4:6), and these guidelines aim to help us to do so.

3. The principles applied to this 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 United Methodist Church UK Mission Area . Remember that you are an ambassador for Christ, the Church and your part of it. Disclose your position as a member or officer of the Church, making it clear when speaking personally. Let Galatians 5:22-26 guide your behaviour.

6. Be respectful: respect confidentiality. Respect the views of others even where you disagree.

Policy

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that safeguarding, libel, slander, copyright and data protection laws apply, as well as the Book of Discipline of United Methodist Church UK Mission Area .

8. For general guidelines on confidentiality, refer to Safeguarding Policy - if telling a story about anyone, ask yourself Is this my story to tell?

9. 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.

10. Staff should be aware of and act in line with Speaking for the United Methodist Church UK Mission Area , the Team email policy and the Team policy on the use of IT equipment, as well as With Integrity and Skill and the whistle blowing policy where necessary.

Policy review and update

The Board of Trustees and the Media and Communications Team have overall responsibility for the review and update of this policy at the beginning of each year or more regularly as required. This Policy takes effect from **04/11/2019** (subject to

approval and amendments from the Mission Area Annual Conference). Next Review date will be **04/11/2020.**