

# Social Media Policy

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## Policy Statement

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.

Community Church Warragul (CCW) does not wish to prevent, discourage, or unduly limit its staff and volunteers' expression of personal opinion or online activity. However, as a Church, we must engage social media in a manner that is safe, responsible, civil, and purposeful. In doing so, we are reminded by the Apostle Paul in Titus 3:1–2, that we should be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

## Purpose

This Policy governs the use of Social Media, in all its current and future forms, where used for communicating matters relating to the Community Church Warragul (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 and 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, be harmful to others and 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

**“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 Activity”** includes any form of engagement with social media and includes but not limited to posting content (including images and videos), messaging, issuing likes, reposting and comments on other users posts, whether in one's own name or using a pseudonym

**“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.

## 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. Staff or Volunteers who misuse 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 and Volunteers interested in representing the Church on social media must have completed a Code of Conduct 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 the Code of Conduct.
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 as documented in the Church's Statement of Faith.
4. Social Media postings should not disclose sensitive or confidential information, unless the person that the information concerns has given their voluntary and informed 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, with written consent from the individuals directly. All photos of Minors must have the parents' written consent prior to posting. Photos and captions posted of minors should not include identifying details such as surname, DOB, address, school uniform, and the school they attend.
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 Senior Pastor and other appropriate authorities.

**10. The primary purpose of communications between the 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 evangelisation, 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, please refrain from commenting or posting anything on social media without first obtaining approval from the Senior Pastor.

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 their delegate and seeking direction.

13. The Senior Pastor or their 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.

14. All Social media pages and groups should have CCW Steph as an administrator on the account.

### **Guidelines for Personal Social Media Use – Applicable to Over 18's**

15. Staff and Volunteers should keep their professional and personal image in mind. Online conduct and behaviour affect this image. Volunteers must not accept invitations to 'friend' or 'follow' minors on personal social networking sites, and they must avoid initiating such connections as well. 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.

16. 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)

17. Staff members must not have individuals under the age of 18 on their personal social media accounts, except for immediate family members.

**18. Volunteers aged between 16 & 18 must remember that you represent our church, so keep your social media respectful and considerate at all times.**

### **Breach of Policy**

Social media use will be monitored, and you may be contacted to discuss your social media activity. You may be asked to take remedial action to address any social media activity that is deemed in breach of this policy.

Furthermore, any breach of this policy will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment (for staff), and the cessation of any further voluntary engagement. CCW also reserves its right to take any legal action it deems appropriate.



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## Social Media Declaration

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the Social Media Policy of Community Church Warragul. I understand the expectations and guidelines relating to appropriate use of social media in connection with my role as a staff member, volunteer, ministry leader, or board member.

I agree to:

- Use social media responsibly and respectfully.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries, especially with minors and vulnerable people.
- Represent the church's values in all online interactions.

I understand that breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_