



## Social Media Guidelines

### Introduction

Social Media is a very public way of communicating that can impact several people simultaneously due to its instant, interactive, conversational, unrestricted, often visual exchanges. It therefore provides Christians with unique opportunities to demonstrate Christlike love in action.

Sadly, many Social Media interactions reflect worldly values so these guidelines attempt to ensure interactions made by United Church Ferndown (UCF) participants reflect the same kind, respectful and wise communication that we would use in face-to face encounters.

### Biblical Principles

The list below highlights six key Biblical principles that underpin these Social Media guidelines.

<b>Love</b>	Matthew 22:39	"Love your neighbour as yourself."
<b>Respect</b>	1 Peter 2:17	"Show proper respect to everyone."
<b>Humility</b>	Ephesians 4:2a	"Be completely humble and gentle."
<b>Patience</b>	Ephesians 4:2b	"Be patient, bearing with one another in love."
<b>Wisdom</b>	Proverbs 3:21	"My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion."
<b>Forgiveness</b>	Colossians 3:13	"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

### Guidelines

This invites you to agree to a number of Christian values-driven guidelines when using any Social Media account but particularly for accounts owned by UCF.

- Be safe:** Special attention that promotes the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. Do not post any images of people unless you have consent to do so. If you have any concerns, please see the UCF Safeguarding Policy
- Be loving:** Do not post anything that is disrespectful, undermining or offensive, including anything that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive or threatening. Don't write defamatory comments about others or make any false or unproven statements that damage a person's reputation. Do not write anything you would not want Jesus to read.
- Be kind:** Communicate compassionately. Treat others how you would wish to be treated and assume the best in people. If you have a criticism or critique to make, consider not just whether you would say it in person, but also what tone you would use.

**Be honest:** Don't mislead people about who you are, what you or others have done and don't misrepresent the truth in any way. Acknowledge the work of others.

**Be responsible:** You are accountable for everything you say, write and text. All shared texts and images can be public and permanent even with privacy settings in place. If you're not sure, don't post.

**Be a good ambassador:** Always reflect Christlike behaviour. Personal and professional ways of behaving can easily become blurred online, so think before you post.

**Be gentle:** Especially when disagreeing. Apply Christian values when publicly disagreeing with others and ensure how you express yourself is Christlike especially when engaging in robust disagreements.

**Be confidential:** Do not post personal information or sensitive information others have not consented to be shared. Always question the source of any content you are considering amplifying/circulating.

**Be law-abiding:** Respect copyright and data protection law. Do not forward any explicit or indecent images. Abide by terms and conditions of various social media platforms. If you see a comment that breaches their policies, please report it to the respective company. Most social media and messaging apps have minimal ages.

Examples of social media minimum ages (Correct October 2022)

13+	WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, BeReal, House Party
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17+	YOLO
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18+	MeetMe, LiveMe, Kik, YouNow, Yubo, Monkey
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Therefore, you should not be breaking these minimums and you should also be compliant with the UCF Safeguarding policy if you are a staff member or volunteer.

**Be wise:** Before circulating videos, images, or texts, please check that the information you are sending out is factually correct and that you are confident of the source and origins of the information. Be wary of circulating material from biased or misleading sources. Remember that some social media options provide a service where messages and images are deleted after a set amount of time (some of these can be very short) amounts of time). This means you cannot prove what was sent. We advise caution and recommend that avoiding these apps is best.

## What will happen if UCF Social Media guidelines are not followed?

UCF, Southern Counties Baptist Association, Wessex URC Synod, the Baptist Union of Great Britain or the United Reformed Church may take action if they receive complaints or spot inappropriate, unsuitable or offensive material posted to their social media accounts or if inappropriate comments are made about them on other accounts. This may include deleting comments, blocking users, reporting comments as inappropriate or addressing it directly with individuals. In certain circumstances this may result in the UCF safeguarding procedures being enacted or a referral to the Police. Any behaviour observed to run contrary to these guidelines may result in church discipline as per our constitution.

## Who do I speak to for further advice?

Please contact our Ministers, or our Designated Person for Safeguarding for more guidance or help.