

Social Media Policy

Scope: This policy covers the actions of District officers, employees of the District and those operating the social media accounts for the District, while acting on behalf of the District.

Introduction: Northampton Methodist District recognises that many people make positive use of social media for ministry and mission purposes and in a personal capacity as well. Whether acting on behalf of a Methodist church/circuit/district, or in a personal capacity, we must be aware that damage can be done to our mission if the work we do is not safe and respectful. This policy aims to ensure that where we use social media we are, as in all other areas of our work, ensuring that safeguarding is central to the mission of the district.

Purpose: to contribute to the active mission of the district and to support the social media presence, and online witness, of local Methodist churches and circuits, in order to make more disciples of Jesus Christ.

Objectives:

- a) To maintain an active District profile on main social media platforms but in the first instance the District will expand its presence on Facebook via the current Facebook page and set up various Facebook groups
- b) To promote the online work of the Methodist Church in Britain.
- c) To develop new online aspects of church life that are safe and effective.

As a District Executive we commit to the following:

1. It is essential that all our online and Social Media work is done according to the latest Methodist Church in Britain connexional guidance or policy. We will post links to these within the social media (see the links at the bottom of this document).
2. We will use, and promote the use of, social media, alongside other media, for the sharing of good news, helpful resources and communications that encourage the mission of the district's churches and circuits.
3. Any communication made through digital and social media should:
 - * not bring the Methodist Church into disrepute
 - * not breach confidentiality nor copyright
 - * not do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual or group
 - * not contain content or images that are discriminatory or offensive (or links to such content)
 - * not be abusive or threatening or sexual or inappropriate in nature (or links to such content)
4. Responsibility for oversight of digital and social media communications and reputation management lies with the District Executive.
5. Our guidance for the content of our social media will include:
 - a) We will keep within the core subject of the particular group, or the core mission of the Methodist Church
 - b) There needs to be some kind of link to churches, circuits or the wider connexion, if it is not directly linked with the work of the district itself.

- c) Posts about activities or issues that are not specifically Christian in nature are permissible if they are of help to the work of the Methodist Church within this district.
- d) Each person posting is accountable to the district for the things they do, say or write on district social media.
- e) Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place and so we expect contributors to show respect for all people, and to generate good conversations. If you're not sure, don't post it.

The administrators will reserve the right to delete posts.

Administration:

1. There will be a minimum of 3 administrators for each district social media platform, with a member of the District Executive being one of these.
2. Administrators for any District social media will be appointed by the District Executive and recruited according to safeguarding principles. A member of the District Safeguarding Team will always be one of the administrators of each district social media platform, for safeguarding monitoring and advice.
3. We will 'post' the rules for each account on the appropriate platform and also post the links to these on the website.
4. Passwords for the accounts will be kept by the district office, and 'spot checks' may be carried out at any time.
5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Northampton Methodist District safeguarding policy and with the latest Methodist Church in Britain guidance (see links below which are accurate as at 4th June 2020). Any updates of this policy and guidance will become the relevant ones at any time.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/digital-communication-guidance-for-churches/social-media-guidelines/>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/policies-procedure-and-information/policies-and-guidance/>