



Social Media Policy

The North West Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe environment both in our chapels & online for all. This policy lays out the responsibilities with regards the NW's approach to social media & will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if there is any incidents or change in its usage. This policy covers, but is not limited to, to Facebook, X (formally known as Twitter), Websites, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, WhatsApp, Messages, Messenger, & any other that people use or will use in the future.

Introduction

All new forms of communication provide opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world. More than 92% of the UK population are internet users - people live their lives online and we, as the Church, need to be where they are. However, online communication comes with new & differing 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 Methodist Church 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 & this policy aim to help us to do so.

Why use social media?

The Methodist Church encourages the use of social media tools as a means of extending our engagement with people inside and outside the church.

Our responsibilities?

- **Consider the safety of yourself and others** - it is important that the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults especially, must be maintained. Conversation on social media can sometimes develop into heated and pointless argument. Be aware of the effect on yourself, and don't feel you always need to engage. You can always 'sign off' from a heated conversation calmly, with something like 'I think we'll have to agree to disagree. Peace.'
- **Respect** - do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful. Try to think of the effect on others who may see what you post.
- **Be transparent** – do not mislead people about who you are, or use pseudonyms.
- **Be relevant** – do not add comments to a social media post that are irrelevant to the topic. Engage in the conversation rather than broadcasting opinions.

- **Disagree, in love** - if you have a criticism you need to make, consider carefully the tone of what you write. If you are personally attacked, do not respond in kind. Being a Christian means that sometimes we must speak out and challenge injustice. However, remember when you need to point out something you think is wrong, that there is a real, and possibly vulnerable, person at the receiving end of what you say.
- **Be careful when sharing content** – do not share in haste. It's also important to not share material that belongs to someone else and isn't available for you to use due to copyright. Make sure you always seek the copyright holder's permission before sharing or using content, if it hasn't already been given.
- **Maintain confidentiality** - if telling a story about someone else, ask yourself first ‘**Is this my story to tell?**’ Do not reveal personal details about others without their explicit permission.
- **Be a good representative of the Methodist Church** – at local, NW, Circuit, District & Connexional level

We want our social media channels to be safe spaces and a place for healthy, open and insightful discussion, which is why we have a short set of house rules:

- All users must comply with the relevant social media platform's terms of use as well as our own terms of use (this includes age limits)
- We will remove, in whole or in part, posts that we feel are inappropriate, or discriminatory against any individual or group
- You are wholly responsible for any content you post including content that you choose to share
- We will remove messages and/or disable comments (where function allows) including reporting and/or blocking users on our social media channels who post messages or leave comments which we believe are:
 - Abusive or obscene
 - Deceptive or misleading
 - In violation of any intellectual property rights, including copyright
 - In violation of any law or regulation
 - Spam and off-topic content, including persistent negative and/or abusive posts in which the aim is to provoke a response
 - Promotional material, including links to external websites and promotions that are not relevant to the original post

Anyone repeatedly engaging with us using content or language which falls into the above categories will be blocked and/or reported to the associated social media platform. We will not tolerate or respond to abusive messages.

This role outline was reviewed & approved by North West Church Council on 1st May 2025 and will be reviewed annually.