

Electronic Communication Guidelines

We acknowledge that the use of electronic media for communication is part of everyday life, however we need to be mindful of the position of trust and power we have been entrusted with as leaders.

General Principles:

- Leaders must not transmit, retrieve or store any communication that is: discriminatory or harassing, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic, defamatory, threatening, for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the code of conduct.
- Do not send any electronic communications that attempts to hide your identity or represent the sender as someone else.

Telephones

- When contacting a child/young person by phone, call on their home phone if possible.
- Mobile phone use should be kept to a minimum, not used for long calls, not used for pastoral care.
- If the child/young person initiates a mobile phone call which will require a long conversation, arrange to have conversation in person in a public location at another time.

Email

- As far as it is practical, email children and young people in groups, rather than as individuals.
- Avoid having deep conversations regarding personal issues over email. Arrange to have these conversations in person in a public location at another time.
- As far as possible, save all emails to and from children/young people in a folder.

SMS

- Avoid having long conversations via SMS. If a longer conversation begins, arrange to meet in person in a public location at another time.
- Avoid language that conveys emotional content, such as “You are loved.”

Social Networks (e.g. Facebook, etc)

- As far as it is practical, message children and young people in groups, rather than as individuals. Keep or “archive” messages, rather than deleting messages with young people.
- Writing on “walls” should only be general in nature. E.g. “Hey, hope you’re having a good week, cya Sunday” or other light conversations. Never give out details of children/young people on “walls” e.g. name of school, email address, home address, phone numbers, etc.

Skype and Video Phone

- Skype and video phone should not be used with children/young people.

Photography (including on phones)

- All children/young people must be appropriately dressed when photographed.
- Ensure you have approval of your ministry leader before publishing videos or photos. Never identify the person/s in published content without their explicit permission.
- Ensure all photos/videos captured at gatherings are accessible to ministry leaders upon request.