

Communication Guidelines

We acknowledge that communication with young people is an essential part of leadership, and we desire to be mindful of the position of trust and power we have been entrusted with as leaders. This document outlines how communication with young people may be done in an appropriate manner across several mediums beyond regular programs/events.

Key Principles:

- Leaders must not transmit, retrieve, or store any communication that is: discriminatory or harassing, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit, pornographic, threatening, for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the code of conduct.
- Don't send electronic communications that attempts to hide your identity or represent the sender as someone else.
- Pastoral care and longer conversations should occur in person, not across media (even if initiated online)

Photography (including on phones)

Ensure that a) all people are dressed appropriately when photographed, b) all content is accessible to the ministry leadership, and c) content is not posted without ministry leader approval and parental consent.

Guidelines for leader-young person communication

	Primary aged	Young people in years 7-8	Young people in years 9-12
Telephone Contact	Permission must be requested from parents or carers (even if young person answers the phone or initiates the call). Contact with young person's mobile should be limited to emergency situations.		Permissible. Keep calls short and direct longer conversations to in-person meetings.
Messaging (SMS, social media, email etc.)	Must be limited to conveying information about church programs		Can include information about programs and encouragement (e.g. <i>praying for you this week</i>). Avoid long conversations and language that conveys vague emotional content (e.g. <i>"I love you and care for you"</i>). Messages must be stored for accountability to ministry leadership.
Online Contact	Only to convey information and should never be one-on-one	Caution must be used to maintain transparency and accountability and to ensure all messages can only be interpreted as intended. Leaders are expected to follow these guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limit chats to group discussions that can be read by others (ideal for year 9-12) - Chat history should be kept and be accessible to ministry leadership upon request. - Consider phone privacy settings that prevent others from using your phone and viewing contact details for young people. - Consider gender demographics and delegate communication to the most appropriate leader/s. - Ensure all messages and images are above reproach and cannot be misconstrued. 	
		- Limit contact to group discussions	- individual contact is permissible sparingly
Private Video Calls	Not appropriate	Not ideal, however group calls may be appropriate (e.g. Bible Studies) that adhere to stricter safe spaces expectations.	
In Person Contact Outside of Programs	Appropriate only in group settings with parental and ministry leadership approval.	Appropriate only with parental and ministry leadership approval.	Permissible to meet one-on-one or in mixed groups. Both ministry leader approval and parental permission are required. Wisdom is needed regarding the gender of the young person and leadership dynamics.