

Beeston Methodist Church

Guidelines for the use of the internet and social media.

As the people of the Methodist Church we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

As technology progresses, so must our vigilance in protecting against its abuse. The internet and Social Media provide new and imaginative ways of gaining information and communicating, but while offering a wealth of possibility, the darker side offers those with intent on harming children new ways to abuse them.

Most importantly, "communication and common sense" are the two key elements to these guidelines and the primary aim is to protect the individual and work to ensure they are aware of their rights and empowered to exercise them, while still offering the freedom to families and friends to record important events in their lives and the lives of those close to them.

Workers should not allow children and young people under the age of 18 to be your friend on an individual social networking site such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter or MSN site, since this could be seen as developing a separate relationship with a young person outside church. It could also allow children and young people access to possibly unsuitable material. If you are invited by a children or young person under 18 to become your "friend", please contact their parents or guardian so that they and you can explain that declining an online friendship is not a rejection of the child or young person concerned. The golden rule is: If in doubt, don't do it. If your leadership role with the church requires you to be friends with anyone under the age of 18 years this must be referred to the BMC safeguarding officer for approval by the safeguarding team.

BMC acknowledge the need within the church for freedom to express views and opinions and as a church those channels are available. People using these channels must remember that BMC reserves the right to remove any posts it deems unsuitable. The administrating group for these sites consists of The ministerial team and the safeguarding officer.

There may be occasions when church officers, youth or children's workers wish to demonstrate the internet to children or young people, or encourage them to access information online as part of an activity. When this happens, workers are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Ensure that parents or guardians are aware of what their children or young people are doing and have given their permission.
- When demonstrations are being given, plan beforehand to ensure that all websites visited have material that is appropriate for the age group taking part.
- Ensure that children & young people are aware of the Methodist Church Social Media Guidance for children and young people*.
- Ensure that parents and guardians are aware of the Methodist Church Social Media Guidance for parents*.
- Ensure that all workers with children and young people are aware of the Methodist Church Social Media Guidelines for workers*.
- Where children and young people are being encouraged to undertake subsequent searches on the internet at home, they must only do so with the knowledge/supervision of their parent or guardians.
- Warn children and young people about the dangers of giving out personal details on the net.
- Ensure children and young people are advised to obtain parental consent if they wish to develop internet friends into face-to-face friendships and that they should always be accompanied on any first meeting.

*These guidelines can be downloaded at - <http://childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/resources-worker/social-media-guidelines/new-social-media-guidelines/>

Approved by Beeston Methodist Church Council:

October 2017

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You should be aware of the Methodist Church Social Media Guidance for children and young people, which can be downloaded at - <http://childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/resources-worker/social-media-guidelines/new-social-media-guidelines/>

Here are some quick guidelines:

- Never tell anyone you meet on the internet your home address, your telephone number or your school's name, unless your parent or carer specifically gives you permission.
- Never send anyone your picture, credit card or bank details, or anything else, without first checking with your parent or carer.
- Never give your password to anyone, even a best friend.
- Never arrange to meet anyone in person without first agreeing it with your parent or carer, and get them to come along to the first meeting, which should always be in a public place.
- Never hang around in a chat room or in a conference if someone says or writes something which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, and always report it to your parent or carer.
- Never respond to nasty, suggestive or rude e-mails or postings.
- If you see something you don't like (e.g. bad language or distasteful pictures) then move on or click "back". If you are still concerned, talk to your parent or carer.
- Always remember if someone makes you an offer which seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- Your leaders are not allowed to be friends with you on any individual social networking site such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter or MSN site.

The safeguarding officer for Beeston Methodist Church is Heather Brough

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