

the underground

Communication & Social Media Policy

Social media is a major part of our culture and a means by which we interact with the children who are a part of our ministry. As ministry personnel interact online with children who are a part of our ministry, we want to ensure the safety of all parties involved. *Online communication and text messaging with children grade 5 and younger is not permitted.*

Social Media: The approved methods of social media interaction between students and ministry personnel are Facebook, Twitter & Instagram. Social media interaction is done publically (writing on Facebook walls) or including a second leader in messages.

Phone, Texts & Emails: While text messaging remains a popular means of communication, it is not to be the primary means of communication between leaders and students. Text messaging and phone conversations are to be used to exchange event details or for brief check-ins, not as a means of building relationships or having deeper conversations. Leaders should move these conversations to Facebook or email (cc'ing another leader) whenever possible. Emails will include a second leader.

Note: In the case of youth in designated volunteer roles (e.g. kidmax), email communication is appropriate for dialogue regarding the ministry position without copying a second leader. Wisdom is still encouraged in utilizing email and social media regarding all communication with minors.

We ask that all of our ministry personnel abide by the following guidelines:

- Youth leaders must be mindful to maintain appropriate opposite gender interactions and redirect opposite gender students to their same gender leaders whenever possible, especially when discussing highly personal, physical, or emotionally intense topics (e.g. female students with female leaders, male students with male leaders). In the case of same gender attracted students/leaders, discuss wise approach with overseeing pastor.
- When communicating with youth through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, email, or text messaging it is important that ministry personnel save all correspondence in the event that any of the content is called into question.
- Video Calls (Skype, FaceTime, etc) must include 2 security cleared leaders with the acknowledgement of the appropriate ministry supervisor and parental notification.
- Online interaction will be such that is appropriate to the ministry setting in which the worker or volunteer serves.
- In the event that children or youth attempt to converse or exchange information of an inappropriate nature, the worker or volunteer will contact their manager or ministry coordinator immediately.

- Ministry personnel will not post comments, content, or photographs that are not conducive to the integrity of the ministry, or that may be considered a contradiction of beliefs and core values of The Meeting House.
- Ministry personnel will not post photographs or videos of children or youth online except with permission on an approved page of The Meeting House.
- Ministry personnel will not use The Meeting House logo or other graphics that may cause confusion as to whether or not a site is an “official” site of The Meeting House.