



# Headcorn Baptist Church

## Social Media Policy & Guidelines

### Policy Statement

This policy aims to safeguard members of our fellowship involved with HBC's online social media groups, and so we would encourage those who are part of our fellowship to follow the guidelines below. The Minister and Deacons will review this policy annually and propose any changes that are deemed necessary to maintain its effectiveness.

- Social media updates are immediate and can have a lasting impact and you should assume that anything you post is permanent. Even if you delete it later on, it may have been seen and re-published, referred to, or even screen shotted and used elsewhere.
- You are to remember that if you are a part of our church fellowship, others who aren't will see you as a representative of HBC when you post anything on our church social media groups. There are risks associated with personal opinions being seen as public statements.
- Anonymity or 'hiding' behind aliases when using our church social media groups is not allowed.
- The informality that social media encourages can mean that it might be harder to maintain the professional distance that is required when working with children, young people and the vulnerable. Communicating directly online with someone, for example with private messaging, is like meeting them in private. You're advised to send messages only to groups, rather than individuals, or else share publicly.
- Whilst sharing thoughts and reflections with friends or followers via our church social media groups can seem personal and private, it is not. By law, if one or more people can access it, content is classed as published, in the public domain and subject to legislation around libel, defamation, copyright and data protection. So, if you wouldn't say something in a public meeting, don't say it online.
- Use of social media does not change HBC's understanding of confidentiality. Within the life of our church there are private meetings and conversations, particularly in terms of pastoral work. Breaking confidentiality on our church social media group is as wrong as it would be in any other context. Arguably, it is worse as via social media a broken confidence could spread rapidly and be impossible to retract. Remember: Is this story mine to share? If in doubt, don't.
- Don't overshare personal information. Never publish detailed personal information such as your or anyone else's address or telephone number within our public church social media groups.
- Always use Biblical wisdom when utilising our church social media groups. For example, if someone has offended you, consider speaking with them privately on the matter. Do not post offense responses publicly.
- Please refrain from posting photos of individuals or identifying those individuals on our church social media groups without their consent prior to posting.
- In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for your question, please check with our leadership team (Minister and Deacons).

**The policy was approved by the Church Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021**