

## **Purpose of Guidelines**

This policy provides parameters in order to guide church staff, team members, employees, volunteers, and church leaders when social media tools are used on behalf of **Example Church** or when **Example Church** becomes part of a social media dialogue.

## **Social Media Tips**

- Be selective! There are a variety of digital platforms available. Use the right medium for the message. For example, don't use a Facebook post to communicate sensitive or private information.
- Be smart! A blog, community post, or social media post is often visible to the entire public and can/will be shared by others in various ways that cannot be controlled at any level. Be extremely wise with all content posted.
- Use grace! Always use Biblical wisdom when utilizing social media. For example, if someone has offended you, consider speaking with them privately on the matter. Do not post offense responses publicly.
- Ask us! In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for how members of our community should answer social media questions, please check with **Example Church's** leadership team before speaking as a representative of the church.

## **Use of Social Media**

- All of **Example Church's** policies, including harassment, confidentiality, and software use, apply in the extensive use of social media.
- Team members who misuse the **Example Church's** social media resources in ways that violate the law or other ministry policies are subject to immediate disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

## **Guidelines**

- Employees/volunteers who are interested in representing **Example Church** must first sign a consent and application document, as well as attend a social media training class.

- Social media postings should never disclose sensitive or confidential information, unless written consent to share said information is obtained from the individual it concerns. This includes but is not limited to personal and/or medical information.
- Please refrain from posting photos of individuals or identifying those individuals on **Example Church's** social media pages without their written consent prior to posting. Written consent can be submitted via email or text. The members of the social media team are responsible for disabling the "tagging" feature of photos posted on the ministry's page. If the photos reference a location, that information must be deleted as well.
- Copyright and Fair Use Laws must be respected at all times. Feel free to point or link to another individual's site, not post or blog about it like it is your own content.
- If any posted material concerning **Example Church** seems to be illegal (e.g. child or elder abuse, etc.) team members should contact church leadership and the appropriate authorities immediately.
- When communicating with youth via social media, team members must adhere to **Example Church's** youth communication policy. Additionally, employees and volunteers serving in the children and youth ministries must keep their professional image in mind at all times. Online conduct, comments, behavior, etc. affects this image. **Example Church** discourages staff members and volunteers from accepting invitations to "friend" youth group members within personal networking sites. Social contact outside the **Example Church's** youth page may create serious risks for the ministry workers and negatively alter the dynamic between a youth leader and a student.
- Team members and employees are solely responsible for the content they publish online, including content from their own social media pages. It must be absolutely clear that all views/posts do not reflect **Example Church**, but are reflective of themselves.
- As a team member of **Example Church**, remember that your online presence and posts can have the potential to affect the ministry of **Example Church**. For this reason, it is imperative that you conduct your online interactions in accordance with the Employee/Volunteer Handbook, **Example Church's** Statement of Faith and with the Code of Conduct. If you have any questions in this area, inquire with the leadership team for clarity.
- When in doubt, be positive! Whether someone has posted something mean, rude or distasteful, take the high road at all times.

- In the event of a crisis, contact church leadership prior to responding to any posting or comments relating to the crisis.

## **Public Relations Guidelines**

- Church communications may not be used for partisan political messages or paid advertising.
- **Example Church** may designate one or two main employees to facilitate all external communication channels on behalf of the Church. Only authorized employees such as the Pastor(s), Communications Staff and Departmental Directors may coordinate communications with members of the media on behalf of **Example Church**.
- Any external communication from the **Example Church** office regarding serious/unexpected incidents must be approved by church leadership and follow **Example Church's** guidelines.
- Always use **Example Church's** official name and logo. These branding items must be approved prior to official use.

## **Where Do These Guidelines Apply?**

- This policy applies to all online and mobile platforms for sharing content and information, whether hosted by **Example Church** or hosted by others. "Social media" refers to social networking services, short-message services, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image/video sharing sites and other methods for sharing real time information among users. Due to the ever-changing speed of social media, this policy applies to all new social media platforms, whether or not they are mentioned. All social media platforms are relevant and included.

*\*\*Note: This is a template. Your organization is responsible for compliance with all applicable laws. Accordingly, this sample should not be used or adopted by your organization without first being reviewed extensively and approved by an attorney. Social Church assumes no liability in connection with the use or distribution of this template.\*\**