(POL-DIGITAL) Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy

General Board Approved: May 31, 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish wise and accountable standards for electronic communication, texting, messaging, social media, photos, videos, livestreams, and online interaction connected to church ministry.

The church desires to communicate clearly and effectively while protecting children, youth, vulnerable adults, ministry workers, families, and the testimony of the church.

2. Scope

This policy applies to pastors, employees, officers, ministry leaders, volunteers, teachers, helpers, mentors, and others communicating in connection with church ministry.

This policy applies to communication by:

- Text message;
- Phone call;
- Email;
- Social media;
- Messaging apps;
- Group messaging;
- Video calls;
- Livestreams;
- Church websites;
- Photos and videos;
- Any other digital or electronic platform.

3. General Standard

Electronic communication connected to church ministry shall be appropriate, accountable, respectful, and limited to legitimate ministry purposes.

Communication shall not be secretive, manipulative, sexually suggestive, romantic, harassing, threatening, or inconsistent with the church's faith and testimony.

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4. Communication with Minors

Adult ministry workers should avoid private, one-on-one electronic communication with minors.

When communicating with minors, workers should use one or more of the following safeguards:

- Include a parent or guardian;
- Use group messaging;
- Include another approved adult leader;
- Use official church communication channels;
- Keep messages brief, appropriate, and ministry-related.

Private messaging with minors should be avoided unless necessary for a clear ministry purpose. When it occurs, it should remain appropriate and may be shared with parents or the General Board if needed.

5. Time and Content Boundaries

Communication with minors should occur at reasonable times and should be limited to appropriate ministry purposes.

Adults should not engage minors in late-night, emotionally dependent, romantic, sexual, secretive, or overly personal communication.

6. Social Media Connections

Adult ministry workers should use wisdom in connecting with minors on personal social media accounts.

Church leaders may require ministry communication to occur through official church pages, parent-included groups, or group communication platforms.

Adults shall not use disappearing messages, hidden accounts, anonymous accounts, or private platforms to communicate secretly with minors.

7. Photos and Videos of Minors

Photos or videos of minors may be used for church communication when appropriate and when parent or guardian objection is not known.

The church should avoid posting:

- Embarrassing images;
- Images of children in vulnerable situations;
- Names connected with identifying personal details;
- Location details that create safety concerns;
- Images of minors whose parents or guardians have requested that they not be posted.

Parents or guardians may request that photos or videos of their child not be used in public church communication.

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8. Livestreams and Public Worship

Because church services and events may be livestreamed, photographed, or recorded, the church should take reasonable steps to communicate this practice.

Special care should be used when minors are featured prominently, interviewed, baptized, performing, or otherwise highlighted.

9. Official Church Accounts

Official church websites, pages, groups, and communication channels should be administered by approved persons.

Access to official accounts should be limited to those authorized by the General Board.

Passwords and administrative privileges should be protected and updated when roles change.

10. Confidentiality and Sensitive Matters

Electronic communication should not be used carelessly for confidential matters, counseling details, abuse reports, personnel matters, or sensitive church business.

Sensitive matters should be handled through appropriate in-person, phone, secure, or leadership channels.

11. Reporting Inappropriate Communication

Any inappropriate, concerning, sexual, manipulative, threatening, harassing, or policy-violating communication should be reported according to the Abuse, Misconduct, and Incident Reporting Policy.

12. Review

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the General Board and may be revised as needed.

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