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**Mustard Tree Community Church**

*Connect with God. Grow together. Change our world*

**Social Media Policy**

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Issue: 1.0

The Mustard Tree Community Church

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Version History

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| Version | Date | Changes |
| V0.1 | Jan 2024 | Initial Draft |
| V0.2 | Jul 2024 | Minor review changes |
| V1.0 | Jul 2024 | Issued |
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# Policy Statement

A healthy Christian community is a safe place of mutual care, where all people feel valued, loved and respected. This includes both face-to-face interaction and digital interaction over social media. MTCC is committed to ensuring that our use of social media promotes these values.

# Our responsibilities

We want our social media channels to be safe spaces, as a result we will:

* Comply with the relevant social media platform's terms of use
* Remove, in whole or in part, posts that we feel are inappropriate, or discriminatory against any individual or group
* Remove/block users on our social media channels who post messages or leave comments which we believe are:
	+ Abusive or obscene
	+ Deceptive or misleading
	+ In violation of any intellectual property rights, including copyright
	+ In violation of any law or regulation
	+ Spam and off-topic content, including persistent negative and/or abusive posts in which the aim is to provoke a response
	+ Promotional material, including links to external websites and promotions that are not relevant to the original post

# Why use social media?

MTCC uses social media tools as a means of extending our engagement with people inside and outside the church. This mainly includes:

* Sharing our events
* Reaching those who cannot physically attend
* Sharing relevant posts from other Christian organisations

Whilst MTCC does not currently use social media in a way that promotes discussion which can lead to into heated and pointless argument, these guidelines do cover such discussions and should be applied to any social media discussion on involving MTCC, now or in the future.

# Access to Social Media

Whilst our social media channels will be open to all to view and comment as themselves, only limited access will be given to allow people to post/comment as the “Mustard Tree Community Church”. This access will be limited to those within MTCC responsible for creating content and managing social media.

# Guidelines

These guidelines apply to all content and comments posted to the Mustard Tree Community Church social media channels.

**Be careful when sharing content**

Don’t share in haste. Read linked content thoroughly or watch a video to the end so you know exactly what you are sharing before you judge whether it is suitable to share.

**Maintain confidentiality**

If telling (or sharing) a story about someone else, ask yourself first ‘**Is this my story to tell**?**’**Don’t reveal personal details about others without their explicit permission. Our [Data Protection Policy](https://wp.themustardtree.com/2018/07/22/data-protection-policy/) also applies here – particularly regarding the use of photographs on social media.

**Consider the safety of yourself and others**

It is important that the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults especially, must be maintained. If you have a safeguarding concern, in relation to social media e.g. bullying, grooming etc please inform the appropriate adult/child safeguarding lead.

Be aware of the effect on yourself, and don’t feel you always need to engage. You can always ‘sign off’ from a heated conversation calmly, with something like ‘I think we’ll have to agree to disagree.

**Respect**

Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful. Try to think of the effect on others who may see what you post.

Be careful about expressing ‘political’ opinions. Whilst as a church we should highlight issues of poverty, social injustice etc we should be careful not to align ourselves with any particular political party.

**Be transparent**

Don’t mislead people about who you are or use pseudonyms.

**Be relevant**

Don't add comments to a social media post that are irrelevant to the topic. Engage in the conversation rather than broadcasting opinions.

**Disagree with love**

If you have a criticism you need to make, consider carefully the tone of what you write. If you are attacked, do not respond in kind. Being a Christian means that sometimes we must speak out and challenge injustice. But remember when you need to point out something you think is wrong, that there is a real, and possibly vulnerable, person at the receiving end of what you say.