

## Tabor Baptist Church

# Social Media Policy

### Church details

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# Introduction

This policy is to help Tabor Baptist Church utilise the benefits of social media, whilst sensibly managing the risks. It covers the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter/X and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to use of social media for work purposes as well as personal use where that may affect what the church does or its reputation.

“Social Media” is the broad term used for the set of online tools, websites and interactive media that enable users to interact with each other in various ways. Social media is used regularly to communicate about the work of Tabor Baptist’s Church, but staff and volunteers may also use social media for personal purposes. The separation between personal and professional use and views can be blurred on social media, and so while we recognise the value of the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe.

Our overriding biblical principle in all our communications, including via social media, is to seek to speak the truth in love.

## Aims of the policy

The aims of the policy are to:

- provide staff and trustees with the overarching principles that guide the use of social media;
- to protect those who interact with the Church’s activities and who make use of social media; and information technology as part of their involvement with us;
- ensure Church information remains secure and is not compromised; and
- ensure the Church’s reputation is not damaged or adversely affected.

## Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to staff, trustees and anyone working on behalf of the church.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during working hours or otherwise, and regardless of whether the social media is accessed using Church equipment or personal equipment.

## General principles

The following general principles apply:

- Personal email addresses (not church email accounts) should be used for personal social media accounts.
- Information shared on social media should be considered to be in the public domain, regardless of the privacy settings applied. Posts should be considered indelible – they will always exist somewhere once made.
- Respect and kindness should always be shown to others. Social media or other forms of communication should never be used to attack or abuse others; anything which could be considered discriminatory, defamatory, bullying or harassment should be avoided.
- The privacy and feelings of others should be respected; contact details or pictures, etc. of others should not be shared without their prior permission.
- Information which could, directly or indirectly, damage the Church's interests or compromise its reputation should not be shared.
- Confidential information about the church, its staff, members or attenders should not be revealed.

## Using social media on behalf of the church

Social media is used by Tabor Baptist Church to promote and share information about our activities and work.

Andrew Love is responsible for setting up and managing Tabor Baptist's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by Andrew Love will have access to these accounts.

All social media content should have a clear purpose and bring value to our audience.

Where individuals seek to challenge, question or debate content posted, Church Members, volunteers or those working on behalf of the church should not seek to respond publicly on social media platforms but, where a question appears to be genuine, should respond privately via email, phone or face-to-face.

Care should be taken with the presentation of content: making sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors, the information shared is accurate, the images are clear and licensed for use (i.e. not copyrighted).

Content about individuals, including images, should not be shared without permission. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, Church Members, volunteers or those working on behalf of the church, must ensure they have the explicit consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

Staff and church members should refrain from offering personal opinions via the church's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'reposting'.

Individuals should not set up other social media channels on behalf of Tabor Baptist Church or that purport to be on behalf of the charity.

If a complaint is made on Tabor Baptist Church's social media channels, advice should be sought from the Church Elders and Deacons before responding.

## **Breach of the policy**

Serious breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether Church equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach.

Individuals may be required to remove internet and/or social media postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in disciplinary action.