



ARARAT BAPTIST CHURCH

SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY

Created: November 2025

Approved by Deacons/Trustees: 04.12.2025

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Introduction

This policy is to help Ararat Baptist Church utilise the benefits of social media, whilst sensibly managing the associated risks. It covers the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to use of social media for work purposes at the church 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 Ararat Baptist 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 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 everyone 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 that church information remains secure and is not compromised.
- ensure the Church’s reputation is not damaged or adversely affected.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to staff, trustees, volunteers 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 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 harassing should be avoided.
- The privacy and feelings of others should be respected; contact details or photographs of others should not be shared without their prior permission, this particularly relates to those under the age of 18

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- 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 attendees should not be revealed.

Particular considerations:

- Be a faithful ambassador for Christ and a good representative of Ararat Baptist Church in all online activities.
- Remember that you are always part of the Church and will therefore be seen as a representative of the Christian position even when speaking personally.
- Be credible. Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
- Be consistent. Encourage constructive criticism and deliberation.
- Be cordial, honest and professional at all times. Be responsive. When you gain insight, share it where appropriate.
- Be integrated. Wherever possible, align online participation with other communications.
- Be respectful and respect confidentiality. Respect the views of others even where you disagree.

Using social media on behalf of the church

- Social media is used by Ararat Baptist Church to promote and share information about our activities and work.
- The Deacons at Ararat hold overall responsibility for the Social media accounts and only they will be able to post information to the public domain.
- 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, employed staff, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of the church should not seek to respond publicly on social media platforms but to bring the matter to the attention of the church deacons who will respond privately, wherever possible, to the person concerned.
- Care should be taken with the presentation of content: making sure that there are no typographical errors, misspellings or grammatical errors.
- All information shared should be accurate, the images 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 photographs that clearly identify a child or young person, those posting must ensure they have the explicit consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
- Everyone 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 Ararat Baptist Church or that purport to be on behalf of the charity.
- If a complaint is made on Ararat Baptist Church's social media channels, advice should be sought from the Diaconate.

Internet access and monitoring usage of social media

Employed staff, deacons and volunteers are not restricted from viewing social media on Ararat devices (but other employment or data protection policies may apply). All are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity in their own time. But, during

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working hours usage should not be excessive or interfere with their duties. Ararat Baptist Church has the right to monitor how it's devices and IT systems are used for both church and personal use.

Data Protection

Any concerns relating to the inappropriate sharing of personal data (which includes images of people), may constitute a potential data breach. This must be brought to the attention of the Data Protection Officer (DPO), currently Karen Kaneen as soon as possible.

DVW/11.25