

ICBC PUBLIC COMMUNICATON POLICY

Date approved: March 2017

Review date: In progress

Media can have a powerful impact on how the church is seen in the community. Advertising and articles are part of the “face” of the church to the wider community. Increasingly, social media is a powerful influence. Sometimes, often unexpectedly, a church can find itself in the media spotlight. This means it is important to have a clear media policy in place.

The Invercargill Central Baptist Church Staff, Leaders & Volunteer’s policy is as follows:

1. Only the Lead Pastor and the Chairperson of the Elders can respond to Media requests on behalf of Invercargill Central Baptist Church.
2. Only the Lead Pastor or Chairperson of the Elders can give permission to others to communicate with the Media.
3. All Staff, Leaders and Volunteers at Invercargill Central Baptist Church will ensure that all comments concerning the Church, its people, its practices and its purposes to the Media are positive. This includes Blogs, ‘Letter-to-the-Editor’ style comments, interviews and comments on Social Media.
4. When using images, photos or videos of people that will be accessed in the public domain, i.e. newspapers, YouTube, Facebook, church website; then permission must be gained from the individuals in the images.

Social Media

Social Media is the ever growing, ever changing field of communication through different forms of technology accessed by mobile phones, tablets and other computing devices. It opens new means to connect with others but holds the possibility for misunderstanding and abuse. Communication through social media is often more individual thus needing high levels of accountability particularly when communicating with children, young people and others who are vulnerable.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY CONCERNING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 12 YEARS OLD AND YOUNGER

The Invercargill Central Baptist Church Staff, Leaders & Volunteer’s policy concerning Social Media with children & young people aged 12 years old and younger is as follows:

1. All forms of social media communication will be through the children’s parents/caregivers.
2. Due to age restrictions on Social Media sites & applications [Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.], these are inappropriate means of communication between Staff, Leaders & Volunteers and children who are aged 12 years old & younger and will not be used.
3. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers will not communicate with the personal cell phone of any children 12 years old & younger in any way. If children 12 years old and younger have their own cell phones, their numbers will not be collected or used.
4. If a child 12 years old or under contacts a Staff member, Leader or Volunteer via social media, it will not be responded to. The young person’s parents / caregivers will be notified and it will be explained to the child that social media is not an appropriate way to communicate with Staff members, Leaders and Volunteers. If the communications persist, there are methods of blocking incoming communications in most forms of social media.
5. Staff, Leaders and Volunteers will not communicate to children privately across social media platforms. Private and secret communication between Staff, Leaders & Volunteers and children 12 years old & younger will result in that adult’s removal from that ministry.

6. Actions construed as grooming will not be tolerated and the police will be involved appropriately.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY CONCERNING YOUNG ADULTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13-18 YEARS

The Invercargill Central Baptist Church Staff, Leadership & Volunteer's policy concerning Social Media with those 13-18yrs is as follows;

NB. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers should also consider these policies when communicating with those with intellectual impairments and those who are vulnerable in other ways - emotionally, socially, intellectually, etc.

1. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers must have the permission from the appropriate ministry leader to engage with 13-18yr old's using Social Media.
2. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers will not share images, pictures or video of young people [13 -18 years old] and those who are vulnerable in publicly accessible forms of social media, like YouTube or public Facebook pages. SEE PUBLIC COMMUNICATION POLICY #4.
3. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers need to exercise caution when private messaging [text messaging & private messaging on Facebook, etc.] Young people [13 – 18 years old] & those who are vulnerable. They must seek to communicate appropriately and with respect. The appropriate Ministry Leader & any Elder can ask to see private messages between Staff, Leaders & Volunteers and young people [13 – 18 years old] & the vulnerable if concerns have been expressed or complaints have been made.
4. Intentionally hidden or secret personal interactions between Staff, Leaders & Volunteers and young people [13 – 18 years old] & those who are vulnerable are not appropriate and if the content or intent of these messages is inappropriate, the Staff member, Leader or Volunteer will be stood down from that ministry.
5. If Staff, Leaders or Volunteers receive unwanted messages or comments from a young person or any other, they should be asked to stop. If they continue, after consultation with the, Lead Pastor speak to them again with a fellow leader or volunteer, or a ministry leader. If the communications persist, there are methods of blocking incoming communications in most forms of social media. It is to be communicated to the 'offender' that they have been blocked from Social Media communication with that Staff member, leader or Volunteer. This is consistent with Jesus' word in Matthew 18:15-17 concerning offenses against one another.

Needs to include all ages not yet written.