

# Media and Communication Policy

Date Approved: 3 August 2023  
Review Date: August 2026  
(Staff to review annually)

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## Rationale

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 has become a powerful tool for communication, but it also comes with potential for misuse. Sometimes, often unexpectedly, a church can find itself in the media spotlight. It is important to have a clear media policy in place for this sort of situation, but also to ensure consistent, effective, and appropriate communication to all within the Church and neighbouring community. The procedures below serve as a guide to ensure all communications from those representing the Church (staff, leaders, and volunteers) are accurate, appropriate within the context of our community, and protect the privacy of all within the church.

## Scope

This policy covers:

- Brand Integrity
- External communications:
  - Media Enquiries & Press Releases
  - Website
  - Social Media
- Internal communications:
  - Church-wide emails
  - Newsletters
  - In-House Advertising

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*All communications MUST reflect the mission statement of Central Baptist –  
**Love God, Love Others.***

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## Brand Integrity

### NAME

Any communications (both internal and external) that include the Central Baptist logo must be approved by the appropriate Ministry Leader or member of staff before distribution.

The full name Central Baptist Church Invercargill is to be used on external Church communications in the first instance (unless not appropriate) and simply Central Baptist thereafter.

Internal communications can simply use Central Baptist.

The abbreviation ICBC is no longer to be used in either external or internal communications.

### LOGO

The Brand Guidelines relating to the use of the Central Baptist logo must be followed for any promotional/informational material produced by the Church for either external or internal communications. (See Central Baptist Church Invercargill Brand Guidelines)

Promotional/informational material for external communication (i.e. events that the wider community are welcome to attend) are to include the Central Baptist 'CHURCH : INVERCARGILL' logo where possible.



Promotional/informational material for **internal** communication (i.e. events for only those within the Church congregation) are to include the Central Baptist 'LOVE GOD - LOVE OTHERS' logo where possible.



## External Communications

- Promotional/informational material for external communication is to include the Central Baptist 'CHURCH: INVERCARGILL' logo.
- Full church name 'Central Baptist Church Invercargill' is to be used on external Church communications in the first instance (unless not appropriate), and simply 'Central Baptist' thereafter.
- External communications should include at least one of the following to point people towards a source of more information: *Church web address, phone number, email address, physical address or link to social media*
- Any communications (both **internal** and **external**) that include the Central Baptist logo must be approved by the appropriate Ministry Leader or member of Staff before distribution. This provides an opportunity for fact-checking and ensuring the integrity of Church is maintained through all communication.
- Appropriate language, content and behaviour is to be maintained throughout all communications.

## Media Enquiries & Press Releases

- Requests for information from the media are to be directed to the appropriate Ministry Leader or Lead Pastor. No staff, leaders, elders or volunteers are to speak on behalf of the Church without receiving prior consent from the Lead Pastor.
- Only the Lead Pastor or the Chairperson of the elders can respond to media requests on behalf of Central Baptist Church Invercargill.
- Only the Lead Pastor or Chairperson of the elders can give permission to others to communicate with the media.
- Language used must remain positive, factual, professional and be sensitive to the privacy of others.
- When providing images or videos of people that will be accessed in the public domain, permission must have first been granted from the featured individuals or from the owner where rights are not owned by Central Baptist. The images/video used must be sensitive to the privacy of others and identifying information is not to be provided unless permission has been granted to do so.

## Church Website

Central Baptist has one website that represents all ministries. This is the main digital 'face' of the Church. Administrative access to the website is to be restricted to Ministry Leaders and others nominated by the Lead Pastor.

### CONDUCT

- The website should be viewed as the corporate platform to find information regarding the Church and ministries governed by the church. Content must be professional in nature and reflect the core values of the church.
- This is to be regularly maintained and out-of-date information is to be removed as soon as possible. Communications with a short expiry should be considered carefully before being included. Social media provides a better platform for timely information.
- Language used must remain positive where possible, factual, professional and be sensitive to the privacy of others.
- Permission must be granted from individuals featured in images or the owner where rights are not owned by Central Baptist. Visual media used must also be sensitive to the privacy of others.
- Initiatives that are not overseen by a Ministry Leader are not to be included on the website but can be shared through other more appropriate media.
- All requests for changes, corrections or additions to the website are to be directed to the church office and must have approval from the appropriate Ministry Leader or Lead Pastor.

## 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.
- Social media 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 those who are vulnerable.
- Any social media **group** must be a closed group overseen by the appropriate Ministry Leader and at least one other person either from staff, a leader, or a volunteer as administrators.
- Any Social Media **page** governed by the church must have a both a Ministry Leader and at least one other person either from staff, a leader, or a volunteer as administrators. This is for both accountability and practicality purposes.
- No new Social Media profiles/pages/groups may be created without prior approval from the Lead Pastor.

### CONTENT

- There is an expectation that the Central Baptist community will ensure that all comments concerning the church, its people, its practices and its purposes on social media are positive.
- Social media content must remain professional in nature but can be more informal and friendly as appropriate for each audience. For pages/profiles that are publicly accessible, posts should be worded in a way that makes sense to those who are not part of the church congregation. Content must reflect the core values of the church.
- Language used must remain positive, factual, professional and be sensitive to the privacy of others.
- Initiatives from other organisations can be shared on this platform if deemed to be beneficial to this wider audience. Links to outside initiatives or posts from other sources must be approved by the Lead Pastor or ministry leadership team prior to being shared.

- Permission must be granted from individuals featured in images or the creator of these images/videos where rights are not owned by Central Baptist. Visual media used must also be sensitive to the privacy of others.
- Administrators may reply to comments on the page/group, but only Ministry Leaders are to engage in discussion or make theological statements under the Central Baptist Church Invercargill profile.
- Administrators may remove posts, comments or photo tags they deem inappropriate or do not reflect the mission statement of our Church – ‘Love God, Love Others’ or is in breach of the above guidelines. Administrators may block someone who repeatedly writes inappropriate posts or comments.
- Interaction is encouraged. Disclaimer statement to be included:
  - *Please note that the views expressed on this page may not accurately represent the opinions of Central Baptist Church Invercargill. We reserve the right to remove posts at our discretion.*

## CONDUCT

- Safe boundaries in the use of social media must be recognised. Laws concerning reporting of suspected child abuse or exploitation of children, youth, elders and vulnerable adults apply with social media, just as they do in the physical world.
- Communications sent digitally are not confidential and potentially may be shared or reposted to others without an individual’s permission or knowledge.
- **Private/Direct Messages** from the main Central Baptist Church Invercargill Facebook page are only to be answered by a Ministry Leader.
- **Online gatherings** or meetings (via Zoom for example) are subject to the same rules and parameters as a meeting in ‘reality’.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH YOUNGER THAN 13 YEARS OF AGE

Many social media applications require users to be 13 years and above to create a profile. As such, communication through social media is not an acceptable form of communication between staff, leaders or volunteers at this age group, and will not be used.

- If children younger than 13 years of age have personal mobile numbers or email addresses, this information will not be collected or used.
- Any communication using Social Media for those younger than 13 years of age must go through a parent/caregiver of the child.
- Staff, leaders and volunteers will not communicate to children privately across any form of social media. Private communication between staff, leaders or volunteers and children younger than 13 years of age could result in disciplinary action.
- If a child younger than 13 years of age contacts a staff member, leader or volunteer using social media, they will not be responded to. Instead, the young person’s parent/caregiver will be notified and an explanation to the child that this is not an appropriate way to communicate with staff members, leaders or volunteers will be encouraged. If communication persists, methods of blocking incoming communication on the relevant platform could be implemented.
- Actions construed as grooming will not be tolerated and the police will be involved appropriately.

## YOUNG PEOPLE 13 TO 18 YEARS OF AGE

*These policies should also be considered when communicating with those with intellectual impairments and those who are vulnerable in other ways - emotionally, socially, intellectually, etc.*

- Interactions should be encouraged through a public forum (page or group) that is visible to parents/caregivers and maintains strong filters for content. If a member of staff, leader, volunteer or elder chooses to ‘friend’ a young (or vulnerable) person from their ministry through social media, they must ensure their posts and comments are always in-line with christian values.

- Private messages via social media to a young or vulnerable person must only be made during working hours or early evening - unless contacted for an urgent pastoral request. The appropriate Ministry Leader or Chairperson of elders can ask to see private messages between the staff member, leader or volunteer and young/vulnerable person if concerns have been expressed or a complaint has been made.
- Intentionally hidden or secret personal interaction between a member of staff, leader or volunteer and a young/vulnerable person is not appropriate and if the content or intent of the interaction is inappropriate, the staff member, Ministry Leader or volunteer will be suspended from that ministry.
- If a member of staff, leader or volunteer receives unwanted messages or comments from a person associated with Central Baptist, they should ask them to stop in the first instance. If unwanted contact continues, they are to consult with the appropriate Ministry Leader or Lead Pastor, then together go to the 'sender' and ask them to stop. If communications persist, methods of blocking incoming communication on the relevant platform will be executed. It is to be explained to the 'sender' that they have been blocked from communication with that member of staff, leader or volunteer.
- Actions construed as grooming will not be tolerated and the police will be involved appropriately.

## Images/Videos

Rights to images or videos used in **external** communications must belong to the church and therefore be free from copyright. Alternatively, permission to use the image/video must be obtained where rights are not owned by the church.

Individuals featured in the images/videos should also be asked their permission prior to initial use with purpose for use explained.

Extra care is needed when sharing images/videos of children and young people under the age of 18 and those who are more vulnerable. Permission needs to be sought directly from the parent/caregiver, with full explanation of the end use of the image/video.

The images/video used must be sensitive to the privacy of others and identifying information is not to be provided unless permission has been granted to do so.

## Internal Communications

- Promotional/informational material for **internal** communication is to include the Central Baptist 'LOVE GOD - LOVE OTHERS' logo.
- Internal communications can use the informal name **Central Baptist**, but no abbreviations.
- This material needs to include a point of contact for further information.
- Any communications (both **internal** and **external**) that include the Central Baptist logo must be approved by the appropriate Ministry Leader or member of Staff before distribution. This provides an opportunity for fact-checking and ensuring the integrity of the church is maintained through all communication.
- Appropriate language, content and behaviour will be maintained throughout all communications.

## Glossary of Terms

### *Core Values*

These can be found at [icbc.org.nz/meet-the-team-and-our-values](http://icbc.org.nz/meet-the-team-and-our-values)

### *Grooming*

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

*External Communications*

Communications both physical and virtual that are intended for and open to the wider community, not just the church such as the website, social media, newspaper articles or advertising, printed or digital advertising etc.

*Internal Communications*

Communications both physical and virtual that are intended for an audience within the church only.

*Ministry Team*

Lead Pastor; Associate Pastor; Children and Families Pastor; Youth and Young Adults Pastor and the Church Administrator

*Social media*

Web-based social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter etc), and mobile applications that enable interactive communication including instant messaging, texting, emailing, and video chatting.

*The Church*

Central Baptist Church Invercargill

*Vulnerable Person*

Someone with intellectual impairments or in a vulnerable state emotionally, socially etc.