

Media & Social Media Policy

Of Taupo Baptist Church

Taupo, New Zealand

Media

The Taupo Baptist Church Staff, Leaders & Volunteer's Policy concerning **Media** is as follows:

1. Only the Senior Pastor and the Chairperson of the Elders can communicate with Media on behalf of Taupo Baptist Church. The Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the Elders can give permission to others to communicate with the Media. All statements to the Media must be approved by the Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the Elders.
2. All Staff, Leaders and Volunteers at Taupo 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.
3. Always gain specific permission when using images, photos or video of people with public access - such as newspapers, Youtube, the Church Website.

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.

The Taupo 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. Social Media contact between Staff, Leaders & Volunteers and children 12 years old & younger is only allowed through technology and applications owned/managed by their parents/caregivers while their parents/caregivers are present and with their permission.
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. To respect parents & caregivers rights to choose when their children & young people have access to their own cellular technology, 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 in any way.
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 should be notified and it should be explained to the child that Social Media is not an appropriate way to communicate with Staff members, Leaders and/or Volunteers. If the communication persists, there are methods of blocking incoming communications in most forms of Social Media.
5. Staff, Leaders & 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.

The Taupo Baptist Church Staff, Leadership & Volunteer's Policy concerning **Social Media with those 13 years old & older** is as follows:

1. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers must have the permission from the appropriate Ministry Leader to engage with young people using Social Media. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers should also consider the appropriateness of using Social Media when communicating with those who are vulnerable - emotionally, socially, intellectually, etc.
2. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers will not share images, pictures or video of young people (13-17 years old) & those who are vulnerable in publically accessible forms of Social Media, like Youtube or public Facebook pages. SEE MEDIA POLICY #3
3. Staff, Leaders & Volunteers need to exercise caution when private messaging (text message & private messaging on Facebook, etc.) and young people (13-17 years old) & those who are vulnerable. They must seek to communicate appropriately and with respect. The appropriate Ministry Leader & Elder can ask to see private messages between Staff, Leaders & Volunteers and young people (13-17 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 (13-17 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 Senior Leader, 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 on another.

Matthew 18:15-17 ¹⁵ "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

6. Church Ministry Group Social Media pages for young people 13 years old and older will be closed, not open to public access. Permission can be requested to join the group. Ministry Leaders (or Elders) must have administrative rights for Group Social Media sites attached to Ministries of Taupo Baptist Church. It is recommended that all Ministry Social Media pages and sites are closed to public access as well, especially if they have open commenting or posting settings. If a Ministry Social Media page or site is set to open, the appropriate Ministry Leader must be regularly overseeing the comments and posts to ensure their appropriateness.