

POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Policy statement

Information technology and social media have an increasingly significant part to play in GBM life. In order to ensure the safety of members and the integrity of GBM, GBM is committed to ensuring that all volunteers are advised in the safe use of IT and social media. GBM acknowledges the popularity, opportunities and hazards of the internet and social networking sites as a common form of communication and information gathering today. Inevitably, information technology and social media have an increasingly significant part to play in GBM life. GBM volunteers are in a position of trust among children and young people and the relational approach to our work means that we have contact with young people on a GBM evening and, at times, beyond. GBM is committed to modelling and practicing positive relationships and communications that value, nurture and protect children and young people through open, accountable and safe practices and in a way that reflects our Christian ethos.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are provided to assist leaders in the responsible use of IT and social media.

Use of pictures and videos:

- Pictures of GBM members under 18 years of age may only be taken for personal or publicity purposes if parental consent has been received. This may be sought using the *Annual Consent Form*, which should be kept indefinitely – see the data protection policy section on Page 29
- Pictures of young people should only be taken if a second adult is present
- The content of pictures should be considered for good taste e.g. all children and young people featured in photos or recordings must be appropriately dressed and, where possible, group photos are preferable to individual shots
- Care should be taken when identifying children and young people (under 18 years) by name in publications. It's good practice to avoid using surnames but if the full name is to be printed then parental consent will need to be obtained
- No personal details such as email or postal addresses, telephone or mobile numbers should be revealed. Addresses should never be given out and care should be taken to avoid pictures clearly showing where the young people come from (e.g. easily read group names)
- Parents of children may use cameras to take photos of their own children at GBM events but should be advised that these are for personal use and that if other children appear in the pictures they shouldn't be displayed in any publicly accessible space, including the internet or any web-based site
- Some churches require their groups to follow conventions such as only taking photos on a specified camera and keeping any images in a locked, secure place. Local groups should ensure that they comply with their local church policies. If the local church doesn't have a policy then they should ensure that they comply with the GBM policy.



GBM websites and Facebook pages (for publicity purposes only):

- It's the policy of GBM to safeguard the welfare of all members by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. It's essential that anyone creating a website follows a few simple guidelines designed to ensure the personal safety of children and young people. GBM doesn't want any sites to be used as a method for people with wrong intentions to develop contacts with children
- All guidance relating to the use of pictures and videos also applies to images on a website
- Don't use copyrighted information or graphics from other websites instead use royalty free images or your own digital photographs
- Be aware that libel laws affect all forms of written media including information on websites and social media. Any statement may be libellous if it's defamatory of anyone i.e. if it tends to a) expose them to hatred, ridicule or contempt; b) cause them to be shunned or avoided; c) lower them in the estimation of right-thinking members of society generally; or d) disparage them in their business, trade, office or profession
- Always use the official registered GBM logo or GB crest and logo, unaltered e.g. no change of colours, font or wording. If re-sized, maintain the proportion of the logo so that it's not distorted in any way. The GB crest and logo can be downloaded from the GB leaders' online resource base
- Ensure all information is up-to-date and consider the tone of language and vocabulary being used. Ensure your content is:
 - o **Relational** – engaging with the audience in a warm and friendly manner
 - o **Relevant** – can be understood by those visiting the site
 - o **Responsive** – meeting the needs of/telling the audience what they need to know.

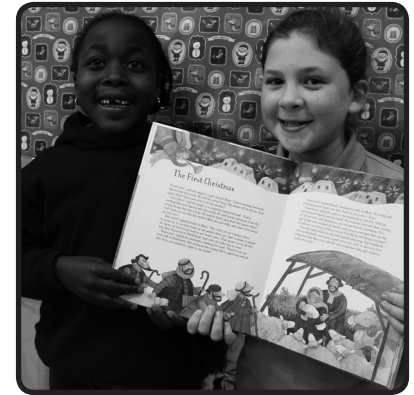
Social media:

Although it's GBM's practice not to make one-on-one connections with young people through social media it's acknowledged that this is a useful communication tool. It's expected that each group will find its own way of using social media to communicate within the law and in a way that is a positive, safe experience for all members of the GBM group.

The following guidelines relate to the use of Facebook and are made, therefore, to ensure safe practice.

GBM expects that leaders and young people involved in GBM communicate on Facebook via a corporate account, not through personal, individual accounts. This can be achieved by applying the following principles:

- Set up a group/district group Facebook account to make connections with young people (under 18s) thus avoiding inappropriate one-to-one interactions through private social media/Facebook accounts
- Apply a 'closed' or 'secret' group setting when you set up and maintain your group. This will keep all content outside the public domain
- Ensure that one (or more) trained volunteers (18+) act/s as administrator/s for the GBM Facebook group taking responsibility for approving new members to the group
- Post all information – news, events, information and reminders on the wall, thus avoiding inappropriate one-to-one private/inbox messages
- Keep up-to-date with Facebook/social media policies e.g. age, privacy settings etc., noting that at present Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat require all users to be over the age of 13 years



- The administrator should be responsible for the addition of photographs (following the above guidelines for good practice) and additionally ensuring that no picture is ‘tagged’ or used as a personal profile picture
- Be aware that even though volunteers’ private social media accounts are not used for one-to-one connection with GBM members, they may be open to public view. Ensure that what is seen or read reflects the values and ethos that volunteers in GBM profess
- To engage the group in good practice, involve the young people in creating a positive code of conduct relating to behaviour, purpose, management, setting, monitoring and use of the site.

Mobile phones, texting and email communication:

Mobile phones may make a positive contribution to the safety and welfare of young people and workers, particularly when an emergency occurs. However, there are clear good practice and child protection issues in relation to the appropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic forms of communication:

- Volunteers should only use a designated GBM phone to contact young people and should not give out their personal/private number(s) or email addresses
- Group texts or group emails may be used to communicate information about programmes or activities related to the group; always include another adult in the distribution list and ensure that you have specific consent to contact young people and people in this manner – see the data protection policy section on Page 29
- Ensure that the language used is clear and appropriate and cannot be misinterpreted e.g. never use terms such as ‘love’ or ‘xxx’ to end messages
- Be aware of the time when texts or messages are sent and avoid communicating early in the morning or late at night
- Generally avoid contacting individual young people by phone, text or email. If necessary this should only be undertaken with parental/guardian knowledge or consent
- Texts and email communications should be saved and not deleted
- Make sure images, if sent, are appropriate and that any hyperlinks do not lead to inappropriate content
- The use of mobile phones for photography and video should be subject to the guidelines on the use of photography and digital images. Parental consent is required to use mobile phones for these purposes and for any subsequent reproduction of recorded digital images
- Making/taking phone calls or sending and receiving text during a session is discouraged as it compromises the volunteers’ ability to supervise effectively.

Internet use:

- The internet may be used with members to support group activities
- Volunteers should be familiar with both the opportunities and the dangers of the web
- Ensure the computer is loaded with up-to-date internet security that includes anti-virus and anti-spam software
- Members accessing the internet during GBM activities should be supervised so that volunteers have sight of the screen at all times
- When using a website as part of the group’s activities check before hand to ensure that the material being accessed is appropriate for the age group taking part
- If children and young people are given access to undertake their own searches on the internet use search engines which have been recommended by the DfE.

