

Romsey Baptist Church

Social Media Policy

Date	Version	Review Date	Approved
January 2020	1	March 2021	

Social media is defined as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Applications such as Facebook and Instagram enable churches to engage with the church and wider communities. While these tools can be extremely effective in showing the loving nature of the church, this has to be done with careful consideration to avoid the risk of:

- Making offensive, sexual, suggestive or politically biased comments
- Bullying and harassment, both to external people and also to those within RBC
- Grooming and impersonation
- The formation of inappropriate relationships
- Breaching the Romsey Baptist Church safeguarding and Data Protection policies
- Blurring the boundaries between the public view of the church and the private life of the administrators

For Romsey Baptist Church, overall responsibility for the use of social media and compliance with this policy lies with the Minister, or their chosen and approved delegate. Approval for a delegate is to be approved by the Leadership Team.

Purpose and uses

For Romsey Baptist Church (RBC), social media is a way of highlighting the future events that are going on in the church, as well as sharing things that already have happened. While the content on the platforms will be beneficial to current attendees and members, it will also be a useful way of reaching out to the wider community, to draw people in and to share the church's messages. Fundamentally, the use of social media is for the external engagement not for internal benefit.

Facebook will predominantly be used to advertise what is to come while Instagram is to be predominantly used to showcase what has occurred. The church can use these platforms to encourage a sense of community, as well as act as a form of evangelism to draw people

closer to encounter Jesus. The use of these platforms is to promote the church vision (loving, striving, serving) and thus everything posted should be grounded in this.

A non-exhaustive list of possible posts:

- **Morning and evening services** - the person preaching that morning, service theme, part of the church (always include service time)
- **Special services** - Communion, Unite, Prayer evenings, Baptisms, Dedications, Christmas events, Easter, Harvest, Guest speakers, Traditional service
- **Verse of the week** - quote image, small bit of writing about the verse
- **Recurring activities** - Community cafe, Godzone, Toddlers, Wave, Girls Brigade, House groups, Thursday Fellowship, Youth club
- **Special events** - Light party, Late night shopping, Church BBQ, charity events, Holiday Club, Soul Survivor (summer festivals), Youth weekend away, Say one for me

Rules - For the administrators

- Uphold safeguarding policies to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Familiarise oneself with the Romsey Baptist Church Safeguarding Policy (linked at the bottom of this document) and refer to said policy if any questions or concerns arise. If an issue arises it must be raised to the safeguard lead.
- To maintain accountability, ensure that there are multiple administrators (preferably one being the minister). Before posting content, the post must be approved by at least two administrators.
- Administrators will be chosen, and approved, by the Leadership Team. A review of the administrators should be undertaken periodically to ensure the most appropriate individuals are responsible for the social media platforms held by Romsey Baptist Church
- Content can only be uploaded to the platforms by an approved administrator (See Appendix A). Any material not uploaded by an administrator will be removed (no matter its intentions, authenticity or appropriateness) and should be submitted to administrators following the correct process
- Comply with the Data Protection Act. Before any identifiable pictures of people are taken/used/posted you must acquire written permission according to RBC's Data Protection policy (linked at the bottom of this document).
- Written consent must be obtained from the subject (or parent/guardian of individuals under 18 years of age), prior to any personal information being posted. This includes (but is not limited to).
 - Any photograph showing a face.
 - Name.
 - Address.
 - Email/phone number etc.
 - Age
- The Minister, or their delegate, is responsible for the retention of the written consent.
- Consistently uphold the highest levels of integrity, transparency and confidentiality. Always interact with a benevolent manner, remembering that the content on these

profiles is permanent and that the administrators represent both RBC and the Christian faith.

- Always use clear and unambiguous language to avoid any miscommunication.
- Keep personal accounts distinctly separate from the church's public account.
- Familiarise yourself with the Baptist Together social media guidelines (linked at the bottom of this document).
- Keep a record of all negative or hateful interactions and relay all information back to the other named administrators.
- Never allow content, or shared links to other sites, that contain: offensive, sexual, suggestive or politically biased comments, bullying or harassment, breaches of copyright and data protection.
- Avoid replying hastily. Think carefully before replying, and look for others for advice if necessary. Respond with kindness and grace to all reasonable comments, although never interact with people who are being deliberately hateful. In this case, keep a record of the comment but delete it from public view.
- Don't respond to children or young people one on one.
- Ensure that the media that you are using is within copyright rules, and preferably, as much as possible, use images taken by members of the congregation
- Avoid posting misleading information or images. Make sure that your content accurately represents the church in reality.
- While high engagement is not the most important thing to focus upon, it is good to consider. If you are posting important content there are certain times in the week that make it more likely for higher numbers of people to view your post. For instance, midday weekdays, specifically 11:00-15:00 on a Wednesday have been seen to increase social engagement, more so than posting on Sunday afternoons.
- Consistency and quality are both key in the profiles being successful in sharing the desired messages. You should be posting no less than once a week, and preferably more, once the profiles have been made public.
- In regards to Instagram in particular, hashtags are very important. These are a useful tool to organise and promote certain themes relating to each individual post. For example all posts that contain the hashtag #lovingchurch are all filtered into the same place. This means that people who have interests in these certain areas may be drawn to your posts. It is advised to use around 4-5 on each post so that they are effective.

Current Social Media Profiles (November 2019)

Instagram: @romseybaptistchurchuk

Profile Picture: 110px X 110px

Facebook: Romsey Baptist Church

Profile Picture: 600px X 600px

Cover Photo: 820px X 312px

Links:

Church Website: romseybaptist.church

Church Safeguarding and Church Data Protection Policy can be found on the church website here: <http://www.romseybaptist.church/c5/about-us/policies-docs>

Baptists Together Social Media Guidelines: (scroll down to download the document)
https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220739/Social_Media.aspx

Appendix A: Uploading Process

