**Kempston East Methodsit Church – Social Media Policy**

We believe that a healthy Christian community is a safe place of mutual care, where all people feel valued, loved and respected.

This policy for engaging on social media on behalf of Kempston East reflects those values. Our fervent hope is that individuals who are members of, or otherwise associated with, the Church will reflect these same values when engaging on social media on their own behalf.

The policy applies to all content and comments posted to Kempston East Methodist Church social media channels.

**Why do we use social media?**

We believe that the use of social media tools offers a means of extending our engagement with people inside and outside the church. This includes:

* sharing our stories;
* engaging in conversations ‘where people are’;
* sharing, learning and encouraging;
* reaching those who cannot physically attend church; and
* forming and deepening relationships locally and globally.

**The principles we will apply.**

1. **We will always consider the safety of ourselves and others**

Everyone’s safety is important, but the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults especially must be maintained. We will follow the [Children and Youth social media and communications guidance for churches](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/17148/children-and-youth-social-media-guidance-060520.pdf). We will report all safeguarding concerns as they arise.

We acknowledge that conversation on social media can sometimes develop into heated and pointless argument. We will strive always to be aware of the effect on ourselves and will not feel we always need to engage.

When disengaging, we will strive to ‘sign off’ from a heated conversation in a calm manner, using phrases like ‘I think we’ll have to agree to disagree. Peace.’

1. **We will be respectful**

We will not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, discriminatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful. We will aim always to consider the effect on others who may see what we post.

1. **We will be transparent**

We won’t mislead people about who we are, or use pseudonyms that hide our identity as Kempston East Methodist Church.

1. **When we disagree, we will do so with love**

When we need to make a criticism, we will consider carefully the tone of what we write. If we are personally attacked, we will not respond in kind: being a Christian means we will turn the other cheek. But being a Christian also means that sometimes we must and will speak out and challenge injustice and discrimination. When we need to point out something we think is wrong, we will seek to remember that there is a real, and possibly vulnerable, person at the receiving end of what we say.

1. **We will take care when sharing content**

We will ‘count to ten’ before sharing and won’t share in haste. We will always read linked content thoroughly, or watch a video to the end, so we know exactly what we are sharing, before judging whether it is suitable to share.

1. **We will maintain confidentiality, applying the same principles we use in considering the use of personal data generally**

If telling a story about someone else, we will ask ourselves first ‘Is this my story to tell?’  We will not reveal personal details about others without their explicit consent.

1. **We will act on our responsibilities**

If we deem comments (or other content) that are posted to Kempston East Methodist Church social media  accounts or pages to be unsuitable or offensive, we will take action that may include hiding, deleting or reporting comments, or blocking users.

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