



Shoreham Baptist Church, Western Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex BN43 5WD
t: 01273 965407 e: office.sbc1880@gmail.com f: @shorehambaptistchurch
w: shorehambaptist.co.uk

Shoreham Baptist Church Social Media Policy

Introduction

Shoreham Baptist Church acknowledges that social media is increasing in use and influence on many people's lives. When used responsibly, social media and the internet have many benefits for the Church including building contacts with people, gaining and sharing information about church services, activities and events, and spreading the gospel.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide trustees, church employees, staff, group leaders and volunteers when social media tools are used on behalf of Shoreham Baptist Church or when Shoreham Baptist Church becomes part of a social media dialogue.

The trustees of Shoreham Baptist Church are the Elders, including the pastor, and the Deacons.

Where do these guidelines apply

This policy applies to all online and mobile platforms for sharing content and information, whether hosted by Shoreham Baptist Church or hosted on behalf of them. "Social media" refers to social networking services, short-message services, emails, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image/video sharing sites and other methods for sharing real time information among users. Due to the ever-changing speed of social media, this policy applies to all new social media platforms, whether or not they are mentioned. All social media platforms are relevant and included.

The person responsible for the monitoring the church's use of social media and for annually reviewing this social media policy are:

Administrator Ian Stainsby for the trustees.

Social Media Tips

Be selective. There are a variety of digital platforms available. Use the right medium for the message. For example, don't use a Facebook post to communicate sensitive or private information.

Be smart. A blog, community post, or social media post is often visible to the entire public and may be shared by others in various ways that cannot be controlled at any level. Be extremely wise with all content posted.

Use grace. Always use Biblical wisdom when utilizing social media. For example, if someone has offended you, consider speaking with them privately on the matter. Do not post offence responses publicly.

Ask first. In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for how members of our community should answer social media questions, please check with Shoreham Baptist Church's Pastor and Elders before speaking as a representative of the church.

For further guidance, consult the Baptist Union Guide to Cyber Safety found at [BUGB Guide to Cyber Safety](#) .

Use of social media

Shoreham Baptist Church's Social Media policy should be used in conjunction with the Data Protection Policy, Equal Opportunities Employment Policy and Safeguarding policy. Shoreham Baptist's Safeguarding Policy can be found here [Safeguarding Policy](#).

All Shoreham Baptist Church's policies can be found on: www.shorehambaptist.co.uk.

Breach of policy

Should someone employed by the church (e.g. Pastor, other employed person(s)) misuse the Shoreham Baptist Church's social media resources in ways that violate the law, this policy or other church policies, the person will be subject to immediate disciplinary action and or dismissal in accordance with the terms of their contract.

Should an Elder, Deacon, church staff, group leader or volunteer misuse the Shoreham Baptist Church's social media resources in ways that violate the law, this policy or other church policies, the person will be subject to immediate disciplinary action.

In either case this may include:

- Removing or deleting the offending content.
- Putting in place corrective measures to prevent future breaches.
- Making a report to the police or to the Charity Commission (risk of harm) or the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if needed.
- Removal of the role or responsibility from the person causing the breach.
- A written record will be kept of the breach, person/s involved, how decisions were made, resulting action and any other relevant information.

The trustees are responsible for addressing any breach of the Social Media policy.

Guidelines

Trustees, church employees, staff, group leaders and volunteers who are using social media to publish Shoreham Baptist Church activities must first sign a social media application and agreement register (see appendix) as well as attending in-house social media training.

Social media postings should never disclose sensitive or confidential information. This includes but is not limited to personal or medical information.

Please refrain from posting photos of individuals or identifying those individuals on Shoreham Baptist Church's social media pages without their written consent prior to posting. Written consent can be submitted via email. All persons posting on behalf of the church are responsible for disabling the "tagging" feature of photos posted on the ministry's page. If the photos reference a location, that information must be deleted as well.

If a church service or other church event is 'Live Streamed' or recorded, then attendees shall be informed and, if concerned, advised of locations out of range of the cameras. For further guidance see Shoreham Baptist Church Safeguarding Policy and the BU Guidelines on 'Live Streaming' here: - [Recording and Live Streaming Services and Events: Safeguarding Guidance](#)

Copyright and Fair Use Laws must be respected at all times. Feel free to point or link to another individual's site but do not post or blog about it as if it is your own content.

If any posted material concerning Shoreham Baptist Church seems to breach safeguarding guidelines (e.g. child or vulnerable adult abuse, etc.), the person should contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding and follow the Procedure for Recognising, Responding and Reporting Abuse (2.1) as given in the Safeguarding Policy.

Bullying online and on social media is as serious as physical in person bullying; there is no "safe place" and the emotional impact of online bullying can be significant as a result. With this in mind, the same procedures apply to disclosures of online bullying as in person incidents.

The Online Safety Bill, 2021, introduces new rules for internet search engines and firms who host user-generated content, see the Safeguarding Policy p.7; 3.4.1.

To promote cyber safety and data security, all church computers must be logged out when not in use by a church worker. (Safeguarding Policy 3.2.7)

When communicating with youth via social media, trustees, church employees, staff, group leaders and volunteers must adhere to Shoreham Baptist Church's Safeguarding Policy (3.1.8 Digital Communication with Young People). Additionally, all those serving in the children and youth ministries must keep their professional image in mind at all times. Online conduct, comments, behaviour, etc. affects this image. Shoreham Baptist Church discourages trustees, church employees, staff, group leaders and volunteers from accepting invitations to "friend" youth group members within personal networking sites. Social contact outside the Shoreham Baptist Church's youth page may create serious risks for the ministry workers and negatively alter the relationship between a youth leader and a student. For further guidance, see the [BU Safeguarding home pages](#) – Using social media to engage and communicate with young people within the church and the [BU Guide to Cyber Safety](#).

Shoreham Baptist Church does not monitor individuals personal social or professional social media accounts. Any person posting on any social media platform is solely responsible for the content they publish online, including content from their own social media pages. It must be absolutely clear that all posts reflect their own views and do not reflect Shoreham Baptist Church views.

As trustees, church employees, staff, group leaders and volunteers of Shoreham Baptist Church, remember that your online presence and posts can have the potential to affect the ministry of Shoreham Baptist Church. For this reason, it is imperative that you conduct your online interactions

in accordance with the policies and guidelines named in this policy, and Shoreham Baptist Church's Statement of Faith. If you have any questions in this area, inquire with the Pastor and Elders for clarity.

When in doubt, be positive! Whether someone has posted something mean, rude or distasteful, be gracious.

In the event of a crisis, contact church Pastor or Elders prior to responding to any posting or comments relating to the crisis. Only the Pastor, Elders or a Designated Trustee may speak on behalf of the church.

Public relations guidelines

Church communications must not be used for partisan political messages or paid advertising.

Shoreham Baptist Church may designate one or two church members to facilitate all external communication channels on behalf of the Church. Only authorized members such as the Pastor(s), Elders and Designated Trustee may coordinate communications with members of the media on behalf of Shoreham Baptist Church.

Any external communication from the Shoreham Baptist Church office regarding serious or unexpected incidents must be approved by the Pastor(s) and church Elders and follow Shoreham Baptist Church's guidelines after seeking advice from the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Always use Shoreham Baptist Church's official name and logo. These branding items must be approved prior to official use.

Complaints procedure

Complaints should be addressed in writing to the Elders and Deacons stating the issue clearly and the date of occurrence.

If this is relating to safeguarding then the safeguarding procedures must be followed.

If not, the deacons should follow up as necessary to gather the correct facts relating to the issue.

The deacons should respond within five weeks in writing. However, action may need to be taken more quickly than this.

A record should be kept of the issue.

Appendix: Shoreham-by-Sea Baptist Church Social Media Policy

Application and agreement register

I hereby agree that I have read, understood and will abide by the Shoreham-by-Sea Baptist Church Social Media Policy:

Name	Address	Date	Signature

Pastor:

Elders: David Rollings, John Lillywhite, Andy Lincoln

Treasurer: Denise Edwards

Registered Charity no: 1148191