



The Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade

Social Media, Electronic & Written Communications Policy

25 November 2023



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Keeping members and leaders safe within the world of electronic communication, social media is of paramount importance along with the Written word. This policy looks at four very different, but related areas:
- Social Media
 - Mobile Phone usage whilst engaging with members
 - Electronic communication and data protection
 - Written documentation
- 1.2 The policy has been designed to focus on employed staff as well as volunteers working for the CLCGB. The first section will be used to create a handy leaflet to be circulated to all members and volunteers in order that they can gain a better understanding of how to keep themselves and their members safe.

2. Social Media

2.1 Social networking offers a world of possibilities to the Church Lads' & Church Girls' Brigade (CLCGB). Many young people in the CLCGB are already users of sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. However, it is essential to ensure that you keep both yourself and young people safe online and, as a leader or helper in the CLCGB, you have a key role to play in actively promoting these safety messages.

2.2 General Information

The following has been designed to give volunteers of the CLCGB clear guidelines as to what the CLCGB expect of them when accessing these sites. The absence of, or lack of, explicit reference to a specific website or service does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. Where no policy or guidelines exist, volunteers should use their judgment and take the most prudent action possible. Consult with your Officer in Charge or National Headquarters if you are uncertain.

2.3 A common-sense approach

While social network profiles are easy to set up and use, it is important that you keep a professional distance online, just as you would in the 'offline' world.

Think carefully about how any digital communication might appear to a third party compared with a conversation in the real world, technology increases the potential for messages to be seen out of context, misinterpreted or forwarded to others. The use of sarcasm and innuendo are not appropriate and it is essential to remember that you are in a position of trust.



If you have a website or have set up a social networking site for your CLCGB Company, bear in mind that once you place something there, it is in the public domain, which means people can access it, change it and share it with others.

2.4 Guidance for CLCGB Volunteers

- Remember you are in a position of trust as a volunteer.
- Remember that some sites have an age restriction (i.e. Facebook has a minimum age of 13 years)
- Conduct yourself in an appropriate way as you would face to face - be aware of what you say and how you say it.
- Don't engage in one-to-one conversations with young people via chat facilities or instant messaging - this is the same as going into a private room with a young person and closing the door.
- Do not become 'friends' with members under 18-years of age on any social media portal, this excludes family and close family friends under 18-years of age.
- Do not provide personal details about young people on your website or social networking group (this includes school name, email address, ID, etc).
- Always ensure you have parental permission to use any photos of young people and only use their first names on any caption.
- Only use appropriate photos on your site, the sort that you would be happy putting on a public notice board - remember that everyone can view them.
- If you are concerned about the way a young person is attempting to contact you, report it immediately to your Officer in Charge.
- If you need to email or text young people, always copy the message to another adult from your Group or Unit and if sending emails to groups of people use the 'BCC' facility to avoid sharing e-mail addresses.
- Don't use your personal social networking account to communicate with young people.
- Monitor places where interaction occurs including walls, discussions boards, comments on photos, tagging of pictures and 'Group' or 'Fan Pages'.
- Only set up pages for events, activities or groups for which you are responsible
- If you sign yourself up to social networking sites you need to be aware that content is speedily updated. Photos can be tagged and posted on your account.
- Use separate profiles and communication routes for email or social networking to keep contact with any young people in the CLCGB and your private life separate.
- All direct communications with members must have prior signed consent (via the membership form) of parents/guardians. Any social media communication groups must include multiple Safeguarded leaders.
- If in doubt always check with your officer in charge.



2.5 Safety for young people

Most children and young people assume they are safe when using the internet because they are in their own home. They will usually assume that the person they are chatting with is who they say they are and will put trust in that person. There is the potential for misuse, risks associated with user interactive services include: cyber bullying, grooming, and abuse by online predators, identity theft and exposure to inappropriate content including self-harm, racist, hate and pornography.

The only way to protect young people is to teach them to understand the online environment – including the risks it poses – so that they can learn to stay safe themselves. This is even more important now that the internet is available on many mobile phones and tablet devices.

2.6 It's a good idea to share this basic advice with our young people:

- Never give out personal information to online friends. This includes an instant messaging ID, email address, mobile number, school name and any pictures of you, your family and friends.
- If something is published online, anyone can access it, change it or share it with others. Keep social network profiles private.
- Use webcams with caution and only with family and friends who are already known in the real world, as images can be copied, changed and shared.
- Do not post inappropriate images of yourself online which send out the wrong impression and make you vulnerable.
- Do not use bad language online, use the same language you would use in front of children, so as not to cause offence or set a bad example.
- Remember that online friends are just that and if they are not known to you in the real world, they may be lying about who they are.
- Children and young people should never meet up with a person they have met online, unless they take a trusted adult with them.
- Think before opening files from people you do not know in the real world. They may contain anything from a virus, spam emails to an inappropriate image or film and should be deleted.
- Know how to block someone online (guidance will be available under the downloads section of the website for the most popular social media sites).
- If you suspect someone of acting suspiciously towards any of the young people we have responsibility for ensure that the Officer in Charge or the CLCGB National Safeguarding Officer is made aware.

3. Mobile Phones

- 3.1 This part of the policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on any site during contact time with members. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.



- 3.2 A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a supportive environment, where all work as a team, have high values and respect each other; therefore creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.
- 3.3 The aim is therefore that everyone:
- has a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
 - knows how to minimise risk.
 - avoids putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
 - understands the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
 - is responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.
 - is aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.
- 3.4 It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:
- 3.5 Personal Mobiles – Staff/Volunteers
- Staff/volunteers should not make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children
 - Staff/volunteers should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight during contact time
 - Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present
 - Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present
 - It is also advised that staff/volunteers security protect access to functions of their phone.
 - Staff/volunteers are not advised to use recording equipment on their personal mobile phones or audio visual equipment, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using CLCGB equipment such as cameras and ipads.
 - Staff/volunteers should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the senior officer/line manager.
- 3.6 Personal Mobiles - Members
- Mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping members to feel safe and secure. However we also recognise that they can prove a distraction and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Members should refrain from using their mobile phones during activities and leaders will encourage this behaviour. Where mobile phones are used in or out of CLCGB to bully or intimidate others, then the CLCGB does have the power to intervene.



3.7 Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at CLCGB, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times. We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst at CLCGB is *courteous* and *appropriate* to the environment. We also allow parents to photograph or video events such as shows or sports competitions using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.**

4. Electronic Communications

- 4.1 The part of the policy aims to encourage all staff, trustee and volunteers to use electronic communication systems in an effective and appropriate way. It covers the use of electronic communication systems and equipment including data sharing portals and email systems for both charity and private purposes. This includes all systems and equipment capable of electronically transmitting data via any means, including computer software, hardware and printers, electronic mail, Internet, voicemail and telephones (this list is not exhaustive).
- 4.2 The CLCGB is committed to its value of openness and will provide staff with access to a variety of electronic communication systems for the operation of daily business. The CLCGB protects the professional integrity of its communications and will therefore reserve the right to intercept or monitor the use of e-mail, internet access, social media threads and telephone calls, from time to time for the following reasons:-
- To establish whether use of the email system and internet is legitimate and in accordance with this policy
 - To establish the existence of facts and circumstances
 - For quality control and staff training purposes
 - For operational purposes such as protecting against viruses or misdirection of emails
 - To investigate or detect unauthorised use
 - For the prevention or detection of crime
 - To gain access to routine business communications if an individual is absent
 - To raise awareness of the potential personal and commercial risks of using these systems and ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities.
- 4.3 All electronic communication systems and any stored information is the property of the CLCGB. Any material on these systems should not be considered as private. The CLCGB has access to, and reserves the right to retrieve and review, information on any system, including information that the worker has protected by password. Erased or deleted material may remain available for retrieval and review.



- 4.4 Excessive personal use within the working day or inappropriate use of any of CLCGB's electronic communication methods could lead to disciplinary action. If CLCGB data is accessed via an individual's own pc or smartphone device, individuals must be mindful that the data remains the property of the charity and all aspects of this policy apply.
- 4.5 The CLCGB will educate all new staff on the content of this policy. Any worker found to have acted in contravention of this policy may have their contract with the CLCGB terminated. Staff should be aware that the content of their CLCGB e-mail messages reflects the image and professional delivery of the charity and they must behave in a responsible manner when undertaking communication of this nature. In extreme instances inappropriate communication can have legal implications.
- 4.6 **Acceptable Use and Behaviour**
The CLCGB provides staff with access to a variety of information technology systems and electronic communication media for the operation of business. It must be used in a responsible manner. Personal use is permitted but should not be excessive and must not impact on normal operations. Personal usage is undertaken at the staff's own risk of liability. Personal use during the working day will be monitored. Any inappropriate material received by mistake, which may cause offence to others, must be deleted immediately and its receipt reported to a Line Manager. Under no circumstances should inappropriate material be passed on to any other system user.
- 4.7 The purchase of goods and services for personal use may only be undertaken with personal credit cards, and is undertaken at an individuals own risk. Purchases should only be made from sites that show the recognised symbol for a secure internet shopping site as identified by a padlock in the status bar. Personal purchases should only be made outside working hours.

Acceptable Use	
Entertainment	Sites that provide information about cinema, non-news radio and TV, books.
News	Sites that cover 'real time' news
Sport	Sites that provide information on or promote sport, active games and recreation
Legal and Consumer advice	Sites that provide legal and consumer information e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau
Online Banking	Note; staff are reminded that this activity is undertaken at their own risk
Society and Lifestyles	Sites that provide information on matters of daily life e.g. restaurants and hotels
Travel	Sites that provide information on or promote travel-related services, including those that support online purchase or reservations
Education	Sites that discuss or provide information on educational material
Health	Sites that provide information or advice on personal health or medical services, but not drugs. Includes self help groups
Shopping	Most shopping sites are available for individuals to access and use. However, individuals are reminded that purchases may only be made with personal credit cards and such activity is undertaken at the individual's own risk.



Social Media	Sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn (but excluding Web Chat services which are included in the Unacceptable Use and Behaviour list shown below)
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4.8 Unacceptable Use and Behaviour

Creating, accessing or attempting to access any materials which are alleged or may be considered to be defamatory, derogatory, obscene, discriminatory, in bad taste, immoral or in any way inappropriate may constitute gross misconduct, the penalty for which may be dismissal. The definition of 'inappropriate material' includes any material which may be potentially offensive to others. A more detailed explanation is contained within this policy.

- 4.9 To protect the security of the system no worker may use an access code or password to access a file or retrieve any stored communication in another person's area of the system. If staff pass user id's and/or passwords to any other person this exposes them to potential misuse of their details. This may also breach Data Protection laws.
- 4.10 Due to the potential incompatibility between systems and exposure to viruses, any hardware or software not purchased or approved for use by the CLCGB must not be used.
- 4.11 All staff are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of material on all systems and may not remove from the premises any hardware, software, files or data unless expressly for business purposes. Removal for any other reason requires appropriate authorisation from the appropriate Line Manager.
- 4.12 Laptop users who access the system remotely are responsible for any activity by family members or others who may utilise the system with or without their prior knowledge.
- 4.13 The introduction of games to the CLCGB system from the Internet carries the largest potential for the transmission of viruses and the charity must protect core data as a priority. Therefore, the loading or playing of games not already included in the system set up is forbidden. The loading of screen savers and wallpaper from any outside source is also forbidden. Only screensavers and wallpaper contained within the system set up can be used.
- 4.14 Staff must not encourage or promote activities which make unproductive use of their time, for example engaging in provocative e-mail exchanges which could escalate and become offensive.
- 4.15 Staff must not post any inappropriate material or, participate in any internet chat room, post messages on any internet message board or set up or log text information on a blog, even in their own time, where this is related to the CLCGB, unless approved for business reasons by their Line Manager.



4.16 Staff must not download email text, music or other internet content which consists of copyright works, unless certain that the owner of such works allows this.

Unacceptable or Inappropriate Use	
Sexually explicit adult material	Sites featuring full or partial nudity, sexually orientated context, sexual paraphernalia, and sexual matters falling short of pornographic.
Racist material or language	Sites that promote the identification of racial groups or the superiority of any group.
Games	Sites that provide information or promote electronic, video and computer games or support or host on-line games, including sweepstakes and give-aways.
Cartoons, Jokes	Sites that provide/promote cartoons or jokes that may cause offence to others.
IT Hacking	Sites that provide information on or promote illegal or questionable access to or use of communications equipment and/or software. This includes web based e-mails.
Weaponry	Sites that provide information on, promote, or support the sale of weapons and related items.
Video and Music files	Sites that advocate or offer the illegal download of materials.
Drugs	Sites that provide information about prohibited or controlled drugs and their abuse.
Alcohol and Tobacco	Sites that actively promote the sale of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and any associated items.
Militancy and Extremism	Sites that offer information on groups advocating anti-governmental beliefs or actions.
Internet Auction	Sites that support the sale and purchase of goods between individuals.
Chat rooms	Sites that host Web Chat services, chats sites via HTTP and on-IRC chat rooms. Sites that offer forums or discussion groups via the internet. This excludes permitted Carillion Academies Trust facilities.

4.17 Management Guidelines

Line Managers are responsible for the content of e-mail messages and internet use undertaken by their staff. It is therefore essential that Line Managers are mindful of the potential areas of concern. These include: -

- Using e-mail to send or receive pirated software
- Disseminating pornographic, inappropriate or offensive material
- Distributing obscene material. In certain circumstances the CLCGB can be held liable for such distribution
- Publishing or creating defamatory, discriminatory and inappropriate statements and sending such statements to others
- Sending e-mails containing negligent mis-statements or binding the CLCGB in other ways, i.e. through the inadvertent form of a contract
- Using e-mail to harass or bully others

5. Written Communication



5.1 Written communication is still used a lot within our organization and many others, therefore we all have a responsibility to know that whenever we put something down in writing that it may not only represent our own personal point of view but that of our wider organization.

5.2 Use of Letterheads and Branding (Corporate Image Guidelines)

The use of the CLCGB letterhead is limited to Governors, Trustees and NHQ staff, unless express permission is granted on an individual use basis.

Officers in Command may use a version of our letterhead, and add their company details to this, However, they are always representing the CLCGB, and not expressing any personal viewpoints when doing so.

Should a letter need to be drafted on behalf of a non Trustee or NHQ member of staff, the draft may be supplied to NHQ who will approve and send directly, should it meet with CLCGB requirements.

There are Corporate Image Guidelines with rules re colours, fonts, font sizes which must be followed in all correspondence.

5.3 Advice & Guidance

In this section we will use the adjective "Write" but this may mean text, email or post on social media.

If in doubt, ask NHQ, if you are writing to somebody on behalf of Brigade and would like to know that's its written correctly, just ask NHQ who will try to quickly approve or amend your letter.

Think about what you are saying, is this what "The CLCGB" would say or just a personal opinion?

Could your words mis-represent the CLCGB, if they could, do not send it

If you do not like to write messages, do not have great grammar skills, then ask others who do, to proof read.

