



# Social Media Policy (Church Paid Personnel)

## Summary & Purpose

Main Street Baptist Church (MSBC) is increasingly exploring how online community through social media (including personal web pages, social networking pages, texting, instant messaging, e-mail and other forms of electronic social networking/communication) can empower our church family to be witnesses of the good news of Jesus Christ. We believe it is in the best interest of MSBC and its employees to be aware of and participate in the sphere of online community, interaction, and idea exchange to find opportunities to share the life change that comes through Jesus Christ and to promote MSBC.

MSBC's paid personnel are seen by our members and outside parties as representatives of the church. Therefore, as in all areas of daily life, your personal website, social networking page, blog, texts, emails, and other forms of electronic communication is a reflection on the church, whether or not the church is specifically discussed or referenced. Please bear in mind that, although you may view your site as a personal project, many readers will assume you are speaking on behalf of the church. Therefore, we ask that you observe the following guidelines to preserve the Christian witness and effectiveness of both yourself and the church. The following best practices and guidelines aim to provide you helpful, practical advice, and also to protect you, your family, and MSBC itself, as the church seeks to embrace social media.

## Policies

The following social media policies are expected to be adhered to by all paid personnel. The Personnel Committee reserves the right to modify or amend these policies at any time, and the Operations Minister or other designee of the Personnel Committee reserves the right to interpret these policies as needed. These policies are intended to **uphold MSBC's values and its mission** (1 Corinthians 14:12).

- Always demonstrate loyalty to Christ, the church and to each other.
- Be sensitive to linking to content. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content.
- Avoid creating competing web properties with the church's official web presence. For example, posting official MSBC media or communications on a personal site without publishing it on MSBC's official web presence.
- Report any misuse of MSBC's trademark logo. Only those authorized by MSBC may use the church's logo, so be sure not to include them in personal blogs or postings.
- Don't engage in polarizing political speech aimed at an individual. In order to be effective, MSBC must maintain a position of being able to speak into people's lives, no matter their political preference. There should be nothing in a paid personnel member's public communications that

lead people to believe that MSBC is endorsing a political candidate or party. This could jeopardize our tax-exempt status.

- Non-MSBC ministry-related online or electronic activities are discouraged during working hours or MSBC events and should be kept to a minimum.
- Due to the nature of working for a Christian institution, all paid church personnel need to communicate to their immediate family members the impact social media has on their employment. Should the occasion arise in which an immediate family member's use of social media reflects in a negative manner upon Christ or MSBC, the Personnel Committee reserves the right to work with the employee and his or her supervisor to correct the situation. In rare instances, if the behavior is not corrected, it may result in termination of the employee. In all cases, grace should abound and solutions should be sought after.
- Honor differences. MSBC will not tolerate discrimination (including age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, disability, or marital status or any other legally recognized protected basis under federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or ordinances). We love others because God loves others. All people bear His image and are worthy of the dignity inherent in that identity.

## Guidelines

### **1. *Live the Foremost and Second Commandment*** – Mark 12:28-31

- Represent God, not yourself.
- Make sure your communications are above reproach.

### **2. *Be Yourself and Be Transparent*** – Philippians 2:3

Even when you are speaking or writing as an individual, people may perceive you to be speaking or writing on behalf of MSBC. All personal web pages, social networking pages, and blogs (in which you are personally identifiable) should feature the following disclaimer: "Please know that these are my personal views and do not necessarily represent those of my employer, MSBC." However, simply posting this disclaimer does not void the overall spirit and intent of this Policy and Guidelines document.

### **3. *Keep Your Cool*** – Proverbs 29:11

One of the aims of social media is to create a dialogue, and people won't always agree on an issue. When confronted with a difference of opinion, stay cool. Express your points in a clear, loving, and logical way. Don't pick fights and choose your battles wisely. If someone is upset by something you've shared, contact them personally and resolve it in a private manner. Correct mistakes when needed and ***if you encounter disparaging remarks about the church, please let the Operations Minister know ASAP***, who will gladly review it and determine if an official response is needed.

### **4. *Stay Timely*** – Proverbs 15:23

Part of the appeal in social media is that the conversation occurs almost in real time. So, if you are going to participate in an active way, make sure you are willing to take the time to refresh content, respond to questions, and update information regularly, and correct information when appropriate. Since social media is a powerful and effective medium to connect with and minister to people, we encourage its appropriate use.

**5. *Protect Confidential Information and Relationships* – Acts 20:28**

Online conversations and postings are not private. Know that what you post online may be around for a long time and potentially shared with others. Therefore,

- Avoid identifying and discussing others, including church members, visitors, or staff – *especially* any pastoral details such as hospitalizations, deaths, health concerns, or counseling engagements.
- Obtain permission before posting pictures of others or before posting copyrighted material.
- Take proper care not to purposefully or inadvertently disclose or distribute any information or intellectual property that is confidential or proprietary to MSBC. Be sure that what you are sharing has been published in some other official form of communication.

**A Gentle Closing Reminder**

We take the reputation of our church very seriously and desire to protect all paid personnel. Your failure to operate under this policy could have unpleasant consequences for you, the community, and the church. Such consequences may include but are not limited to:

- Our loss of our non-profit status as a church
- Your loss of employment with MSBC
- MSBC becoming entangled in legal trouble with members, the community, and the government
- Cost MSBC the ability to reach people and retain members
- Ultimately, set back the work of advancing God's Kingdom through the mission of MSBC



# Social Media Policy (Church Paid Personnel)

I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the Main Street Baptist Church Social Media Policy.

---

Signature

---

Date

(Please sign and return to the Operations Minister.)