PENINSULA CITY CHURCH

Policy Title: Social Media Policy
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Approved By: Peninsula City Church Board
Responsible Officer: Communications Coordinator
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1. Introduction

This Social Media Policy outlines Peninsula City Church's expectations of staff members / volunteers when using social media or making public comments online.

Peninsula City Church embraces the use of social media for the promotion, development and delivery of Peninsula City Church's goods and services and is committed to ensuring that social media engagement connected with Peninsula City Church is lawful, professional and respectful.

In line with the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 (as in force from time to time) (effective 10 December 2025), which currently provides for restrictions on users under 16 holding accounts on designated platforms, this policy applies across all church departments and teams. Peninsula City Church should not facilitate social media communications involving individuals under 16 on restricted platforms, as designated by the e-Safety Commissioner from time to time, and must use safer, age-appropriate alternatives such as email, the in-house church app, or other approved channels.

2. Purpose

Social media is an important tool that Peninsula City Church uses to publicise its operations and solicit public support. It is also used to facilitate communication within church teams and various groups.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage staff members/volunteers to generate appropriate social media content in connection with Peninsula City Church.

It also aims to set expectations and protocols to ensure that social media posts are consistent with the values of Peninsula City Church and that posts made through its social media channels do not damage the Peninsula City Church's reputation.

The policy will also ensure that relevant legislation is adhered to, relating to social media users under the age of 16.

3. Scope

This policy applies to Staff, volunteers, contractors, Board and Eldership.

Social media includes, but is not limited to, engagement on:

a. X *(formerly Twitter)*
b. Facebook
c. Instagram
d. Pinterest
e. WordPress/Blogger
f. YouTube/Vimeo
g. iTunes/Podcasting
h. Snapchat
i. TikTok
j. Reddit
k. LinkedIn
l. Online chat forums/tools (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, Viber etc)
m. Discord, BeReal, and any new, or emerging, forms of social media.

4. Definitions

"Approved Poster": A staff member or volunteer who has been formally authorised in writing by the Communications Coordinator to post content on Peninsula City Church's official social media accounts. Only Approved Posters may have access to official account logins and passwords.

"Professional Social Media Use": Any posting, commenting, or interaction carried out on Peninsula City Church's official social media accounts or explicitly on behalf of the church.

"Personal Social Media Use": Any posting, commenting, or interaction on an individual's personal social media accounts that may or may not relate to Peninsula City Church, its activities, staff, volunteers, or members.

"Restricted Platforms": Social media platforms designated under the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024, as subject to age-based access restrictions from time to time, that restrict users under 16 from holding accounts. This may include (but is not limited to) Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X (Twitter), YouTube, Reddit, Discord, BeReal, and any additional platforms subsequently added by the e-Safety Commissioner.

“Exempt Messaging Services”: Private messaging or group-chat services that are exempt from the under-16 ban (e.g., WhatsApp, iMessage, Signal, standard SMS). These may continue to be used with appropriate child-safe safeguards and, where minors are involved, parental consent.

“Staff / Volunteers / Workers”: For the purposes of this policy, this term includes all paid employees, contractors, consultants, regular volunteers, Board members, Elders, and any person acting in an official or representative capacity for Peninsula City Church.

“Minor”: Any person under the age of 18 years.

“Under-16”: Any person who has not yet reached their 16th birthday.

5. Values

Peninsula City Church’s social media use shall be consistent with the following core values:

a. **Integrity:** Peninsula City Church will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about our own work or the work of other Churches or individuals. In addition, we will post in accordance with the Peninsula City Church's Copyright and Privacy policies and core beliefs and values
b. **Professionalism:** Peninsula City Church’s social media represents Peninsula City Church as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and uniform tone. Staff and volunteers may, from time to time and as appropriate/authorised, post on behalf of Peninsula City Church using our online profiles, but the impression should remain one of a singular Peninsula City Church rather than a group of individuals.
c. **Information Sharing:** Peninsula City Church encourages the sharing and reposting of online information that is relevant, appropriate to our mission and aims, and of interest to our members.
d. **Child and Youth Safety**: All social media activity must comply with the Child Protection Policy, 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards, and e-Safety guidelines, especially regarding minors.

6. Policy

All posts that relate to Peninsula City Church must meet content guidelines for use of social media. This includes:

a. posts on or connected with Peninsula City Church’s social media accounts (**Professional Social Media Use**); and
b. posts on staff’s own social media accounts (**Personal Social Media Use**).

A. Professional Social Media Use

The Communications Coordinator may approve an individual to post on Peninsula City Church's social media accounts (**Approved Poster**). In determining who should be an Approved Poster, the Communications Coordinator may consider:

a. the level of accountability to Peninsula City Church
b. whether the individual has the appropriate communication skills
c. what understanding the individual has of the risks of social media use
d. current and former responsibilities and how the individual performed in those roles

Only Approved Posters should have access to social media account passwords and logins.

The Communications Coordinator must keep records of Approved Posters and review the appropriateness of approvals on an annual basis.

B. Personal Social Media Use

Staff and volunteers do not need prior approval to promote or support Peninsula City Church activities on their personal social media accounts, provided that such posts are low-risk and factual in nature. This includes, but is not limited to:

- sharing or reposting official Peninsula City Church content
- promoting public events or services
- expressing general encouragement or support for the church's activities

For any other personal social media posts that reference Peninsula City Church, its ministries, leadership, staff, volunteers, members, internal matters, or sensitive issues, prior written approval from the Communications Coordinator is required. This includes posts that:

- could reasonably be perceived as representing the views of Peninsula City Church
- involve commentary, criticism, or interpretation of church decisions or positions
- relate to internal matters, disputes, or pastoral situations
- address controversial, political, or advocacy issues in connection with Peninsula City Church

Staff and volunteers who are not Approved Posters must not present themselves as speaking on behalf of Peninsula City Church and must ensure that any personal views expressed are clearly identified as their own.

All Personal Social Media Use must comply with this Policy, Content Guidelines, the Code of Conduct, and other relevant Peninsula City Church policies. Where a clear and relevant connection exists between a staff or volunteer's social media activity and Peninsula City Church,

this Policy may apply regardless of whether the activity occurs inside or outside church-related duties.

7. Content Guidelines

Peninsula City Church respects the right of staff/volunteers to participate in political, advocacy and community activities.

Staff/volunteers should be aware that content published online and on social media is, or may become, publicly available, even from personal social media accounts. Peninsula City Church expects staff/volunteers to take reasonable steps to ensure that their social media use and public comments fall within the following parameters where there is a clear and relevant connection to Peninsula City Church, its activities, or their role within the organisation.

When engaging in Professional Social Media Use, Peninsula City Church expects that Staff members/volunteers will:

a. be professional and respectful.
b. promote the best interests of Peninsula City Church.
c. not include misleading or deceptive statements or inferences.
d. refrain from inappropriate language.
e. only include intellectual property (such as photos, videos and quotes) that Peninsula City Church has permission to use or that do not require permission to use
f. comply with Peninsula City Church's Privacy Policy.
g. obtain written parental consent before posting images or videos of minors (under 18), per Child Protection Policy.
h. not send information about youth events, or other church activities/groups to under-16's via restricted platforms where such platforms are designated as restricted under applicable legislation or regulatory guidance.
i. not create or administer any group chats (e.g. Messenger, Instagram DM groups) on restricted platforms that include under-16's, where such platforms are subject to age-based restrictions.
j. avoid tagging or identifying minors in posts on restricted platforms.

When engaging in Personal and/or Professional Social Media Use, staff/volunteers must also ensure that they:

a. don't use a work email address to register personal social media accounts
b. refrain from conduct that has the potential to damage Peninsula City Church's reputation
c. don't make comments that are unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to, or about other staff/volunteers, clients or stakeholders of Peninsula City Church
d. don't make comments that are, or could be perceived to:

1. be made on behalf of Peninsula City Church, rather than an expression of a personal view unless approved or consistent with the Social Media Policy and Procedure
2. compromise the Staff/volunteer's capacity to fulfil duties in an impartial and unbiased manner

e. are mindful that their behaviour is bound by Peninsula City Church's Policies, Procedures and Code of Conduct, even outside work hours where such behaviour has a clear and relevant connection to Peninsula City Church or reasonably impacts its reputation, operations, or community trust
f. make clear that any views expressed in Personal Social Media use are their own and not those of Peninsula City Church (However, this will not necessarily protect them from breaching the Policy where a reasonable person could conclude that the post is connected to, or reflects upon, Peninsula City Church).
g. must not knowingly engage with, add, or respond to individuals under 16 on restricted platforms after 10 December 2025 where such engagement would be inconsistent with applicable legislation, regulatory guidance, or this Policy.

8. Responsibilities

The Board shall nominate [Communications Coordinator] to co-ordinate Peninsula City Church's social media management.

Staff/volunteers may, from time to time, post or comment on the activities of Peninsula City Church and where appropriate/authorised, post on behalf of Peninsula City Church using the Peninsula City Church's online social media profiles. Unless a Staff/volunteer is promoting or supporting the activities of Peninsula City Church, this should only be done with the express knowledge and authorisation of the Communications Coordinator.

The Communications Coordinator, with oversight from the Associate Pastor, has responsibility for overseeing the Peninsula City Church's Social Media Strategy. Their role includes:

a. Determining which social media platforms are most appropriate for Peninsula City Church to engage in and policing those boundaries. This includes taking into consideration the social media ban for children under 16 on certain platforms.
b. Ensuring that all posts are in keeping with Peninsula City Church's mission, core values, and policies
c. Ensuring appropriate and timely action is taken to correct or remove inappropriate posts (including defamatory and/or illegal content), and to minimise the risk of a repeat incident
d. Ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken to repair relations with any persons or group Peninsula City Church offended by an inappropriate post
e. Moderating and monitoring public response to social media, such as blog comments and Facebook/Instagram replies, to ensure that trolling and spamming does not occur, to remove offensive or inappropriate replies, or caution offensive posters, and to reply to any further requests for information generated by the post topic

f. Developing a strategy for expanding our social media footprint over time
g. Work on the Peninsula City Church App with the appropriate people/teams to ensure groups and communication tools within the app comply with child-safe standards.

All Approved Posters and team leaders using social media must complete annual training on this policy, child-safe online practice, and current legislation.

9. Breaches

If a Staff member/volunteer breaches this Policy or associated Procedures, they may be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of their engagement. Breaches involving minors or non-compliance with the Online Safety Act will be reported to the e-Safety Commissioner where required or other relevant authority. Whistleblowers are protected under the Corporations Act 2001.

10. Related Documents

- Child Protection Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Parental Consent Form (Social Media)
- Peninsula City Church App User Behaviour Guidelines