

# **Social Networking and Youth**

## **Suggestions for Best Practices/Safe Church Policies**

1. Adults should not submit “friend” requests to minors/youth. Youth may request friendships with adults, and adults should discern the level of contact they want to maintain with youth prior to responding to these requests.
2. When and where available authorized youth workers may choose to create private and professional profiles on networking sites to create a line of privacy.
3. If an authorized youth worker chooses to accept friend requests from minors/youth that are associated with their community of faith, we recommend that other youth workers (within the same community of faith) have full access to the professional youth worker’s profile and correspondence.
4. Authorized youth workers who choose to accept friend requests from minors/youth should use all privacy settings applicable to shield youth from any inappropriate content that may exist within the authorized youth worker’s profile.
5. All youth and adults should be informed that any communication that is sent via digital means (email, social networking site notes or posts etc) is not confidential and may be reported or shared with others.
6. We strongly recommend “closed” groups, but not “hidden” groups be used for Pilgrim Fellowships/youth groups. These groups should have both youth and adult administrators.
7. Pilgrim Fellowships/Youth groups should decide within their covenant whether or not their social networking site groups are open to parents of current members.
8. Covenants should be created to govern what is appropriate and inappropriate content to be placed displayed in the online group for a Pilgrim Fellowship/youth group.
9. Any inappropriate material that is not covered by “Mandatory Reporting” laws should be deleted from the site. Any material that is covered by “Mandatory Reporting” laws should be reported to the clergy (within your community of faith), documented for church records and then, deleted from the site.
10. Any content that details inappropriate behavior (outside of the bounds of the established covenant) during a Church Sponsored event/activity should be addressed by authorized youth workers and parents.
11. Parents should be informed that content that appears on youth pages or groups that are not sponsored by the Church are NOT within the purview of authorized youth workers.

*Additional Suggestions regarding Video Chats, Blogs or Video Blogs*

1. Adults should refrain from initiating video chats with youth.
2. Participants in a video chat or blog should consider what will be shown in the video such as their surroundings, their clothing/state of dress, etc.
3. All transcripts of on-line text chats, video chats, blogs or video blogs should be saved when possible.
4. All clergy and authorized youth workers should consider the content and nature of any post that will be read/visible to youth. Your voice is often considered the voice of the church, and your content may be viewed as church policy.



**MODEL RELEASE**

In exchange for consideration received, I hereby give permission to [ your name here ] to use my name and photographic likeness in all forms and media for advertising, trade, and any other lawful purposes.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If Model is under 18:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above, I have read this release and approve of its terms.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_