

Responsible Trustee	Date policy produced	Name of Policy Writer	Frequency of Review	Date reviewed on / by whom	
Harry Doel	January 2024	Governance Committee	Three yearly	10/1/2024	Governance Ctte

Communications Policy

(including Digital, Social Media, Email, Messaging, Web and Marketing)

Replaces Existing Policies: Communications Policy (2018), Email Policy (2018), Internet and Email Policy (2018)

Application

This policy identifies acceptable behaviour in written and verbal communication and the use of all digital presence and communications, including social media, email and other forms of electronic communication. It is applicable not only to staff, volunteers and members of Cambray Baptist Church but to all who are God's people in Cambray.

The policy aims are to:

- Enable God's people to bring God glory in all our interactions
- Uphold the Safeguarding commitments of the church in respect of electronic devices, storage and communications
- Help guard against bullying, abuse or hurtful communications, including through electronic means
- Encourage God's people to treat one another with love, as brothers and sisters in Christ
- Ensure that God's name is honoured in all church communication with those outside the church

This policy should be read alongside Church's policies and procedures relating to Whistleblowing; Disciplinary action; Anti-bullying; and the overarching Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Biblical Basis

James 3:6 reminds us that the tongue can be like a "fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body". We can honour God or cause great destruction through our communications. But God is about His work of transformation within His people (Rom 12:1-2). Our speech is a vital part of His work, and is in itself a measure of how much we have allowed His work to occur within. Galatians 5:22-26 reads: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." In Christ we are to love one another, and this is the response of a heart which loves the Lord our God with all our being (Lk 12:27). Love sometimes requires reprimand, rebuke or even wise judgment, but even in these circumstances our communications must be loving and with gentleness, kindness and patience (Col 3:12-17). Ultimately the cause of the gospel is at stake. If we with the same mouth praise God and curse we demonstrate that the life of Christ is not in us (Jas 3:9-10). In Philippians 4:8 we are given the basis by which we are to speak and examine our hearts about our

communications: “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”

General Policy

- ‘Communication’ in this policy is taken to mean any form of information passed from one person to another, be that by spoken, written or electronic means, audio, image, photo, video or any other form of media.
- All communication, whether public or private, should be for building up, encouragement, or instruction, under God’s word and reflecting Phil 4:8 “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”.
- All those who hold public roles within CBC, (Deacon, Elder, Ministry Leader, Member, Regular Attender) are communicating as a representative of CBC whether in an official capacity on church-managed system or on a personal account. What is said privately or publicly is a reflection on the name of Jesus and His Kingdom.
- Every communication should be out of love for all involved. In love we may need to rebuke or instruct, but even in these circumstances we do so with gentleness and kindness (Col 3:12-17), calling those who have strayed to repentance.
- Church communications are ultimately the responsibility of the Trustees of Cambray Baptist Church. They devolve this authority and responsibility to the Pastors, the Staff, Church Office volunteers and Ministry Leaders so that the work of the church can be carried out. However, all those with this delegated authority remain accountable and answerable to the Trustees who may prohibit individuals who abuse this privilege or act in a way that brings harm to the Gospel, to His people or to the work or reputation of the church.
- Any communication should be with the name of the sender, not anonymous or using an alias to hide the sender’s identity, unless the sender requires anonymity because of the nature of their employment (e.g. GCHQ work) in which case the alias should be known within Cambray Baptist Church.
- No communication in the name of Cambray Baptist Church or on its behalf may contradict or challenge the Basis of Faith of Cambray Baptist Church nor contradict the plain reading of the Bible. Where there are individual views on secondary issues or issues not otherwise covered by the Basis of Faith, Deeds or Constitution of Cambray Baptist Church, the person communicating should ensure that they clearly state that these are personal views.
- All communication is to be regarded and maintained as private to the named parties in the communication or the named parties inferred by the group or email list used, unless otherwise covered by the clause below.
- No communication can be reproduced to a third party without the author’s permission, and without the consent of those to whom the communication has been sent, *unless* there is a requirement of the Trustees, Safeguarding Team or legal investigation to examine communications to protect others or uphold the law.

- No communication should be about another person or group of people, whether public figure or private individual(s) where the intent or result is to undermine, belittle, ostracise, isolate, hurt or bully another person, nor to spread gossip.
- No communication should be with the intent of making public issues or complaints about Cambray Baptist Church which do not fall under Whistle-blowing or Safeguarding concerns. Instead, the normal internal mechanisms for resolving hurts, reporting problems, and pursuing complaints as identified by the appropriate policies of Cambray Baptist Church should be used. These policies are written to enable resolution of problems in Biblical and Legal ways which bring honour to the Lord (cf Matt 5:21-26, Matt 18:15-18, Deut 19:15, 1 Cor 5:1-5, 1 Cor 6:1-8). Where issues do fall under Whistle-blowing or Safeguarding concerns that require elevation beyond the mechanisms available within the church, public communication should be limited and only to the relevant legal authorities for the purpose of resolving the concern.
- Communication about other individuals (for example, to share prayer points) should be only after that individual has given permission, only to the extent to which permission was given, and only to the audience to whom the individual has agreed for it to be published.
- No communication or stored document should hold any personal opinion on another party. Expressions of concern which might be regarded as opinion should be always based on verifiable facts and must be marked as private or confidential and to a limited audience for a defined purpose relating to a position of trust (e.g. as a leader of a ministry or in Trustee/Elders/Deacons minutes).
- Where a communication is about an individual, or a communication refers to third parties, it should be related to the purpose of the communication, must be factual, without embellishment and verifiable, and must be for the benefit of that individual/third party, and to build love, enable care and encourage them in the faith.
- All communications are subject to current Data Protection legislation, which includes the right to request to view stored information, to request the deletion of stored information, and to expect that stored information is only used for the purposes for which it was collected and is deleted when it is no longer being used for the purpose of its collection.
- No communication should make comments that humiliates, alienates or divides between God's people. Where God's word must be upheld, we lead like our Good Shepherd, with careful, loving reference to God's word and patient calls to repentance. Where lines need to be drawn because of the clear statement of God's word (for example, between those who are believers and those who are not, or those walking in obedience to God and those deliberately turning away), care must be taken to explain lovingly why there is distinction, and to graciously call people to turn to the Lord.
- In responding to communications which may be received which are ungracious, unkind or unjust, we will seek to be Godly and wise in response by:
 - Not responding censoriously nor hatefully even if such comments have already been received

- Not engaging in verbal aggression, derogatory opinions or comments, or hateful speech
 - Seeking to resolve issues in person and, in the extreme, through the means for dealing with hurts or complaints provided in the policies of Cambray Baptist Church
 - Ensuring that no communication brings the Gospel into disrepute
- No communication or response to media, news agencies or journalists should be made on behalf of Cambray Baptist Church or using the name of Cambray Baptist Church. All such communication will always be by the Trustees after agreement of the Trustees on behalf of Cambray Baptist Church. Where necessary and practicable the Trustees may seek the approval of the Members for press communications.
 - All communications will honour the relevant copyright laws and will credit other authors or producers of work where credit is due. In particular, care will be taken to only use self-created, 'public domain', or 'free to use' materials in our publications, communications and on-line presence. The author of any communication takes on personal responsibility for checking all materials used and ensuring the right to free use or the relevant purchase of rights.
 - All communications will honour the right to privacy of other individuals, which includes ensuring permission has been given for photos to appear, names to be used, or written/created content to be reproduced.
 - In honouring the right of privacy to other individuals, their details, including communication details, should not be unwittingly revealed by adding them to a digital group without their permission, using their email address publicly (rather than BCC) or letting an external agency or individuals not from within CBC know of their affiliation to the church.
 - All Groups, Sites or Platforms set up by the church will be monitored by at least two individuals appointed by the Trustees to ensure that a Godly 'Code of Conduct' is maintained in all posts, and to delete any content which does not conform to the Code of Conduct and remove any individual who does not abide by the Code of Conduct.
 - We actively discourage the use of 'Blanket communications' apart from the weekly e-News or Agendas/Minutes for upcoming Members meetings. Communications to Small Group Members, Ministry Teams or Rota groups may be needed more regularly, but should be kept brief and only used where needed. Where a 'whole church' or Members only communication is needed beyond these normal uses, this should be approved by one of the Pastors, the Church Secretary or the Trustees. Careful preparation of any communication to a large number of people must be undertaken, and ideally the communication checked by another person, to ensure that the email is clear and the communication does not cause confusion or upset. We discourage 'reply all' and forwarding of messages, except where this is absolutely necessary.
 - All messages on a site, group or platform relating to Cambray Baptist Church should be retained/archived so that they can be retrieved (e.g. in case of a legal investigation, Safeguarding investigation, or for transparency purposes). On closing of an email account, communications site, group or platform all messages should be backed up and handed to Cambray IT staff for archiving within a church digital archive.

Policy relating to non-Cambray Organisations, Events and Individuals

- Where there are requests to promote an event or organisation, the decision about whether, where and how to communicate the details will be made by the Church Office, consulting with the Pastors, Church Secretary or Trustees where necessary to identify whether it is something the church wish to associate itself with and where and how the external event or organisation should be promoted.
- The church does not normally promote organisations or events which are for commercial benefit of third parties, unless to raise support for a supported Mission Agency or related cause.
- We do not at any time accept 'paid for' content or pass on any content for personal or third party gain.
- Requests for additional flyers to be handed out, emails to be sent to the congregation or items to be posted in messaging groups, social media or the website for events not related to the church will not normally be considered, and will only be done with the final permission of the Pastors, Church Secretary or the Trustees. Events posted onto noticeboards, chat groups, social media or websites, or flyers left in church which have not been approved beforehand will be removed.

Policy additions relating to Cambray Email Account Use

In addition to the general guidelines given above:

- For Cambray Email accounts, the account can only be used for Cambray related communications and not used for private use. All Cambray-related emails should be sent using a Cambray email account where one is provided.
- All Cambray Email account messages should end with a footer which contains the contact details of Cambray Baptist Church and the charity number of the Church CIO (see example in Appendix 2).
- All Cambray Email accounts must be kept secure so that no third party can attack and use a Cambray Email account for their own purposes.

Policy additions relating to Communications with Children and Young People

In addition to the general guidelines given above, when communicating with young people using digital means, any adult who is not the parent of the children or young people involved must:

- Ensure that any communication with children or young people is not private between an adult and child/young person and is open to scrutiny by other leaders. This may mean some forms of communication are not appropriate to be used (e.g. Text communication, 'Friending' on a Social Media platform)
- Use separate, designated accounts/platforms for the purposes of the youth organisation. This account must be open to scrutiny by all the leaders of the particular Ministry Team and, on request, by the Trustees or their representatives, and should be used for Youth purposes only.

- Ensure all communication using digital means is kept public to at least the Ministry Team and kept logged or maintained in an Archive. All communications should be saved and kept (both incoming and outgoing).
- Ensure that all contact with young people cannot be misunderstood by a parent or guardian – this means that acronyms and short-hand terms that could have unknown meanings to others should not be used.
- Ensure that no young person is on a church related social media platform without explicit parental consent
- Ensure that there is a clear Code of Conduct that reflects this Policy for each communications platform, and that all young people using the platform are made aware of and understand this Code of Conduct
- Ensure that the platforms used are fully moderated by two or more leaders to enforce the Code of Conduct

Policy additions relating to Communications means and routes

In addition to the general guidelines given above we note regarding available communication means and routes that:

- Communication towards those outside Cambray Baptist Church is primarily done via the Church Website and Social Media, as well as flyers for individual events or series of events (such as Christmas Services). All external communication is to be commissioned by or approved by the Pastors and/or the Trustees of Cambray Baptist Church, or the leaders of individual Ministries acting within their ministry roles. No external communication claiming to be representative of Cambray Baptist Church is permitted by those who do not hold church-appointed leadership or ministry positions.
- Where possible mass communication internal to Cambray Baptist Church is conducted via the weekly E-News, the monthly Magazine and the termly church Term Card, and occasional or irregular communication is via the Church Facebook Group. This is to avoid heavy use of email, messaging or text messages which can be very intrusive and become repetitious. Individual ministries may use other Social Media, email or printed material appropriate to their age group, but the means used should always aim to avoid a heavy load of separate communications so that the recipients never feel 'swamped' with information.
- Longstanding information and resources will be made available primarily through the Church Website rather than in hardcopy formats, and made available in printed form (typically as information tri-folds) for those unable to access the website easily.
- Each Noticeboard around the church is allocated for the use of ministries or a particular area of church life – none are available for casual communication and no poster or flyer can be posted without permission from the Church Office or the Trustees. Those ministries who have been allocated noticeboards are responsible for keeping them current, relevant and readable, and should allocate individuals to this task.
- The Welcome Area is maintained by the Church Office, and only items authorised by the Office are permitted to be kept or displayed in this area. This area is primarily for outreach (via church provided literature), information for new-comers, and information on upcoming events that reinforces what has already been

publicised via the E-News and Church Magazine. Other requests to host information in the Foyer are normally refused.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Example Code of Conduct

CODE OF CONDUCT

This is a group/chat/site related to the work of Cambray Baptist Church. The following is a list of expectations for using this facility. These are intended to reflect Godly interactions, so that all involved are built up and encouraged in the Lord:

- * Express love to one another through your conversations
- * Be respectful, courteous and gracious in all you say
- * Ensure that all you contribute expresses the values and beliefs of Cambray Baptist Church
- * Do not use offensive language
- * Do not post content intended to induce an angry response or cause hurt
- * If you disagree with something, express your viewpoint with care and respect
- * Do not bully, harass or intimidate
- * You must not post content here for which you do not have copyright
- * You must not post personal photos/video for which you do not have the explicit permission of those within the images
- * Do not post any media or text which is offensive, violent, contains nudity, or has sexual content
- * You cannot reproduce/forward/repost any content you find here to another place without the author's express permission
- * This is not a place to pass on 'spam', nor to re-post from other places, nor to market events not linked to Cambray Baptist Church

We reserve the right to delete posts which do not conform to our code of conduct, and to suspend or remove users who break the code of conduct.

Appendix 2 – Example Cambray Email Footer for all Cambray Email Accounts

TEXT FORMAT:

Your name (Your Position)

Cambray Baptist Church

Cambray Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 1JS, UK

Tel: 01242 584672 | Mob: 07400 067078

Web: <https://www.cambray.org/>

Cambray Baptist Church, Cheltenham is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered charity number 1156858

HTML FORMAT:

Name (Position)

<p align="center">

Cambray Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 1JS, UK

Tel: 01242 584672 | Mob: Personal phone number

Web: https://www.cambray.org/

</p>

<p align="center">

<small>Cambray Baptist Church, Cheltenham is a

Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered charity number

1156858

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