



### **Youth Ministry Communications Policy**

Christ Community Church (CCC) desires to equip students to grow in wisdom and Christlikeness unto the glory of God. To that end, CCC desires to promote wise digital discipleship and to cultivate a healthy environment for communication between its youth workers and students. Although it can be used as a good gift in God's providence, digital technology is often used by humans for sinful purposes. Therefore, technology should be used to edify and encourage fellow image-bearers unto God's glory. It should strengthen embodied community, not replace it. It should be used with discernment and discretion. In pursuit of these aims, CCC has developed the following guidelines:

1. Employee and volunteer youth workers who want to communicate with minors by phone or by using text messaging, e-mail, or other approved forms of digital media, must first pass a background check, attend a ministry training class, and sign a consent form. The class will outline the recommended practices, limitations, and legal parameters for texting and other forms of digital communication within youth ministry.
2. To participate in ministry digital communications, parents must sign a consent form and review the informational form with their student. These forms provide an opportunity for parents to discuss the wise use of digital media with students.
3. Except in an emergency, youth workers may not communicate with a minor or transmit any personal information pertaining to a minor without the student and his or her parents or guardians signing consent forms. This applies to group texting, group e-mail, or any other public method of digital communication. Personal information includes such things as a minor's name, phone number, e-mail address, or photograph.
4. Youth workers must communicate with students in a way that encourages and edifies them and that glorifies God. Youth workers may not transmit any content that is illicit, unsavory, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful when communicating with each other or with minors involved in ministry activities.
5. Youth workers will teach students occasionally about the Youth Ministry Communications Policy and how to cultivate wisdom when using digital media.
6. Youth workers will encourage students to participate in youth activities and to cultivate relationships with other students present with them at those activities. To help students cultivate the skill of being present with others, youth workers will encourage them to reserve the use of their digital devices during ministry programs for emergencies, to contact a parent or guardian, or to perform tasks necessary for a given activity.
7. All information, images, or videos shared digitally through public ministry communications channels are not considered confidential. Therefore, youth workers and students must exercise discernment and discretion when using digital technology.
8. Youth workers who become aware of possible child abuse through digital media must immediately notify the Youth Director or Lead Pastor. CCC will report abuse as required by law.
9. Youth workers are permitted to communicate with students in accordance with this policy only by means of the following media: texting/voice texts, email, phone calls, FaceTime, and Zoom.



Youth workers are also permitted to communicate with students on official church or youth ministry websites and **public** social media pages.

10. To foster wise and healthy mentoring relationships, youth workers are encouraged to keep texting/email communications with youth brief and to a minimum. Whenever possible, conversations should happen in person (with parents' approval) or on the phone.
11. Youth workers are not permitted to follow, 'friend,' or privately/directly message students on social media. This includes—**but is not limited to**—FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and other similar apps or platforms.
12. Youth workers are not permitted to communicate with youth using one-on-one video chatting apps such as—**but not limited to**—Snap Chat and Marco Polo.
13. Youth workers are permitted to communicate with youth on video platforms such as Zoom either for large group meetings or for one-on-one meetings that have been scheduled with parents' prior approval (e.g., pastoral counseling or Bible studies).
14. Except for emergencies, youth workers are not permitted to communicate with students during school hours, after 9:00 pm, or before 6:00 am.
15. Youth workers must inform parents and the Youth Director of phone calls with students. In general, phone calls should focus on scheduling meetings, prayer, and brief shepherding/mentoring conversations. Video calls on FaceTime should have parents' prior approval. Additionally, youth workers may not talk on the phone with a student of the opposite sex without parents' **prior** approval of the phone call.
16. All texting and emailing between youth workers and students must include either two or more non-related youth workers or a parent/guardian of the student. Communications between youth workers and students of different sexes must include both a male and a female adult youth worker or parent. Youth workers must inform the youth director of any communication that does not fit these criteria either by sharing a screenshot of the texting conversation or by forwarding the email.
17. Youth workers and students are not permitted to send one another photos or videos of themselves (such as 'selfies').
18. Cellular phones can cause distraction if used while driving. For safety reasons, youth workers driving on ministry business are not to make calls unless they use a hands-free device. If they receive a cell phone call while driving, the youth worker should answer it using a hands-free device or pull off the road to a safe location as soon as possible.
19. Youth workers driving on ministry business are to avoid cell phone use—even hands-free—when transporting children, while driving in heavy traffic, during hazardous weather conditions, or when it violates local law.
20. Youth workers are never to send or read text messages while driving.
21. The goal of this Communications Policy is to help youth workers and students cultivate healthy discipleship relationships and to use media wisely. Youth workers should reach out to the Youth Director with any questions about how to wisely live out these policies. Youth should reach out to their parents or a youth leader with any questions about how to wisely live out these policies.