

General Principles:

Be Transparent: Always be open, honest and accountable; be Christ-like in your communications.

Common Courtesy: Remember to greet, bid farewell and respect the recipients from beginning to end. Respect boundaries.

Context: Remember to give context into a conversation, whether from the start, or introducing others part of the way through. And, recognise that communications can limit our understanding and therefore cause confusion.

Healthy Office Hours: Keep to and communicate sensible office hours, looking after yourself and others around you. Avoid responding to correspondence when emotionally drained or tired. When communicating teenagers avoid during school time and after 9pm.

Keep it Legal: make sure what you are communicating isn't offensive, slanderous nor likely to be misunderstood.

Secure documents: Where possible send documents as PDFs to protect your information. *Where official correspondence is required, use letterheaded paper/documents.*

Address Books: check regularly e.g. annually for data cleansing

Telephone:

Answer machine: be clear, concise, and leave telephone numbers. Be aware of what information you are giving out on an answering machine (whether pastorally sensitive or if you are advertising your holiday dates to strangers).

Caller Display: is essential to help decide whether able to take a call, or to be prepared for an important number, or simply to determine private from business.

Mobile Phone:

Know your environment: recognise (and where necessary agree) boundaries with the use of mobile phones in a meeting. Be careful when using/ringing mobile phones that pastorally sensitive information can be shared in public.

Texting: Be aware of your audience, use appropriate language whilst maintaining common courtesy and use emoticons sensitively, where emotions may shed light on context.

Email:

Ongoing Exchange of Emails:

Be aware of your email conversation, and when adding others to the chain of emails – be wary of pastoral matters, comments not intended for wider audiences, and also when needed ask permission to share information.

Sending to recipients:

Be prepared to use BCC (Blind Carbon Copy- hides email addresses, Carbon Copy- includes this person in the conversation).

Email Signature

Good Practice to add an Email Signature (a formal end to an email that includes name, title, contact details that include phone numbers, websites, District and Methodist information and logos.

Proof read. Read what you write, you may have made a typo, it may not make sense.

Department and shared email addresses:

Be aware of multiple address users, email addresses shared with work colleagues (be aware of sharing sensitive information, and when necessary, context).

Social Media:

Responsibility: You are responsible for your online activities, of what you say, do or write.

Privacy: Always put in place the right privacy settings (this can protect yourself as well as others).

Assume nothing is private (once written it can be permanent). Be wary of your wider audience: friends, family and strangers

Under 18's/vulnerable adults:

Hold to a correct procedure when dealing with under 18s/vulnerable adults (like with any other correspondence or

Communication Guidelines

contact). Interactions may need permission slips, additional accountabilities as well as to communicate these appropriately.