



WhatsApp Guidelines

Introduction

WhatsApp is a valuable tool for both personal and official communication within our congregation and Maybridge Community Church (MCC). However, to ensure privacy and compliance with GDPR, MCC has established the following guidelines for all official MCC WhatsApp groups and broadcasts. For more details on data protection, please see our privacy notice on the website.

These guidelines apply to WhatsApp and similar services like Messenger, Skype, Snapchat, Google Messages, and FaceTime.

MCC cannot, and would not want to, monitor all online communications. We expect all partners to engage in conversations that respect different points of view. It is up to individuals to stop and/or block content from anyone who sends messages that are offence or inappropriate.

General WhatsApp Group Guidelines

1. **Public Domain Awareness:** Anything shared online is public and subject to laws on libel, copyright, freedom of information, and data protection. Be cautious with pastoral concerns as they can be easily forwarded.
2. **Context:** Provide context for your messages for clarity.
3. **Prayer Updates:** Share prayer request updates once, unless there are significant changes.
4. **Relevance:** Only reply to group messages if relevant to avoid message overload.
5. **Permission:** Don't share on behalf of others without explicit permission.
6. **Forwarding:** Think twice before forwarding messages. Avoid forwarding if unsure of its truth or origin.
7. **Respect Requests:** If asked to stop messaging, remove the contact and refrain from further contact.
8. **Privacy:** Don't share phone numbers without consent.
9. **Broadcast Etiquette:** Frequent broadcast messages may lead to reports and potential banning by WhatsApp.
10. **Compliance:** Follow WhatsApp Terms of Service, be kind and courteous, and respect privacy.

WhatsApp Admin Guidelines

1. **Group Description:** Add a group description to inform members of the group's purpose.
2. **Rules Reminders:** Remind members of group rules and post them as needed.
3. **Conflict Management:** Address conflicts by restating rules and taking appropriate action (suspend, ban, mute).
4. **Rule Changes:** Implement rule changes gradually.
5. **Reporting:** Inform the Operations Director of the group's name, purpose, closure, and any breaches or concerns.

Personal vs. Official MCC WhatsApp Groups

- **Personal Groups:** Created by individuals, not managed by MCC, and may include MCC partners.
- **Official Groups:** Created by MCC for church-related communication, managed by church leadership, and adhere to MCC guidelines.

Official MCC WhatsApp Group Guidelines

Broadcast Groups

- Used for MCC communications with only administrators posting.
- Members can't comment.
- Admins can remove members and will notify before group closure.
- Notify admin if someone should be added to the group.

Interactive Groups

- Allows members to comment and ask questions.
- Used for purposes like prayer requests.
- Admins shut down and reopen groups annually to manage sensitive data.
- Admins will notify members before closing or reopening groups.

Commencement

These guidelines are effective from 7th April 2025. Existing groups will be informed of these changes, and all new groups will follow these guidelines.