

# Minute

**Distribution:** All Officers through the Territorial Executive Council

**Section:** Policy and Procedures

**Sección:** Normas y Procedimientos

**Subject:** Guidelines for Use of Social Media and Other Electronic Communication with Minors

**Tema:**

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**CC:**

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*Si necesita asistencia para interpretar al español el contenido de la minuta, por favor comuníquese con el Consultante de Ministerios Hispánicos en el Cuartel Territorial. (If you need assistance with interpreting the content of this Minute into Spanish, please be in contact with the Hispanic Ministries Consultant at Territorial Headquarters.)*

## GUIDELINES FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WITH MINORS

### A. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The Salvation Army values the power of social media to spread the gospel, encourage holy living and promote community-building activities of its members and supporters.

The Salvation Army is also concerned with the safety of minors in the emerging technological landscape. Tools and means of communication are constantly changing, and this presents both great opportunity and serious risk to youths; and the officers, cadets, employees, and volunteers (together, "Salvation Army Personnel") who serve them.

The following are guidelines that, together with The Salvation Army National Code of Conduct for Electronic Communication with Minors, will provide guidance to Salvation Army Personnel and minors participating in Salvation Army programs on how to utilize technology and social media appropriately, and help to protect minors from inappropriate content and contact. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of these guidelines will be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of an officer or employee, removal from a position as a volunteer, or termination of a participant from a program.

For purposes of these Guidelines, a "minor" is a person under the age of 18 years of age and "electronic communications" includes all communication utilizing an electronic device (i.e. phones, computers, tablets or any similar devices).

### B. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SALVATION ARMY PERSONNEL

1. All Salvation Army Personnel are required to sign and agree to comply with The Salvation Army National Code of Conduct for Electronic Communication with Minors.

2. Electronic communications with minors should normally be carried out through an official Salvation Army social media presence, such as an organizational social networking account, an official Facebook page, or a Salvation Army email address. Any Salvation Army social networking account used by Salvation Army Personnel to communicate with minors must be approved by, and is subject to monitoring by, The Salvation Army.
3. Local units may set up organizational accounts on social network sites that participants may join for news and updates on program-related information and activities. Corps officers and other program leaders must be given the necessary user names, passwords, and permission to access and administer such accounts and will have the ability to monitor the accounts at any time. Salvation Army Personnel will comply with the National Minute entitled "Internet Blogging/Podcasts and Web Communities" with respect to all such accounts.
4. The Salvation Army is committed to maintaining transparency and monitoring appropriate content of all electronic communication. Electronic messaging should primarily be utilized to communicate with youth about specific program-related information. All ministry communications, (i.e. prayer requests) between Salvation Army personnel and minors are subject to monitoring by authorized Salvation Army representatives.
5. Parents/guardians of program participants should always be informed in writing when The Salvation Army intends to use social media to contact participating minors and should be made aware of internet safety resources. Parents/guardians must be invited to participate in such groups and must give consent in writing before their minor children are allowed to participate in Salvation Army social media groups or pages.
6. Personal identifiable information, photos or videos of minors will not appear on Salvation Army social media groups or pages unless permission is granted in writing by the minor and his/her parents or legal guardians. Only first (given) names of minors should be used to identify minors in photos or videos.
7. Electronic messages must not be unlawful, offensive, discriminatory, or intended to frighten, intimidate, disrupt, abuse, harass or bully another person. Offensive or discriminatory messages include any words or images that contain sexual implications; racial slurs; or negative comments regarding age, gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin or disability. The Salvation Army will not tolerate, and reserves the right to remove, any harmful, derogatory, defamatory, obscene or otherwise potentially embarrassing content from Salvation Army organizational accounts, and to block any individual from access to a website or social networking group in its sole discretion.
8. Salvation Army Personnel must not intentionally exchange, transmit, solicit or receive and retain any sexually explicit material in writing or pictures. Any Salvation Army Personnel who inadvertently receives sexually explicit material must follow the steps prescribed in the "Responding and Reporting" section below. The transmission of sexually explicit material to a minor may violate federal and state criminal laws. The transmission of any sexually explicit material to a minor is also considered child sexual abuse within the meaning of The Salvation Army's National Policy Statement on Sexual Abuse of Children. Any sexually explicit image of a minor is child pornography and subject to applicable child pornography production, possession and distribution laws.
9. If Salvation Army Personnel cease their relationship with The Salvation Army they are personally responsible to obtain parental permission for any electronic communication with a minor.

### **C. TRAINING OF SALVATION ARMY PERSONNEL**

Prior to working with minors, Salvation Army Personnel should be trained with respect to these guidelines. Retraining will be provided when substantive changes to the policy have been made and as the local unit deems appropriate or necessary.

### **D. TRAINING OF MINORS**

1. Minors involved in programs should receive training on these guidelines and staying safe online before using Salvation Army computers or participating in electronic communications with Salvation Army Personnel.
2. Training should inform minors that any sexually explicit image of minors is considered child pornography, even if the minor created the images him or herself, and that, any persons in possession of these images, including the minor himself or herself, may be subject to child pornography production, possession and distribution laws.
3. Training should advise minors that electronic communications are not confidential, and that use of Salvation Army computers is monitored.

### **E. INTERNET SAFETY RESOURCES**

1. For Parents, Children and Educators: [netsmartskids.org](http://netsmartskids.org) (Safe Internet Usage: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)
2. [Internetsafety101.org](http://Internetsafety101.org) (Enough is Enough organization)

### **F. RESPONDING AND REPORTING**

In the USA, knowingly sending, soliciting, or receiving and retaining any sexual image of a minor is considered trafficking in child pornography, and is a felony under Federal criminal law. Sending any sexually explicit images or words to a person under 16 year of age also constitutes a Federal crime.

Salvation Army Personnel who discover that sexual images are being transmitted between or to minors must immediately report this to Salvation Army leadership and law enforcement

Any Salvation Army Personnel receiving any sexual image of a minor on a computer, cell phone, hand-held device, or other electronic means owned or provided by The Salvation Army should take the following steps immediately:

1. Close the image (Do not delete, forward or show to anyone else).
2. Contact your Salvation Army leadership and report what happened.
3. Contact your local law enforcement and make a report about what happened.
4. Understand you may need to surrender the computer, cell phone or hand-held device to law enforcement.

\* These national guidelines are minimum standards developed with the understanding that more stringent standards are to be followed where required by law or by local program guidelines approved by territorial administration.

**The Salvation Army National Code of Conduct for Use of Social Media and Other Electronic Communication with Minors**

Salvation Army officers, cadets, employees, and volunteers (together, "Salvation Army Personnel") will conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with this Code of Conduct and the discipline and teachings of The Salvation Army within the course of all their electronic communications including The Salvation Army Guidelines for Use of Social Media and other Electronic Communication with Minors ("the Guidelines"), the National Minute entitled "Internet Blogging/Podcasts and Web Communities," and the "National Policy on Sexual Abuse of Children."

For purposes of this Code of Conduct, a "minor" is a person under 18 years of age. Salvation Army Personnel will conduct all electronic communication with minors in an open manner that maximizes the accountability of the participants and allows others access. It is the responsibility of Salvation Army Personnel to build transparency and accountability into all of their interactions with minors. Salvation Army Personnel will inform minors that electronic communications may be monitored by authorized Salvation Army Personnel.

Salvation Army Personnel will not engage in any electronic communications that are unlawful, offensive, discriminatory, or intended to frighten, intimidate, disrupt, abuse, harass or bully another person. Offensive or discriminatory messages include any words or images that explicitly or implicitly contain sexual implications, racial slurs, or negative comments regarding age, gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin or disability.

Salvation Army Personnel will not knowingly transmit, solicit or receive and retain sexually explicit material, including any sexually explicit pictures or words.

Salvation Army Personnel will report to their supervisor any inappropriate electronic communications or breach of this Code of Conduct or the Guidelines by Salvation Army Personnel or program participants.

They must also report to appropriate government authorities as required by law, Salvation Army policy, or if The Salvation Army otherwise determines it is in the best interest of the program participant, the public or The Salvation Army to do so.

*Salvation Army Personnel understand that The Salvation Army will not tolerate abuse and agree to comply with this Code of Conduct. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct will be grounds for discipline up to and including termination. Salvation Army Personnel will read and sign the following acknowledgment.*

**Acknowledgment**

I acknowledge that I have received copies of the Code of Conduct and the Guidelines adopted by The Salvation Army. I have read and understand the Code of Conduct and Guidelines and agree to comply with these standards and conduct myself in complete accordance with them, as they may be amended by The Salvation Army from time to time.

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

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

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

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Corps: \_\_\_\_\_

Issued by the Authority of  
The Territorial Commander

Colonel William A. Bamford  
Chief Secretary