

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Cyber Safety Policy

The internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Some incredible ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry there are some inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. However, following Safe Sanctuary procedures can help to minimize those risks. There is no such thing as privacy in cyberspace. Anything and everything on the internet is public information.

Receive Parental/Guardian Permission

In addition to general permission to participate in a St. Matthew ministry, Adults working with children and youth will receive advance parental permission in writing for:

1. Posting photos of participants on any official St. Matthew websites or sending them through e-mail or cell phone messages or making videos for any use.
2. E-mailing, Instant messaging, calling, texting, or sending data to a child or youth by computer, PDA, or cell phone.
3. The sharing of any full name or contact information.

Guidelines for Communications with Children and Youth

Adults working with children and youth will be instructed to use the following guidelines

1. If communicating by email, do not use "broadcast" e-mails. Use the "BCC"(blind carbon copy) so that each recipient sees only his or her address when a message is received.
2. We will seek to be cautious when transmitting easily identifiable information like dates, times, locations, or participants.
3. There will be no individual adult to youth conversation. Information will be delivered as a group or parent included.
4. Conduct any communications in a professional manner.
5. Save all confidential cyber-communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Remind 101 will service as a safe messaging app where information is stored and can be viewed.
6. If at any time an adult feels unsure about a topic addressed, send a BCC to a parent/guardian (if appropriate) or another trusted adult.
7. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.

Safety Measures for Sharing Photos Electronically

1. We will obtain permission to use photos

2. When posting photos, we will refrain from using names and never use last names or identifiable information
3. When tagging on a social networking site, only tag yourself. Only St. Matthew official adults will be tagged.

Safety Measures for Using Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites such as; Facebook, Instagram, twitter, and others are popular with many people.

1. Adults will be instructed to set privacy settings to limit who can see your profile.
2. Adults of St. Mathew UMC in an official capacity will not submit “friend requests” to children or youth.
3. Church leaders and adult volunteers will avoid relationships with children/youth via social networking sites, unless an actual relationship (ministry, family friendship, etc.) already exists between them.
4. We will not post anything to a social networking site that would not want to be attached to someone’s resume or printed in the church bulletin or newsletter
5. We will act as quickly as possible to remove or to not post inappropriate comments, photos, etc.
6. We will encourage and train youth to follow these same guidelines.

Administration of Official St. Matthew Social Media Groups

1. Each church relation social media site, group or page will have a minimum of two unrelated administrators, who are either church leaders or adult volunteers engaged in the ministry
2. Sites will be monitored frequently to allow for quick responses in the event urgent or crisis concerns are posted.
3. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and make sure they uphold your mission.
4. Any inappropriate material posted to a church related social media site, group or page will be deleted and addressed. Refer to “Reporting allegations of abuse” section for further information and reporting guidelines.

St. Matthew United Methodist Church
701 Cleveland Street
Greenville, SC 29601
864-242-1966

Waiver: Communication by Social Media, Photograph and Video, and Texting

- I authorize Staff Members and adults working in an official capacity of St. Matthew United Methodist Church to use photos, videotapes, and or other likenesses of myself and or my child or the child for whom I have legal guardianship for promotional materials regarding St. Matthew United Methodist Church programs, facilities, or services. Such images will not be sold to other parties. Promotional materials bearing these images may be distributed for free to the public and posted on the St. Matthew United Methodist Church website. (www.stmatthewumc.net)
- I authorize Staff Members and adults working in an official capacity of St. Matthew United Methodist Church to communicate by methods of Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc), email and/or texting with my child or the child for whom I have legal guardianship.
- Do not use photos, videotapes, or other images of myself or my children in promotional material or on the website of St. Matthew United Methodist Church
- Do not communicate by methods of Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc), email and/or texting with my child or the child for whom I have legal guardianship

Please use one form per family:

Participant's Name, printed:

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Participant's Name, printed:

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Participant's Name, printed:

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Participant's Name, printed:

Participant's Signature:

Date: