Supplement 05
Internet and Social Media Check Guidelines

In an era in which most people have an online presence, it is helpful to review and applicant's online information for red flags or any content that could indicate improper behavior. A general Google search may yield helpful information. Are there any news articles written that include their name.

By searching the applicant online, you may be able to ascertain what the applicant values, their level of discernment, and how they interact with children/students. Red flags that are often found on social media are inappropriate pictures, suggestive or even explicit comments, and excessive commenting and interest in children or students by someone older. You may find some of these red flags, or you may come across other information that indicates this person is not a good fit for ministry service.

Some Questions to Consider:

- Do the applicant's posts contain language/content that would be deemed inappropriate for a volunteer/staff serving with minors in a church setting?
- Who are the applicant's friends? Does that raise a red flag? For example, if the applicant is in his 30s or 40s and a large portion of his friends are young teenage boys, this might be a red flag.
- What sites is the applicant affiliated with? Are the movies, music and other items of interest on their social media telling in some way?

All of these items provide a profile of the applicant's personal life that help to determine if the applicant is the type of person the church would consider to be a positive influence for minors.

Potential inappropriate social media posts could include:
- Inappropriate pictures
- Suggestive or explicit comments or affiliations
- Language or content that would be deemed inappropriate for service in a church setting

This list of things to consider applies to all online and mobile platforms for sharing content and information, whether hosted by (your church) or hosted by others. "Social media" refers to social networking services, short-message services, message boards, podcasts, image/video sharing sites and other methods for sharing real time information among users.

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Due to the ever-changing speed of social media, this policy applies to all new social media platforms, whether or not they are mentioned. All social media platforms are relevant and included.

**NOTE: These are suggestions. Your organization is responsible for compliance with all applicable laws. Accordingly, this sample (suggestion) should not be used or adopted by your organization without first being reviewed extensively by an attorney. The Alabama Baptist State Convention assumes no liability in connection with the use or distribution of these suggestions.