

FCA Digital Engagement Manual: Principles, Guidelines and Best Practices



This agreement outlines FCA's organizational principles, guidelines and best practices regarding digital engagement that apply to all FCA employees, international leaders and/or contractors. Staff will be asked to reaffirm this agreement annually as a part of their ministry planning cycle.

These guidelines and principles apply to all online communications, both FCA ministry accounts and personal accounts. We define "digital engagement" as your participation and communications in any of the following:

- Social media networks
- Websites
- Blogs
- E-Newsletters
- Message boards
- SMS/Group texting
- Any other form of electronic communication

Guiding Principles for Our Digital Engagement

1. Use wisdom in every post and online engagement, whether on personal or ministry channels.
 - a. Ephesians 5:15-16 – *"So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days."*
2. As ministers of the Gospel and members of FCA, how we communicate personally and on behalf of the ministry is held to a high standard.
 - a. Luke 12:2-3 – *"The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!"*
3. Every digital engagement and post, whether on personal or ministry accounts, has the potential to build up or tear down. In all of our interactions, we will seek to bring glory to God.
 - a. Ephesians 4:29 – *"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:31 – *"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."*
 - c. James 1:19-20 – *"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."*

4. Everything we say, even on personal accounts, is a direct reflection on FCA. When we post, we should consider the potential impact our posts have on our fellow staff and the ministry of FCA. The minister cannot be differentiated from the ministry.
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:23-24 – *“Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.”*
5. Our actions and words in the online spaces have real-world consequences. Just as outlined in the FCA Employee Handbook, we will hold our staff to a high standard wherever they communicate. Staff can be held accountable for content posted on their personal social or web platforms. Disciplinary action can be taken and termination may be required depending on your supervisor’s recommendation.
 - a. Matthew 12:36 – *“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak”*
 - b. James 3:1 – *“Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.”*
6. We will live out our FCA Values online as well as offline.
 - a. Philippians 1:27 – *“Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.”*

Embodying the FCA Values

We treat the online world with the same intentionality for our Christian witness as we do the offline world. So what does it look like to live out our FCA Values in digital spaces?

- **Integrity** – We will demonstrate Christ-like behavior privately and publicly.
 - Proverbs 11:3 – *“Honesty guides good people; dishonesty destroys treacherous people.”*
 - We will be salt and light in how we engage on these platforms.
 - We will be filled with integrity, seeking to be the same online and offline.
 - We will not be divisive and will not engage in gossip or unwholesome talk.
- **Serving** – We will model Jesus’ example of serving.
 - John 13:13-15 – *“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’, and you are right, because that’s what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”*
 - We will take the time to engage and respond to those who reach out to us online.
 - We will use social media to build others up and not tear them down.
 - We will focus our content on things that give value to our coaches and athletes, not just promoting FCA.
- **Teamwork** – We will reflect our unity in Christ in all our interactions.
 - Philippians 2:2 – *“Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.”*

- We will reflect FCA in all of our posts, both in our personal and ministry accounts.
- We will invite others to be a part of creating the content and stories we tell on social media.
- We will highlight our coaches and athletes, making them the “heroes” of the FCA story.
- **Excellence** – We will honor and glorify God through the quality of our engagements.
 - Colossians 3:23-24 – *“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.”*
 - We will use the tools available (Suitespace, FCA Annual Narrative and FCA brand standards) to create quality content.
 - We will verify and fact-check content before sharing, remembering that, to our followers, sharing equals endorsement.
 - We will not overextend ourselves on too many platforms. We will only commit to as many platforms as we can execute with excellence.

Responsibility in Representing FCA

Our opinions and thoughts are not restricted to us personally; they automatically reflect the ministry of FCA because we are part of Team FCA. While we have the right to express ourselves, it does not mean we are excluded from the consequences of our communication. Every post and interaction should be treated as if it were visible to the entire world, regardless of our privacy settings. Before making any post, personal or ministry, we must remember the THINK framework:

- Is this **True**?
- Is this **Helpful**?
- Is this **Inspiring**?
- Is this **Necessary**?
- Is this **Kind**?

Respect

We must respect individuals and communities in which we interact, even if their opinions are different than our own, and exercise good judgment and common sense. Staff should conduct themselves online in a way that honors the Lord and maintains a clear Christian witness.

Digital Engagement Guidelines

Understanding the guiding principles behind how we engage in the digital spaces, FCA staff must also adhere to the following guidelines:

- You may not use FCA ministry social media accounts or websites to make political endorsements. Examples of this would be directly or indirectly promoting or opposing a particular candidate or political party. This is a legal violation and could result in FCA losing its nonprofit, tax exempt status.

- Photos or posts on FCA social media accounts should never include an involved participant's name or photo unless that person has given written consent.
- To protect individuals and ministry activities in restricted countries, do not post photos, tag people or tag locations of ministry in restricted countries. View everything you post as public and searchable.
- Other people's intellectual property belongs to them even if not explicitly copyrighted. Ask for permission before reproducing any content found online. Link to online references and source material directly.
- FCA staff should not portray themselves as official FCA spokespersons or attempt to articulate FCA's position on a topic.

Digital Engagement Best Practices

To assist you in making responsible decisions about digital engagement, we have established these best practices for appropriate usage.

Political Statements

- As representatives of FCA, and the Body of Christ, use great caution and discernment if you choose to use your personal social channels to make political or social statements. While you may not intend for a comment to be political or divisive, you must consider how it will be received by those who follow you. While you are an individual, you also are the face of FCA to those with whom you come in contact, and your voice speaks on behalf of FCA to those followers.
- If you do use your personal social media or websites to express opinions on political or social issues, we recommend you express that those opinions represent your views and not the views of FCA.

Handling Feedback & Discussion

- When attempting to respond to a comment or post on any social platform, it is better to follow up in private via email or direct/private message. Making your communication personal applies in the online world just as it does in the offline world. Remember James 1:19-20 and be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger.

Content

- Christ-like qualities should be exuded in everything you post. Content that is critical, negative, hypocritical, judgmental, sarcastic or derogatory does not reflect a life with Christ. Be wary of posts, status updates or tweets that have this tone.
- Be wise in what content you share, "like," quote and repost. To your viewers, these actions appear as an endorsement. Use discernment in those with whom you align.
- Use discernment in the content you share or create.

Choose "Friends" Wisely

- Prayerfully consider with whom you associate online. By accepting someone as a “friend” and associating with them, you allow everyone you are friends with online to see their activity. Social networks are a great way to minister to people, but carefully, prayerfully weighing the risks is highly recommended.

Posting Photos and Videos

- When posting photos or videos online, sound judgment should be used. The context of the media cannot always be communicated, so we must be aware of the appearance of misconduct or questionable character.
- Photos and videos of those involved with the FCA ministry should be posted with discretion. Respecting the privacy of individuals experiencing a life-changing moment is important.
 - Do not “tag” students to photos on social media sites without their permission.
 - Photos you do post should never include the individual’s name unless the person has given written consent. Consent forms are available for you to use on TeamNet.
 - All camp attendees sign an agreement to use their images in promotional materials, articles and stories about FCA, but they should not be identified by name unless staff obtain written consent.
 - Use caution in posting content relating to international, non-U.S. ministry. Know the online safety precautions of staff and volunteers in an area before you post about ministry in that area.

Using Royalty-Free Imagery

- Remember that most photos you find online are licensed and cannot be used without written consent of the creator. In your creation of ministry materials and content, do not save images from search engines and use them, as most require a license to use. Either use photos you have taken or collected directly, or search for “royalty free” photos.

Media – Official Statements

- Media outlets and organizations will often ask local field staff for FCA’s position or opinion on specific issues. Staff should refer inquiries to Hamilton Strategies, (610) 584-1096, ext. 102, or DHamilton@hamiltonstrategies.com.
- Also available on TeamNet is a series of [position statements](#) on commonly addressed and current topics. ***These statements are not to be distributed publicly***, but are available to be used as guides for answering difficult questions.

Relationships

- **Long-term Counseling**
 - FCA representatives (especially at camp) should be careful about entering into long-term individual counseling relationships with participants. Generally, you should not physically meet or engage with a youth via texting, instant/direct messages, social networks or any other form of communication more than three times to discuss the same issue.

- Adult leaders and FCA staff are generally not prepared or supported to provide long-term counseling or formal therapy. Instead, refer youth suspected of a serious need for counseling to professionals in the community. Consider contacting a parent or school counselor should the situation warrant such action.
- All interactions with students should align with the Youth Protection Policy Expectations and Guidelines.
- **Informal Contact** (Independent of FCA Activities)
 - Informal contact refers to phone calls, letters, face-to-face contact, email, texting, social messaging or other communication between an FCA representative and a youth that is not connected to "official" FCA activities. FCA recognizes that informal contact between FCA representatives and youth frequently occurs and can be very beneficial for ministry and social reasons. For example, staff may hire teens as baby-sitters for their own children, or staff may see kids during social events with the child's family. This interaction is usually legitimate and beneficial. However, staff should be cautious of in-depth, reoccurring communication with youth.
- **Be Aware of "Fantasy Relationships"**
 - Refrain from spending an inordinate amount of time with any one participant that could lead the participant to misread your interest in him or her or become too strongly tied to you. This includes relationships with other adults and volunteers. Be aware of how you express your concern for the student, adult or volunteer. When you express love, be sure students know you mean Christian/Phileo love.
- **Appearance of Misconduct**
 - Staff must avoid even the appearance of misconduct online. This is necessary in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations. Posting photos, links, blogs, videos, comments or any other type of created content must be done with care.
- **Marriages**
 - Those FCA staff who are married are strongly encouraged to communicate with their spouse about their online activity, including social networking. Complete transparency is absolutely imperative. It is up to each husband and wife to establish boundaries with the use of social networks and online media (websites, email, message boards, messaging platforms, etc.). These boundaries could include the following:
 - Keeping one another informed of "friend requests" including requests from one another's past. Over-communicating could be helpful.
 - Telling one another about communication that has occurred online.
 - Limiting or not allowing one-on-one, in-depth communication with people of the opposite sex.

Content Filters and Accountability Software

- For all the "good" that is available online, there is equally, if not more, "bad." We recommend FCA staff employ the following tactics to protect themselves online:

- Utilize your computer in the open, in front of highly trafficked areas like the kitchen or living room. Avoid using your devices in areas of low traffic.
- Screens should be viewable to anyone in the house who could walk by.
- Install content filtering software on your computer and mobile devices to eliminate unsafe or inappropriate content from yourself and others using your computer.
- Install accountability software on your computer and mobile devices. Stay accountable to another person about your Internet usage. Examples:
 - [X3 Watch.](#)
 - [Covenant Eyes.](#)

Additional Digital Policies

Pornography Policy

- Viewing pornographic sites is strictly prohibited whether from your FCA-issued computer or your personal computer. Staff who fall into this temptation will be dealt with according to Galatians 6:1: sensitively, yet seriously, with the hope for healing and victory over this sin. Disciplinary action will be taken with strict accountability should the staff person remain with FCA. Termination may be required depending on your supervisor's recommendation. Once a staff person has been accused of or admitted to viewing pornographic websites on his or her FCA computer, personal computer or handheld device, he or she will be confronted and a course of action will be determined by their supervisor and V.P. of Field Ministry.

Internet Access Agreement

- FCA provides access to its communications systems for employees to use for ministry activities. Use of FCA communications systems should not conflict with the primary purpose of the ministry, its ethical responsibilities or applicable laws and regulations. Each employee is responsible for ensuring that the expectations in this policy and agreement are followed. Please review this document periodically in order to stay up to date on our expectations. Failure to comply with this agreement may result in disciplinary action and potential termination.

FCA Computer Network and Database

- The FCA computer network, including but not limited to computers, mobile devices, Internet access, email systems, FCAOne, TeamNet and Help Center, are ministry tools intended for employees to use in performing their job responsibilities. All computer files created, sent or received by means of the FCA Computer Network, such as but not limited to documents, software and email messages, are and remain at all times the property of FCA. Therefore, FCA reserves the right, at any time and without notice, to access, retrieve, read and disclose to third parties all computer files, including but not limited to documents, software and email messages, either work-related or personal, that were created, sent or received by or through the FCA Computer Network. In this regard, employees should not assume that any such information is confidential, even if the information is password protected.

- All information related to accessing the FCA Computer Network, such as user identifications, access codes and passwords, are confidential FCA information and should not be disclosed to non-company personnel.

Personal Use of the Internet

- For reasons of security, system capacity, tracking problems and to maintain a positive witness to our Internet provider and the rest of the world, FCA may monitor Internet use and sites accessed. If inappropriate sites are accessed or a situation of abuse is established, your supervisor will be notified. If a pattern of abuse exists, the human resources department will be notified. Failure to comply with this agreement may result in disciplinary action and potential termination.
- Personal use of the Internet through the FCA Computer Network is permitted, so long as it is otherwise consistent with this agreement and other FCA policies and it does not interfere with the assigned responsibilities of the employee and the employee's coworkers. Personal use of the FCA Computer Network constitutes consent for FCA to access all messages, files, websites, documents and information sent, viewed, received, downloaded, accessed and compiled by the employee. FCA may access employee and third-party messages and information for various reasons, including but not limited to ensuring proper functioning of the FCA Computer Network, obtaining information necessary to the conduct of the ministry's business, supporting audits and reviews, complying with legal requirements and court orders and otherwise as necessary to ensure compliance with this policy and other FCA policies.
- Personal use of the Internet through the FCA Computer Network should not disrupt the operation of the FCA Computer Network or the networks of other Internet users. FCA prohibits employees from accessing the Internet through the FCA Computer Network in any manner that is defamatory or may disparage or harass any person on the basis of gender, race, age, disability, religion, national origin or other protected category. Similarly, the creation, transmission, downloading or uploading of messages or documents that are illegal, defamatory, sexually explicit or discriminatory or that include profane, derogatory, off-color or threatening language or sexual comments is prohibited on the FCA Computer Network.
- Employees shall not use any component of the FCA Computer Network for personal business or commercial purposes. Employees shall also not use any component of the FCA Computer System for lobbying and/or supporting political candidates or campaigns. Any person violating this policy may be subjected to disciplinary action, including dismissal, in the discretion of FCA.

Email

- FCA provides an email system as part of the FCA Computer Network to assist employees in their job responsibilities. Personal use of the FCA email system is permitted. However, employees should be aware that personal use of the FCA email system will be treated the same as business use and is subject to review at any time without notice. FCA prohibits the creation, transmission, downloading or uploading of email messages that are illegal, defamatory, sexually explicit or discriminatory or that include profane, derogatory, off-color or threatening language or sexual comments. Each employee must safeguard his or her

email access privileges and is ultimately responsible for any information that is sent from his or her email address. Please refer to the FCA Document Destruction Policy for further information on retention periods for electronic documents.

Unauthorized Use

- Employees are not permitted to use the FCA Computer Network to visit websites or send email messages that are deemed by management as inappropriate or in violation of other FCA guidelines. FCA reserves the right to determine when an employee is using the FCA communication systems inappropriately. If you have any question whether your behavior would constitute unauthorized use, contact your immediate supervisor before engaging in such conduct.

Software and Copyright

- FCA fully supports the federal copyright laws. Employees may not use the FCA Computer Network to copy or use any software, images, music or other intellectual property (such as books or videos) unless the employee has the legal right to do so. Employees must comply with all licenses regulating the use of any software and may not disseminate or copy any such software without authorization.

Voice Mail

- The FCA voicemail system is intended for transmitting ministry-related information. Although the company does not monitor voice messages as a routine matter, FCA reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over the voicemail systems for any purpose.

Cell Phones and Mobile Devices

- Any FCA cell phone or mobile devices issued must be used in compliance with this policy.

(Printed Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Only send back this page to Human Resources