



Social media is an undeniable force in our new, global, and connected society. For those who work with orphaned and vulnerable children, social media presents incredible opportunities, but poses great risks.

Back2Back is committed to safeguarding children from harm, exploitation, and abuse. Part of this commitment means following communication and social media guidelines that place the safety, protection, and best interest of the child first and foremost in everything we do and post online.

General Rule of Visibility and Accountability

A basic principle in protecting minors from sexual abuse and exploitation is eliminating opportunities for such abuse to occur. This requires a commitment to the twin goals of visibility and accountability in all interactions with minors and all individuals in Back2Back programs and the establishment of appropriate boundaries, both physical and situational.

- It is inappropriate for staff to be alone with a minor and/or in a location not visible to others.
- Healthy boundaries limit the times, topics, frequency, and content of all communications between staff and minors. These boundaries extend to the use of technology and media.

Best Practices

The aim of this policy is to promote good practices that provide children and young people with appropriate safety/protection in the care and interaction with staff, volunteers, tutors, doctors, child development specialists, mission team guests, and visitors in regards to specific child protection issues. For the purposes of this document,

- Minors shall be defined as any child under the age of 18.
- A Hope Program Student is any teen/young adult who is being supported by Back2Back while pursuing job skills or education.
- Hope Program Students may also be minors.

Boundary Guidelines for Social Media & Posting Photos

Back2Back Ministries cares deeply about the minors and all individuals in Back2Back programs. All decisions must be made with their well-being at the center. For this reason, Back2Back Ministries staff are allowed to post pictures on social media provided that the individual is not able to be identified and located.

Only ONE identifying feature may be included in any social media post:

- **First name only**
- **Photo of the faces of minors and individuals in Back2Back programs**
(Specifically in Monterrey & Mazatlan, Mexico NO faces of minors are permissible)
- **Location** (defined as: city, state, children's home, community center, school etc.)
*The name of the country where the individual lives is always permissible and is not considered an identifying factor per the above guidelines.
- **No personal trauma history** in conjunction with any identifier may be shared, out of respect for those we serve.

The staff at each Back2Back site, in accordance with the local law, will inform mission team guests if they are permitted by local government to take photos of the children in children's homes for personal use.

Photos should be taken out in the open, in public spaces, and never in private. Best practice recommends only taking **photos of groups of children rather than individual children** only after **requesting permission to take the photo**.

PERMISSIBLE for Back2Back staff to post on social media



Helping this precious child with homework then taking her for ice cream.

(Photo of girl, no name or location disclosed)



In Nigeria, girls fight to succeed in education. Back2Back steps into the ring each day.

(photo of girl studying, no name, no city or children's home named, no visible school patches)



Today, 16,000 children will drop out of school. Our tutors help kids beat the statistics.

(Photo of volunteer with child/teen, no name or location disclosed)

NOT PERMISSIBLE for Back2Back staff to post on social media



Going to the Cancun city park with Mary who until now, due to abuse, has been afraid to be in public.

(wrongfully discloses location with name, as well as private history)



(wrongfully discloses exact home location, names and private history, photo includes school uniforms so now their school location is disclosed as well)

< **Fully orphaned as a result of tribal conflict, Faith and her older sister, Esther arrived at Rukuba Children's Home lost and afraid. The seven other children living in the home welcomed Faith and Esther with open arms, and it wasn't long before the sisters' demeanor changed. Faith and Esther now exude joy and excitement that comes from feeling safe, known and loved.**

Boundary Guidelines for Communicating with Minors and Hope Program Students via Technology

The ethical behavior that we expect of staff in their interactions with minors and all individuals in Back2Back Programs must extend to all forms of communication, including the virtual/technological world. Those who work with vulnerable children should be especially vigilant regarding healthy boundaries with everyone, and especially with minors. The following principles contribute to the establishment and maintenance of healthy boundaries.

An Easy Guideline to Remember

TAPed

To help achieve these purposes, consider that electronic communication with minors and Hope Program students should always be “TAPed”:

Transparent

Maintain openness, visibility and accountability;

Accessible

Consider all electronic communication to be a matter of record;

Professional

Use correct grammar and tone, choose appropriate subject matter and choose words that are courteous.



Friend Requests on Social Media

- Adults should not send “friend” requests to minors or youth.
- If a student served by Back2Back reaches out and initiates the “friend” request, individuals may choose to accept or deny the request.

Communication Must be Open and Transparent

All communications between staff and minors and all individuals in Back2Back Programs must be open and transparent. Care must be taken to avoid falling into the role of “surrogate parent” in all circumstances. A parent or caregiver should never have cause to be concerned about staff interfering with the primacy of the parent or caregiver.



Communication with Hope Program Student Must Include Hope Program House Parents

Prior to any communication with a Hope Program student via social media, staff should have the same level of communication/friend status with the Hope Program student’s house parent or caregiver. To prevent triangulation and to encourage healthy relationships with house parents, staff should close the communication loop and notify Hope Program student’s house parent of content of any private communication had with student.

In summary, if you accept a friend request from a Hope Program student, you must friend their house parent. If you communicate online with a Hope Program student, please include their house parent in communication.

To protect both the adult and the minor, communications with young people must:

- Not be excessive (no more than 30 minutes per day) and/or
- Not occur with improper frequency (no more than twice per week),
- Not at inappropriate hours (during the daytime only – not before 8am or after 9pm) or
- Not in private (not on disappearing social media platforms like Snapchat), no matter what medium used.
- If a student texts you after hours and it’s not an emergency (the threat of someone’s life - their own or another’s, self-harm threats, clearly illegal activities) wait until morning to reply.
- Video chatting with a student is strongly discouraged.

Model Healthy Boundaries



Staff must always distinguish between “being friendly” and “being friends” with minors. Minors are not the peers of adults and should never be allowed to become overly friendly or familiar with staff.

In all interactions with minors and Hope Program Students via the Internet, staff should model and inform healthy relationships between adults and young people. Establishing and adhering to healthy boundaries provides a model that helps young people more quickly recognize when an adult on the Internet engages in behavior that is divergent and report it to their parent and/or other trusted adults. Therefore, all communications with minors and all individuals in Back2Back Programs must reflect appropriate content and be Christ-centered.