

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 a mission guest 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 mission guests and minors. These boundaries extend to the use of technology and media.

## 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,



**It is prohibited for child sponsor to post any video or photo of a minor or any individual in Back2Back programs to any social media site.**

**You can upload photos of children to shared folders (ex. Dropbox, Google Drive, Apple Photos, Shutterfly etc.) that are not accessible to the public.**

## Guidelines when taking photos:

- Each Back2Back site, in accordance with the local law, will inform mission 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.
- **Make sure to request a child's permission** before taking their photo.
- Best practice recommends **only taking photos of groups of children** rather than individual children

## Examples of approved ways to post on your personal social media:



Photos of your mission team



A favorite view



Share Back2Back posts

## 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 their sponsor 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.

## FAQ Why are Back2Back staff permitted to post photos of children?

Staff members have on-the-ground ongoing relationships with the children served and are in relationship and communication with primary caregivers about the situation of each individual child. Staff are able to determine when and how it is appropriate to post photos of minors or Hope Program Students, whereas, child sponsors lack this detailed information and on-the-ground relationship.

<<<

### OPPORTUNITY:

**You are welcome to LIKE, SHARE, OR REPOST any social media content from Back2Back Ministries or Staff on your personal social media pages.**

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

The ethical behavior that we expect of child sponsors in their interactions with minors and all individuals in Back2Back Programs must extend to all forms of communication, including the virtual/technological world.

**The following principles contribute to the establishment and maintenance of healthy boundaries.**

### Communication Must Be Open and Transparent

All communications between child sponsors 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 house parent or primary caregiver should never have cause to be concerned about child sponsors interfering with the primacy of the parent or caregiver.

**No personal/private conversations should be had between child sponsor and a minor/Hope Program Student.**

In extenuating circumstances, permission to have personal conversations may be granted if:

- The site director deems it beneficial to the holistic care of the child.
- The primary caregiver or house parent is informed and supportive of the conversation.
- The child or Hope Program student affirms the relationship as positive and helpful.
- The child sponsor commits to include the primary caregiver or house parent in all communication between themselves and the child/Hope Program student.



### Friend Requests on Social Media

- Adults should not send “friend” requests to minors.
- If a child in Back2Back’s program or a Hope Program Student served by Back2Back reaches out and initiates a “friend” request, individuals may choose to accept or deny the request.



### Communication with Children in Back2Back’s Program or Hope Program Student Must Include Primary Caregivers or Hope Program House Parents

Prior to any communication with a child in Back2Back’s program or Hope Program Student via social media, child sponsors should have the same level of communication/friend status with the primary caregiver or Hope Program Student’s House Parent. To prevent triangulation and to encourage healthy relationships with primary caregivers or house parents, child sponsors should close the communication loop and notify primary caregivers or Hope Program student’s house parent of content of any private communication had with the child or student.

**In summary, if you accept a FRIEND REQUEST from a child in Back2Back’s program or Hope Program Student, you must “friend” their primary caregiver or house parent. If you COMMUNICATE ONLINE with a child in Back2Back’s program or Hope Program Student, please include their primary caregiver or house parent in communication.**

### To protect both the adult and the minor or Hope Program Student, 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 after 9pm or before 8am) or
- Not in private (not on disappearing social media platforms like Snapchat), no matter what medium used.
- If a child or 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 child or Hope Program Student is strongly discouraged.



### Model Healthy Boundaries

In all interactions with minors and Hope Program Students via the internet, child sponsors 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 primary caregiver and/ or other trusted adults. Therefore, all communications with minors and all individuals in Back2Back Programs must reflect appropriate content and be Christ-centered.