



Social Media Policy

All Saints' Church, Walsoken

Please refer to Document S&S_Doc_001 for all Safeguarding and Social requirements.

Specific Policy

This Safeguarding & Social (S&S) sub-policy controls the expectations in the use of social media concerning church.

The internet provides opportunities for All Saints' Church, Walsoken to promote activities and events, share information and participate in interactive discussions on topics using a wide variety of social media, such as:

- | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| ➤ Facebook | ➤ X (Twitter) | ➤ Instagram | ➤ Whatsapp | ➤ YouTube |
| ➤ Tic Tok | ➤ MailChimp | ➤ LinkedIn | ➤ Snapchat | ➤ etc. |

Definition

Social media is defined, for the purposes of this policy, as: "Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking".

Intent

We actively encourage our PCC, officers, and volunteers of All Saints' Church, Walsoken to use social media, but we also recognise that use of social media can potentially pose risks to All Saints' Church, Walsoken's confidential information, reputation, and may jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations.

To minimise risks, social media should be used appropriately, we expect all PCC, officers, and volunteers of the Church to adhere to this policy when using Church equipment, or whilst on Church premises and elsewhere.

Policy Aims

- 1) To provide PCC, officers, and the congregation with an overarching guide to on-line-safety and so they do not put themselves, or others, in a vulnerable position when using social media.
- 2) To protect all people who receive the Church's services who make use of social media via information technology (such as mobile phones, PCs, laptops, or tablets etc.) as part of their involvement with us.
- 3) To ensure confidential church information remains secure and is not compromised.
- 4) To ensure the Church's reputation is not damaged or adversely affected.
- 5) To ensure that young and/or vulnerable people and third parties are protected.

Church congregation suspected of breaching this policy will be required to co-operate with investigations.

The Church congregation members will be requested to remove internet and/or social media postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy

PCC Responsibilities

All our Church congregation are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. The PCC will ensure this policy is accessible. Any misuse of social media or breach of this policy should be reported to the PCC.

Reference Documents

None

Procedure

Social Media – General Acceptable Use

Irrespective of the social media platform used, please take note of the following concerning social media presence:

- 1) Use your personal email address and not any Church email address.
- 2) You should not use any social media platforms to attack or abuse others.
- 3) You should not include contact details or pictures etc. of others, without their prior permission.
- 4) You must take personal responsibility for your social media content.
- 5) You must protect the Church's interests and not publish anything that could directly or indirectly damage or compromise the Church's reputation.

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- 6) You must always show respect to others when using social media.
- 7) You must not write anything that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, grooming or bullying.
- 8) Avoid conflicts of interest.
- 9) Do not reveal confidential information.
- 10) The incumbent, PCC, officers, volunteers, and congregational members are free to express political views in support of and against political parties and to engage in political campaigning providing that:
 - a. Any social media posting states that such views are personal opinions & not that of the Church.
 - b. Such activity does not use any church equipment.
 - c. The church's communications channels are not used to disseminate political views.

Social Media – Networking with Young People

All social media platforms allow private messaging to take place between people. There are times when one-to-one communication is appropriate. However, we would strongly advise that any one-to-one communication using social media is kept to a minimum and that it is done via a platform that keeps a record of these messages (i.e., Facebook messenger).

When using social networks to communicate with young people, the Church PCC, officers and volunteers will:

- 1) Not hide by using aliases.
- 2) Keep a log of communications using the social media accounts. Messages should be saved and kept.
- 3) Use appropriate language and not use abbreviations that could be misunderstood by a parent.
- 4) Not use social media after 10pm to maintain a safe boundary between church and personal life.
- 5) Have parental consent for all communication with young people on social media.
- 6) Maintain confidentiality (e.g. Is this story mine to tell?).
- 7) Stay within any legal framework.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

Forms

None

Diagrams

None

Appendices

Appendix 1. Alignment with Church Risk Register

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Appendix 2. The Church of England Social Media Guidelines

Be safe. The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, ask our Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Be respectful. Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.

Be kind. Treat others how you would wish to be treated yourself and assume the best in people. If you have a criticism or critique to make, consider not just whether you would say it in person, but the tone you would use.

Be honest. Don't mislead people about who you are.

Take responsibility. You are accountable for the things you do, say, and write. Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place. If you're not sure, don't post it.

Be a good ambassador. Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post.

Disagree well. Some conversations can be places of robust disagreement and it's important we apply our values in the way we express them.

Credit others. Acknowledge the work of others. Respect copyright and always credit where it is due. Be careful not to release sensitive or confidential information and always question the source of any content you are considering contributing towards.

Follow the rules. Abide by the terms and conditions of the various social media platforms themselves. If you see a comment that you believe breaks their policies, then please report it to the respective company.