

## 2.4 Social Media Guidance

From *Parish Safeguarding Handbook* §12 (pp.48-50)

### **Do:**

Have your eyes open and be vigilant.

Maintain the upmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key. Treat online communication with children, young people and adults as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.

Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the PSO and the DSA.

Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post.

Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church account/s and profiles separate from your personal social media account/s e.g. only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, while keeping a separate Facebook profile for private life.

Always ask parents/carers for written consent to:

- Use and store photographs of children/young people from activities or events in official church publications, or on the church's social media, website and displays.
- Use telephone, text message, email and other messaging services to communicate with young people.
- Allow young people to connect to the church's social media pages.

Only use an approved church/ministry account to communicate with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. The named person should be able to access this and review conversations, and the account should be visible to young people and their parents. Young people must be made aware that any communication will be viewed by all users. Save any messages and threads through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence to the named person of your exchange when required.

Avoid one-to-one communication with a child or young person.

Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.

Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the named person, PSO, incumbent or, if appropriate, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

### **Do not:**

Use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Add children, young people or vulnerable adults as friends on your personal accounts.

Facebook stalk (i.e. dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them). — Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper or on headed notepaper.

Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your church role.

Use visual media (e.g. Skype, Facetime) for one-to-one conversations with young people –use only in group settings.

***In particular, do not allow content to contain or share links to other sites that contain:***

Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements.

Breaches of copyright and data protection.

Material of an illegal nature.

Offensive sexual or abusive references.

Inappropriate language.

Anything which may be harmful to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or which may bring the church into disrepute or compromise its reputation