

## Use of Social Media Guidance for PCC and Church Officers

Social media sites enable users to create and share content and keep in touch with other users. They include maintaining a profile page on a networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat; writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own or the blog of another person; taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards. For many, especially young people, using social media is an extension of physical face to face relationships. It is therefore important that churches also engage with their community and worshippers through these platforms.

We have a Facebook page, a YouTube channel and several WhatsApp groups. The YouTube channel is only used to livestream services. The public are able to comment on both of these channels.

The incumbent is included in almost all WhatsApp groups and is the named person

The Children and Families workers are also named persons for any WhatsApp groups relating to work with children and young people; baby group, Caldys toddlers, storytelling, Toasty Tuesdays

The YouTube channel can only be accessed by Christopher Tann but the password and account name are known to the incumbent

The Facebook page is only used by the incumbent

We have taken the decision to not use X or Instagram and to minimise our use of Facebook.

### When using social media we must all avoid the risk of:

- Forming inappropriate relationships.
- Saying things you should not, such as offensive, sexual or suggestive comments.
- Blurring the boundaries between public work/ministry and your private life.
- Grooming and impersonation.
- Bullying and harassment.

### The Role of the PCC

The PCC **must approve the use of social media** and mobile phones by the church. Where there are Facebook or similar online groups set up on the church's behalf, the **PCC must ensure there is a named person to whom all workers are accountable**. The named person must be a church officer, who should be a colleague or supervisor, and should be aware of the account name and password so that they can at any time log on to the account to monitor the communications. The named person should be proactive in fulfilling this role. Communications must be shared with the named person. Church officers remain bound by professional rules of confidentiality. Where there is concern that a young person or adult is at risk of abuse, or they themselves pose a risk of abuse to others, safeguarding procedures must always be followed.

Guidance for Church Officers (all PCC members, clergy, lay readers)

DO ✓ Have your eyes open and be vigilant.

✓ Maintain the utmost 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; 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.
- Young people connecting 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.