

St Margaret's Church Social Media Policy

Introduction

In contemporary times, both social media and the internet wield a growing impact on the lives of numerous individuals. Among younger generations, they have potentially evolved into primary avenues for accessing information about their surroundings and establishing connections with peers and acquaintances. When handled judiciously, these digital platforms can offer advantages to the church, creating opportunities for networking, acquainting oneself with others, disseminating details about church events, deepening understanding of the Christian Faith, and propagating the Gospel.

Social media offers swifter, cost-effective, and arguably more universally accessible communication compared to conventional media. Nevertheless, our comprehension of confidentiality, accountability, and Christian representation must remain unwavering. The responsible use of social media is imperative. The Church of England has formulated distinct social media policies to safeguard children within our church community, along with recommendations concerning the fitting utilisation of social media and electronic media within the Parish. The subsequent social media policy draws its foundation from the Church of England Guidelines.

Social Media Policy

- When providing commentary on any aspect of the activities conducted by the Church of England, the Diocese of London, The Willesden Area and The Uxbridge Team Ministry (or their associated churches being St Andrew's Church and St Margaret's Church), it is essential to distinctly reveal your identity.
- Individuals bear personal accountability for the material they post online, whether on a blog, social platform, or any other form of user-generated media. It's crucial to be aware that whatever you publish could remain accessible to the public for an extended duration. Safeguard your privacy and make sure to comprehend the terms of service for any given website.
- Abide by any copyright protections.
- Adhere to laws against libel and defamation.
- Never disclose confidential information or discuss the activities of groups like the PCC and its sub-committees.
- Refrain from mentioning or alluding to individuals without obtaining their consent. When narrating a tale involving a third party, consider whether you have the right to share that story.
- When referencing content, ensure to provide a link to the source. Avoid sharing anything that could lead to conclusions that might cause embarrassment or harm to an individual.
- Show consideration for your audience. Refrain from employing derogatory language, personal affronts, offensive language, or participating in any behaviour that would not align with Christian values.
- Do not use Church, Diocesan, or Church of England logos or trademarks unless authorised. If you choose to use them, ensure that you secure the appropriate permissions and adhere to the prescribed brand guidelines.

Confidentiality

The blurring of lines between public and private concerns is perhaps a greater source of unease for older generations than for the younger ones. The younger demographic has grown up in an era of online sharing, where airing complaints about teachers, parents, friends, or workplaces on social networking sites is commonplace. In earlier times, these matters might have been confined to private discussions. While one segment may struggle to comprehend the openness with which private details are shared, the other might consider it routine. This contrast can lead to tensions, necessitating understanding, particularly within groups like Youth Workers.

Upholding confidentiality need not pose difficulties in this new landscape. The advent of social media doesn't alter the Church's stance on confidentiality. Within the Church's realm, private or closed meetings, discreet conversations, and confidential affairs exist. All participants have a legitimate expectation that their confidentiality will be respected. Breaching confidentiality on social media is as unacceptable as it would be in any other context. If confidentiality is breached, it can rapidly propagate through social networks, and retracting it becomes nearly impossible. It

might be prudent, therefore, to ensure that those attending sensitive meetings or briefings grasp the limitations placed on sharing such information.

Uploading Photographs and Videos

- Photographs and videos should not be captured during church services without the explicit consent of the clergy.
- Photographs and videos should not be posted online without obtaining permission from the individuals depicted.
- Photographs and videos should not be shared online if they have the potential to inaccurately portray, cause embarrassment to, or compromise the individuals featured.
- Refrain from capturing photos or videos of children without adhering to the guidelines outlined in the Social Media and Social Media Child Protection policies.

Followers and Friends

Social networking platforms commonly revolve around the concepts of "friends" or "followers." Depending on the chosen privacy configurations, posts can either be visible to a specific group or to a global audience. Certain individuals aim for a substantial number of friendships or followers, which might lead them to connect with others who wouldn't necessarily be considered friends in real life. Caution must be exercised in selecting appropriate privacy settings. If uncertain, it might be preferable to engage in more direct communication through channels like email.