

Social Media Policy for St Cuthbert's Church

Social media platforms enable us all to communicate quickly and easily with each other as well as with the public in general. We can engage with others by sharing messages, photos, music and information in an immediate, interactive, conversational and open-ended manner. Although this facility provides many benefits, there are downsides if users do not behave in the same way as if meeting in person so we should apply the same common sense, kindness and sound judgement as we would in that situation.

These guidelines are based on universal principles of social interaction and aim to ensure best practice.

- Be safe:** - the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must always be maintained.

Remember the principles of Safeguarding and how they apply in every situation.

- Be respectful and civil:** - do not post or share content that is inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening, unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually explicit or otherwise disrespectful. Do not use swear words in what you post. Freedom of expression applies only to lawful conduct

- Be kind:** - treat others how you would wish to be treated and assume the best in people. If you have a criticism or critique to make, consider whether you would say it in person and the tone you would use.

- Be honest:** - do not mislead people about who you are and do not impersonate anyone else.

- Take responsibility:** - you are accountable for the things you do, say and write. Text and images that you share or that are shared with you can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place. If you are not sure about the security of what you wish to post then **do not** post it.

- Be a good ambassador:** - personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post and be careful not to put your job or reputation at risk. Be clear at all times

- Disagree well:** - some conversations may become heated and disagreements are inevitable. In the public space that social media is, robust disagreement is one thing whilst confrontational exchange is quite another. It is important to apply the same standards of behaviour online as we would offline.

- Credit others:** - do not post content copied from elsewhere if you do not own the copyright and acknowledge the work of others. Make sure that you do not release sensitive or confidential information and always question the source of any content that you are considering sharing.

- Data Protection:** - do not publicise your own personal details or any passwords and never share the personal or contact details of others.

- Advertising:** - do not advertise products or services unless you have the authority to do so.

- Spamming:** - do not post the same message, or similar messages, more than once

- 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.

How we will respond to those who breach our social media policy

The PCC may take action if complaints are received or if inappropriate, unsuitable or offensive material is found to have been posted. Such action may include deleting comments, blocking users or reporting comments to other organisations as appropriate.

Further information

If you have any other questions or concerns please contact the PCC of St Cuthbert's Church.