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| St Andrew’s ChurchSocial Media Policy |
| Committee | PCC |
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**St Andrew’s Church Social Media Policy**

This policy should be used in conjunction with our St Andrew’s Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection and Safe use of images policy. We use social media at the Church to inform the church family and the local community about the variety of events, activities and interest groups we run. It is a way of demonstrating the church life and culture at St Andrew’s and contributing to fulfilling our church value of urgent outreach.

**1.0 Managing our social media sites**

• The sites will be regularly maintained and only approved persons will contribute to content creation and posting.

• Social media sites should be monitored on an annual basis for effectiveness and ability to achieve our communication objectives. Social media should work in harmony with our other communication touchpoints; Website, ChurchNews, Notices, Foyer, Seasonal Print & Digital Campaigns.

• Posts must be grammatically correct and promote the Church in a positive light.

• Negative comments/derogatory posts will be responded to swiftly and removed by our approved persons.

• Our social media sites will not be used to promote private business/charities unless previously approved and linked to the church.

• St Andrew’s church accounts will only follow relevant organisations linked to the church in order that the feed is focussed on local community, charity partners and Christian faith related organisations.

• Information from other accounts will only be shared if relevant to the Church, the local community and Church of England members.

• Staff should be aware when forming WhatsApp (WA) groups that they must invite members to join via a WA joining link so the recipient can chose whether to join the group by ‘opting’ in and by way of opting in gives consent to be contacted in this way. Youth Ministry should follow the same code of conduct listed below in point 4.0. WhatsApp is effectively a messaging tool, but be aware there are no ‘closed’ groups, sharing content is easy and content/photos/information can all be forwarded by any member of the group to other groups and other platforms. Staff must always adhere to our Safeguarding, Safe use of Photos and Data protection policy.

• Cybersecurity experts recommend changing passwords on social media accounts every three months. There may even be a situation arising that means we must change our password immediately, especially if we suspect a cybercriminal has access to our account.

**2.0 Roles & Responsibilities**

The Church Manager is the named person to whom all employees are accountable. They have full access to all accounts. The Church Manager has overarching responsibility for managing all St Andrew’s social media accounts including delegating approved persons who can post and manage content on behalf of the church.

**Approved persons are; ‘Communication & Community Manager’, ‘Curate’, ‘Youth Pastor’ and ‘Children & Families Pastor’** and these people are responsible for posting content and monitoring feedback. In addition, our Youth Pastor is approved to post content on our Youth Instagram account.

**3.0 Social Media Posts**

Communication by all stakeholders must be professional and respectful at all times. We follow guidelines from the Church of England on our code of conduct below.

We support charity partners but do not promote private businesses. All posts must comply with copyright law and General Data Protection Regulations. We do not include images of people in our posts without prior permission.

**4.0 Behaviour / Code of Conduct**

The Church of England encourage the following behaviour when engaging with faith and non-faith communities using social media platforms.

* **Be safe.**The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, you can ask our St Andrew’s Church 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 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 to ensure upholding the reputation and values of the church and the church family.
* **Do not judge.** Even if you disagree. Do not judge one another. It can be harmful and extremely divisive.
* **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 amplifying.
* **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.

**5.0 Managing disputes**

* Any negative, abusive, derogatory or offensive posts will be responded to swiftly and removed by approved persons within the St Andrew’s staff team.
* If in doubt staff can seek support from the Church Manager or Safeguarding Team in the event of a challenging issue/comment/post.

If anyone has a safeguarding concern they can contact our Safeguarding Officer directly: safeguarding.officer@st-andrews.org.uk

The Church of England communications team can be contacted for advice here:

www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/media-centre/communications-team

Guidance will be reviewed on an annual basis.